

Bridging Work | Sociology A-level

Welcome to Sociology!

If you've not studied this subject before, be prepared for an educational awakening!

Our course investigates UK society today, the society we all live in and are a part of.

Sociology isn't simply an interesting and fascinating study of our society.

At the heart of sociology is a passion for investigating the most serious and pressing social concerns. Issues such as social inequality and human displacement and asylum seeking.

This means finding out why some groups of people in our society are much poorer than other groups, less likely to do well in education, less likely to be employed in paid work, more likely to be convicted of crimes and to be convicted of a crime.

Many sociologists aim to provide solutions to these social problems, and to change society for the better by making it fairer and overcoming inequalities.

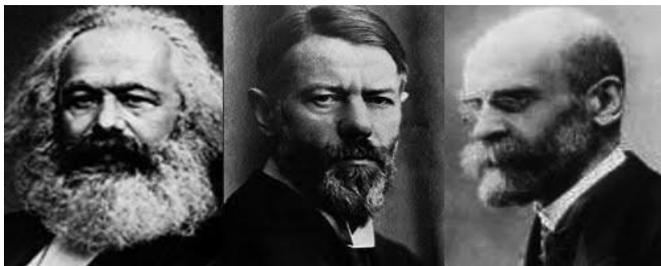


However, sociologists often have very different views about the deep seated causes of social problems and about what needs to be done to change society by making it more equal and fairer for all its members.



Here are some of the main inequality questions you will be investigating:

- Why are children from working class backgrounds far more likely to under-achieve in school, than children from middle-class backgrounds?
- Why do some believe strongly that there is only one type of family that is right for modern society, the *nuclear family*, with married hetero-sexual parents, where the husband goes out to work and the wife stays at home to look after the children?
- Why cohabitating, same-sex, and lone-parent families are considered dysfunctional?
- Is childhood in the UK becoming better and better, or is in reality childhood becoming increasingly *toxic* for many young people?
- Why are over 13% of the prison population made up of black people, and yet the black community makes up only 3% of the UK population?
- Why do some newspapers make front page headlines of working class benefit frauds, yet ignore crimes committed by those multinational corporations exploiting impoverished workers in much poorer, powerless, developing countries?
- Why are the death rates in the UK from Covid-19 pandemic so much higher amongst the poor, the elderly, and some ethnic minority groups, than those from most other social groups?
- What are the main sociological perspectives we will be studying and what are the important differences between them?



Now you have been introduced to some of the issues you will be investigating as an A-level student, you must prepare for this experience by completing the following.

Below are three tasks, and a small research project to complete by September.

You may complete these on a *slide show presentation*, or a report (aim for 750 words), and they should take you at least three hours to complete.

1. In what ways do you think the Sociology A-level course could benefit you as a young person, now, and for your future?
2. Choose 3 or more of the 8 'social inequality' issues listed in bullet points above, and for each one investigate and, in your own words:
 - Identify and explain which social group is being disadvantaged, and
 - Outline the many different ways members of that social group are likely to be disadvantaged eg. through their financial well-being, their feelings of worth and their *life chances* for education and career
 - Explain clearly what you feel *should be done* to overcome this inequality disadvantages, and identify and explain the difficulties that are likely to be experienced with overcoming this injustice
3. The following sociologists have made famous contributions to this subject:
 - Emile Durkheim (1858-1917)
 - Karl Marx (1818-1883)
 - Anne Oakley (1944 -)
 - Max Weber (1864-1920)
 - Becky Francis (1969 -)
 - Howard Becker (1928 -)

Investigate **two** of these sociologists, and outline and explain the contribution each one has made to sociology, and include:

- Their views on *how* society should be studied
- The main *research studies* they completed
- *Your own views* on their work and contributions

You can complete your investigation by researching 'online'; using public libraries; accessing sociology textbooks your family may have; borrowing text books from the sociology department in school and listening to podcasts eg Thinking Allowed

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/profiles/43q7Pf5pYnfkpYQzwxfdBFF/laurie-taylor>

<https://www.theguardian.com/society>

RESEARCH PROJECT

Carrying out this sociological project on an educational issue will bring valuable benefits to your A-level studies, such as:

- First-hand experience of the research process
- Valuable experience collecting, organising and interpreting, primary data you have collected yourself
- New social knowledge that you have produced on your chosen topic
- A deeper understanding of the education system and processes you have been through personally for the last 11 years

Choose an educational issue to research from one of the two below:

(you may chose a different educational topic to research, but do clear it first).

1. **Comparison of schooling in the UK today, with schooling in the past**

For this research you should interview (skype, phone, over the garden fence) several adults (more the better) who went through the state schooling system in 1960s, 1970s, 1980s etc.

Ask them what experiences they had, have a list of questions but you don't need to stick to it. Listen and record what they say, and let them decide the things they want to raise, as long as it's helping you make *a comparison*.

Try to find out the different subjects taught in the past, how boys/girls treated differently, the discipline systems, caning etc.

Collect your material together and produce a report comparing schooling in the past with today, include: the similarities, the differences, when they left school compared with today.

2. **Comparison of the different experiences of 'boys' and 'girls' to school and education.**

For this research you should produce a simple questionnaire with 10-12 questions and distribute this to a minimum of 10 girls and 10 boys – email, online, hand out to friends.

Your questionnaire should contain around 12 questions, each one should help you discover, for example:

- how much the pupils like and enjoy school
- what subject options they prefer, and why
- what their ambitions are to achieve qualifications
- whether they know what they want to do when they leave education eg have a career, get married have a family

- whether they have got in to trouble at school, or never got into trouble
- how much time do they spend completing homework etc

Once you have produced your data, summarise the responses for each question, clarifying whether there were significant differences between the responses of boys and girls, for each question, using draw graphs/pie charts etc to help you

Finally, for which ever research project you chose:

- state who you chose to include in your research, and why
- produce a final conclusion, bringing together overall what you discovered
- identified responses/findings that surprised you
- parts of the project that went well and parts that didn't go well
- what *further research* on your chosen topic would you like to do, in the future

The results of your project to be presented in lesson time in our first week back in September.

