

A-Level Sociology

Entry Requirements: 5 in English Language

Exam Board: AQA

Subject Leader: Miss B Walker bwalker@taptonschoool.co.uk

Why Study Sociology?

Sociology is about the study of societies: how they work and how they change. You will learn how societies shape people's ideas and behaviour, as well as the ways in which people can shape their societies. You will have the chance to reflect on your own experience of the world around you through the thought-provoking topics we explore and via regular class discussion. Sociology helps you to develop a number of important skills which will help prepare you for further study and/or a career.

Topics Covered at A-Level:

Unit 1: Education, Methods in Context, Theory and Methods

Key questions include: To what extent does education reduce or reproduce social class, gender, and racial inequality? How do processes within school impact student experience and identity? What methods can sociologists use to research society and more specifically, the education system?

Unit 2: Families and Households, Beliefs in Society

Key questions include: What functions does the family perform? Are gender roles within the family equal in our current society? Is religion on the increase or decrease? What is the difference between denominations, sects, and cults?

Unit 3: Crime and Deviance, Theory and Methods

Key questions include: Why do individuals break the law? How successful is the criminal justice system in preventing and punishing crime? Is human action a consequence of society? To what extent is sociology a science?

Method of Assessment

A-Level: Unit 1 Education, Methods in Context, Theory and Methods: 2hr Exam

Unit 2 Families and Households, Beliefs in Society: 2hr Exam

Unit 3 Crime and Deviance, Theory and Methods: 2hr Exam

Qualities Required

Students need an open mind, a curiosity about current social issues, and an ability to critically question the world around them.

Links with Other Subjects

Sociology is a Social Science and therefore combines especially well with other Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities subjects. For example, students often combine Sociology with: Psychology, Politics, English, History, Geography, Art, Business, and Economics.

Career Prospects

This course provides students with a number of transferable skills which equip them for a very wide range of degrees and careers; students are better able to express their views, present balanced arguments, and draw meaningful conclusions.

Many of our students go on to Higher Education to study a diverse range of degrees, from Sociology itself, to Criminology, Psychology, Geography, Law, Business, Media, English, Education, Social Policy, Social Work, etc.

Other students who have pursued a career at 18 have gone to work in Insurance, Law, Administration, the Police, etc.

Extension and Enrichment Opportunities

We run a very well attended social science discussion group, where students can lead discussions about contemporary social science research through books, podcasts and documentaries. We also seek opportunities for students to visit universities and attend lectures and talks by researchers, authors and other professionals.

Suggested Reading for Sociology:

- *Sociology: A Very Short Introduction* (1999) by Steve Bruce. This is a small and manageable introduction to the subject.
- *The Sociology Book: Big Ideas Simply Explained* (2015) published by Penguin Random House. This is a visual and bitesize summary of the key theories, concepts, and thinkers within Sociology.
- *Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire* (2018) by hip-hop artist Akala. This explores how racism and class inequality shape life in Britain.
- *Toxic Childhood: How the Modern World is Damaging Our Children and What We Can Do About It* (2006) by Sue Palmer. This explores the ways in which technology, fast-food, and celebrity culture have impacted childhood today.
- *Everyday Sexism* (2014) by Laura Bates. This assesses the extent of gender inequality in many areas of today's society, from the media, to politics, education, and parenthood.
- *'Chavs: The Demonization of the Working-Class'* (2020 edition) by Owen Jones. This is a critical exploration of the ways in which the working-class are presented in both media and politics.

- *'Gang Leader for a Day'* (2008) by Sudhir Venkatesh. This study of criminal networks in Chicago shows how sociologists can choose to immerse themselves in the lives of their participants to better understand their behaviours.
- *It's Not About the Burqa* (2020) edited by Mariam Khan. This is a book of essays written by Muslim women to challenge islamophobia and misogyny.
- *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) by Karl Marx. This is a classic text which examines class struggle within the capitalist system, providing readers with a solid introduction to Marxist theory.
- *AQA A-Level Sociology Books One and Two* (2022) by Webb, Westergaard, Trobe and Townend. These are the two main textbooks we use throughout A-Level Sociology.

Independent Study

Suggested Podcasts for Sociology:

- *Antisocial* with Adam Flemming on BBC Radio 4. This explores divisive social issues through a respectful dialogue between individuals with opposing views on a given topic.
- *Thinking Allowed* with former Sociology professor Laurie Taylor on BBC Radio 4. This delves into new social science research to help us understand how society functions.

Suggested Documentaries for Sociology:

- *Grenfell: Uncovered* on Netflix.
 - *Swiped: The School that Banned iPhones* on All4.
 - *The Most Hated Family in America* with Louix Theroux on BBC iPlayer.
 - *Stacey Dooley Sleeps Over: Open Marriage* on BBC iPlayer.
 - *Jonestown Paradise Lost* on YouTube.
 - *The Shipman Files: A Very British Crime Story* on BBC iPlayer.
- Content Warning: Please be aware of the potentially sensitive nature of many of these books, podcasts, and documentaries.**