



Huxlow & Rushten Academy
SIXTH FORM
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Sociology

A Level

This Transition work is designed to help you to bridge the gap between your GCSE studies and A Level. In September, your subject teacher will ask you for your Transition work and it will be assessed. Teachers will be able to diagnose your strengths and weaknesses and begin to support and challenge you in a more targeted way. You must bring all the work with you to your first Year 12 Psychology lesson in September.

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Year 12 Sociology – Transition Work

Task 1 – What is Sociology? – Key Terms

You may have studied Sociology for GCSE, or you may never have heard of it before.



Sociology refers to the study of society – the way people interact together in society, and how society shapes us and our decisions. Studying sociology will help you to understand different perspectives, to write analytical essays and crucially, to understand the same issue can be seen from multiple perspectives. One of the main issues we study in sociology is equality – how and why society is unequal, and why different people have different chances of succeeding in life. This will be the focus of this work pack. Sociologists believe society can be broken down into different parts: social institutions. These include: education, the family, the mass media (TV and newspapers), the criminal justice system, health and religion. These different parts work together and play an important role in shaping our lives. They also believe that every society has a culture, which means a way of life, and a set of norms (expected behaviours) and values (what we hold to be important).

Define the key terms below using the Introduction Paragraph

Sociology	
Sociologists	
Social Institutions	
Norms	
Values	

Task 2 – Sociological Perspectives

In Sociology, there are three main different sociological perspectives, or ways of looking at society: (Please Note – There are a lot more Sociological Perspectives that we will discuss throughout Year 12 and 13, but these 3 are the most well-known and important for the exam)

1. **Functionalists:** these sociologists believe society runs smoothly, and is made up of different parts which all work together to keep society stable. They believe people agree on what is important (there is a value consensus) and people generally conform to the norms of society. They tend to focus on the positive functions of different parts of society. To further your understanding of this view, head to YouTube and search '**Functionalism Khan Academy**' for an interesting visual explanation.

2. **Marxists:** based on the ideas of Karl Marx, they focus on inequalities based on social class (how much or little money someone has). They believe this is the main inequality in society. They argue there are two main classes: the working class (proletariat) and ruling class (bourgeoisie) and believe the ruling class own and exploit the workers, treating them badly and giving them low pay so they can make more money for themselves. To further your understanding of this view, head to YouTube and search '**Political Theory Karl Marx The School of Life**' for an interesting visual explanation.

3. **Feminists:** see gender inequality, inequality between men and women, as the main inequality in society. They argue women are treated badly and exploited by men, and that society is patriarchal (male-dominated). To further your understanding of this view, head to YouTube and search '**Sociological Theory Feminism Tutor 2U**' for an interesting visual explanation.

Complete the Summary Table for all 3 Perspectives, and draw an image to show how they see society

Name of Theory	Summary of their Views	Image
Functionalism		
Marxism		
Feminism		

Task 3 – Breaking Norms and Values (Deviance)

As you will have learned earlier, society is based on Norms and Values. These are 'expected' behaviours' in society, and 'important beliefs shared by a large group of people'. However, it is important to remember that not everyone follows the rules perfectly all the time. Below are 5 examples of people showing Deviance – Which is when an individual or group of people behaves differently according to the norms

and values of society. This is something we will cover in Year 13 in the **Crime and Deviance Topic**

Your task is to rank them from 1-5 in terms of deviance. The person who you think is the most deviant should be given the Number 1 ranking, and the least is your number 5

1. Claude has just arrived in England on a business trip from France. He leaves Heathrow airport in his hire car but turns onto the wrong side of the motorway and proceeds to drive on the wrong side for a number of minutes. He is eventually pulled over by the police.

2. David has paid a lot of money to watch England play. He is not happy with the performance of one of England's central midfielders and decides to boo him throughout, questioning his place in the team. Strong language is also used.

3. Sarah regularly downloads entire films off a Russian website that does not charge a penny for the privilege. She does not attempt to make further copies and sell them on, although she has invited friends round to watch the films.

4. Peter is waiting for a bus in the morning and decides to light a cigarette. There are other people at the bus stop, none of them are smoking.

5. Jade is taking part in a reality TV show whereby she is living in the same house as an Indian woman named Shilpa. Jade is seen mimicking Shilpa's accent and making fun of her in general. Some moderate racist terms are used.

Task 4 – Education – Who does well and who loses out?

Research into **Educational Achievement** (A topic you will cover in Year 12) tells us the following headlines:

- Girls achieve higher than boys in most subjects, and at most stages of education
- Middle Class pupils achieve higher grades on average than Working Class pupils
- Some ethnic minority groups achieve better than others (For example, Asian students achieve higher average grades than Afro-Caribbean students)

Below are some possible reasons as to why some pupils do better than others. You will need to use your explanation skills to identify why this may affect pupil performance in exams. This is a key skill in Sociology A Level. The first one has been done for you!

Reason	Explanation
<p>Basil Bernstein (1975) identified differences between how working class and middle class pupils spoke when at school and at home. He suggested MC students used an Elaborated Code, based on longer words, correct grammar and putting things into context. However, he also found that working class pupils were more likely to speak with a Restricted Code, where they would use slang words, abbreviations and without context.</p>	<p>This would affect achievement in school because Middle Class pupils would be more able to explain answers fully in exams, and also when speaking in class to teachers. If they can understand more of the content that is being taught to them and put it into context, then their chances of success at GCSE and A Level will increase. Short, badly worded answers would lose Working Class students key marks in tests.</p>
<p>Marilyn Howard (2001) noted that Working Class pupils are more likely to have a poorer diet, or have to skip breakfast before coming to school. Even when they do eat, they are more likely to have food that is high in fat and sugar, instead of fruit and vegetables.</p>	<p>This would affect achievement in school because...</p>
<p>Sharon Gewirtz (1995) found that Middle Class parents took more interest in where to send their child to secondary school. These parents could move house to a nicer area to get their kids a place at a school with a good reputation. However, Working Class parents either didn't have the money to do this or didn't care about where their children went</p>	<p>This would affect achievement in school because...</p>
<p>Howard Becker (1971) claimed that some teachers label students as either 'hard working' or 'lazy'. Lots of studies into this idea have been carried out, and the general trend is that teachers consider students from Middle Class backgrounds, Girls and Asian students as the 'best', and Boys, students from Afro-Caribbean backgrounds and Working Class pupils as the 'worst'</p>	<p>This would affect achievement in school because...</p>

<p>Troyna and Williams (1986) argued that the British school curriculum is ethnocentric. This means that the majority of topics and lessons focus on White British history and literature. This is good for students from that background and culture, but often harder to understand for students who come from immigrant backgrounds as they may not understand it as well</p>	<p>This would affect achievement in school because...</p>
<p>The Equal Pay Act (1970) made it illegal in the UK for companies to pay women less than men for doing the same job. Since this law was introduced, more women have been encouraged to stay in school to get good qualifications, in order to get a good job</p>	<p>This would affect achievement in school because...</p>
<p>Mitsos and Browne (1998) concluded that girls often spent more time doing coursework for their GCSE subjects, producing high quality, well written work and meeting deadlines so they didn't get penalised and lose marks for handing the work in late. They suggested this happened because girls mature quicker than boys and take more responsibility for their work</p>	<p>This would affect achievement in school because...</p>

Task 5 - Tackling Inequality in schools

Imagine you are the Prime Minister of the UK. You want to make school and education fair for ALL students in Britain. Using the examples mentioned in Task 4, try to find some solutions to the problems that we face in the Education system. This is something that the real leaders of the UK have to do as part of their job, and also something we will look at in the **Educational Policy** section of Year 12. The first one has been done for you to get you started

Problem in the Education System	Solution
WC pupils don't have the language skills to succeed in education (Bernstein)	Give Working Class pupils extra English lessons in Early Years schooling, so they can develop their language and succeed in GCSE and A Levels
WC pupils have a poor diet, this affects their concentration and ability in schools (Howard)	
Middle Class parents dominate the decision making for secondary schools, and often take up all the places in the 'good schools' (Gewirtz)	
Some teachers have negative views of pupils and don't think they can succeed as well as others (Becker)	
The British Education system is biased towards White British students and against everyone else (Troyna and Williams)	
Boys take less pride and care in their work, and are more likely to hand in coursework late or incomplete (Mitsos and Browne)	

Task 6 – What does your Family look like?

Fill out this questionnaire relating to what your family/household looks like. This will give you a good insight into

1. How Sociologists actually do their work (Lots of them use questionnaires like this to collect their data)
2. How family life has changed in the UK over the past 50 years. As we now live in a time where families are more **diverse** than ever (In the past, the dominant

family was called the **Nuclear Family**, with mum, dad and children all living in the same house)

Question 1 – How many people live in your house? Please identify their role e.g. '5 people. Me, Mum, Dad, and 2 older siblings'

Question 2 – Who is responsible for making sure you are cared for the most? Please identify the person and their relationship to you

Question 3 – Do you live with anyone in your house who is NOT directly related to you, e.g. family friend, a pet, or a step-sibling

Question 4 – Who does the majority of the housework (Cooking, Cleaning, Washing etc) in your household? Please identify their name and role in the family

Question 5 – Would you classify your family as 'normal'? (Normal in this context means 'most people live like I do in the UK')

Question 6 – Were there any questions on this survey that you did not want to answer or you refused to answer? If so, please identify which questions

Task 7 - Evaluating Questionnaires as a method

Do you think this is a good method to collect data as a Sociologist?

How could you improve this survey if you were to do it again?

If you were a Sociologist, would you ask people to fill out questionnaires or would you prefer to use another method (Other Methods are – Interviews, Observations, Official Statistics, Experiments)

Task 8 – Do people still believe in God?

In Year 13 Sociology, we look at the topic of **Religion and Beliefs**. This is often a topic that a lot of students really enjoy, even if you have not come from a particularly religious background. It is also a new topic for those students who studied GCSE Sociology, so there is something in it for everyone! One of the debates we look at in this topic is whether or not Britain is now a **secular** country. Secular means that you do not have a religious belief, and in general religion is not that important to most people in that country or society. Complete the table below and identify whether or

not each piece of evidence supports the idea that Britain is a more Secular society now, or if religion and belief is still important to people

Evidence	For or Against Secularisation?
Bryan Wilson (2013) noted that in the 1960s in Britain, 10-15% of people attended Christian Churches. By 2015, this was down to 5%	
The number of different religions in the UK now is higher than in the past – Millions of people are Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh and Christian, as well as many other religions. Belief hasn't decreased, just the options are more open for people now	
A large number of people do not attend Church, but they do watch Church services online	
You don't have to go to Church in order to prove you believe in God. Many people say they 'believe' in religion but don't actually attend services	
In 1971, 60% of weddings took place in Churches. By 2012 this number was down to 30%	

Write down your thoughts to this question below – 'Is it correct to say that Britain is now a Secular society?'

5 Top things you need to know before picking A Level Sociology

1. **Sociology is quite heavy on Writing Skills** – The main skill in Sociology is to debate the strengths and weaknesses of various theories and methods that Sociologists use, and to come to well-judged conclusions. The best essays in Sociology HAVE to consider both views e.g. There are some things that happen within schools that affect student grades, and also some things that happen outside of schools too. The biggest questions in terms of

marks in Sociology A Level are the 30 mark essays, and it is important to be aware of the skills and amount of writing needed to answer a question like this fully (An intro, between 4-6 paragraphs and a Conclusion)

2. **It is okay to feel overwhelmed when you first start learning Sociology** – This will be a new topic for some of you, and even though it is sometimes offered at GCSE not all students do both courses. Remember – You will be taught ALL of the key topics/key words/studies/theories by your teachers. You will also be taught how to answer the key questions for the 3 exams. However, it is important to actively start revising at the end of every lesson. Making flashcards/mind maps/answering exam questions as you work your way through the course means you won't have to do it all at the end of Year 13!
3. **Writing skills matter as much as knowledge** – Students often think that just learning the studies and theories is enough. This is not true. Essay questions need structure, key words, arguments, evaluations, and correct grammar where possible. Using frameworks like PEEL are good as a starting point, and this is something you should be familiar with from GCSE
4. **Psychology isn't just about people, it is about how they do their work too!** – Research Methods takes up a large amount of your exam, and part of this involves looking at what methods Sociologists use, the strengths and weaknesses of each method, and particularly applying how Sociologists research things within the Context of Education (This is a 20 mark question on your Paper 1). Overall, knowledge of Research Methods is worth 40 Marks of your 240 total marks across 3 papers, so not engaging with this topic can be the difference between the grade you want and the grade you get!
5. **Learning Sociology isn't just about grades!** – Sociology will provide you with real world skills and knowledge about the world. This subject asks you to argue your point well using evidence,

analyse different viewpoints and theories, and understand why and how people behave like they do. All of these skills are valued by people who offer jobs, and just 'learning' the studies off by heart is massively missing the point! Of course, aim for good marks, but don't treat Sociology as a 'box ticking' exercise and something you 'have to do' to get to the next stage in your life!