

Welcome to



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What is sociology?

Sociology is the study of how people's lives are affected as a result of belonging to different social groups. We all belong to social groups. The main groups studied are:

Social class

Age group

Gender

Ethnicity



Sociology is a **social science**, studied by *sociologists*.

This means sociologists **conduct research** to find factual evidence and patterns about how different groups in society behave. *For example*, how the recent coronavirus epidemic affected people differently if they were middle or working class. Are women more likely to choose to not to marry than men?

Sociologists come up with ideas – **theories** – to try and explain these patterns of behaviour. Also, they do research to try and find evidence that backs-up their theories.

This means that as sociologists we are **not giving our opinion** of what we think should or should not be happening in society or whether it is fair or unfair – we are understanding, analysing and evaluating the evidence and the theories.

Core Concepts

Sociological theories are usually of two types:

- 1) **Social processes** - the behaviour of people in different groups is the result of what they have learned from family, school, peer groups, media etc.
- 2) **Social structure** - the behaviour of people in different groups is the result of how society is organised and the position of groups in society.

The study of sociology has core concepts – important basic ideas – that relate to both social processes and social structure. These core concepts have to be known and understood in order to make sense of and discuss the research evidence and theories of sociologists.

Important core concepts:

- Culture
- Socialisation
- Social Class
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Sociological perspectives



Possible Sociology revision / education sites to explore for research:

<https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology>

<https://revisesociology.com/>

<https://sociologytwynham.com/>



A-level Sociology

Questions

Culture

Q1) Explain what is meant by **CULTURE**

Culture means:



Examples: eating with a knife and fork, saying 'thank you', sending children to school.

Norms: behaviour that is expected in situations

Values: principles or goals that are seen as good in that culture (e.g. honesty; hard-work).

Q2) Make a list of **three things** that you think are part of 'British' culture:

1

2

3

Q3) Give two **norms** of behaviour connected to Christmas:

1

2

Culture

In larger, more complex societies, such as 21st century UK, there may be different smaller groups that **have their own set of norms and values**. These are known as **Subcultures**.



Q4) Give one example of a subculture and the norms and values it might have that are different from mainstream culture:

Socialisation

Q4) What is meant by **socialisation**?



There are two types of socialisation:

- 1) **Primary socialisation**
- 2) **Secondary socialisation**

Primary socialisation takes place in the early years – mainly within the family.

Secondary socialisation takes place later in wider society – such as in school, with peer groups, the media or in the work-place.

Q5) Make a list of three ways of behaving that family would usually socialise their children to have:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Q6) Make a list of **one** norm or value that people may be socialised to have that could be picked-up from:

a) School:

b) Teenage peer-group :

c) Media:

Socialisation is reinforced by the use of **sanctions**. These may be applied by parents, schools, the work place or the legal system.

Q7) What do sociologists mean by sanctions?



Q8) Give an example of a **positive sanction** that could be used by family with a young child as part of **primary socialisation**:

Q9) Give an example of a **negative sanction** used as part of **secondary socialisation**:

Social Class

In the UK people belong to a social class although they may not know it:

- **Working class**
- **Middle class**
- **Upper class**

Most people are either working or middle class. Some argue that class no longer exists, but traditionally the idea of social class is based on education and type of job – NOT income:

- Working class – low skilled or skilled manual work (eg cleaner / plumber)
- Middle Class – highly trained ‘professions’ (eg doctor / lawyer)
- Upper Class – often inherited wealth, with no need to ‘work’.

The class a person belongs to can affect their life-chances

Q10) Read the following evidence statements and decide whether you think they apply to either working class or middle class.

Evidence	Middle	working
Most likely to value education		
Most likely to go to university		
Most likely to have low incomes		
Most likely to turn to crime		
Most likely to live in deprived areas		
Most likely to have important careers (journalist / judge)		
Most likely to be privately educated		

Gender

A person's gender is their biological sex as male or female (or what they choose to identify as). **Sociology focuses on the roles and norms that are expected** of people as a result of their gender. Sociologists consider the norms and roles expected of males and females to be a **social construct** – a set of ideas that do not exist in nature but has been created by society.



Q10) List three types of behaviour that families socialise girls to have:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Q11) List three types of behaviour that families socialise boys to have:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Q12) Give **two** ways schools have expectations of boys that is different from girls:

- 1)
- 2)

Ethnicity

Q13) Ethnicity is NOT race or skin colour. What does ethnicity mean in Sociology?

Ethnicity means:



Q14) Britain is a multicultural society. What does this mean?

Q15) White British is the ethnic *majority*. What are two of the largest **ethnic minority groups** in the UK?

- 1)
- 2)

Sociological Perspectives

Some sociologists seek to explain society by looking at how it is structured. These views of society are called sociological perspectives.

The main perspectives are:

- 1) Functionalism**
- 2) Marxism**
- 3) Feminism**

Q16) How do functionalists see society?

Functionalists think that:



