

Transition work 2020



Sociology A Level

Altwood Church of England School

Section 01

What is Sociology?

01 | What is Sociology?

You will need an exercise book, file and paper or online folder to keep your notes together.

1. Think: What do you think Sociology is all about? Note down your ideas in a spider diagram.
2. Now watch this video on YouTube (it is American so watch out for some differences and pause occasionally!) and add ideas to your spider diagram in a different colour. <https://youtu.be/YnCJU6PaCio>
3. Summarise: in 50 - 100 words 'What is Sociology?'
4. **Morning Routine**: Write a list of everything that you do in the order that you do it in, in the first hour after waking up in the morning.
5. Now talk to others - consider how your daily routine compares to those of your family and peers. List what you do the same and what you do differently. What does this tell us about ourselves as individuals? Are we born with this routine or **socialised** into it? Write up your thoughts.
6. Research - Find the definitions for the following concepts (start a key word glossary) :
 - Socialisation
 - Primary socialisation
 - Secondary socialisation
 - Agents of socialisation
 - Institutions/Agencies in Society
 - Norms
 - Values

Thinking like a Sociologist

A concept established by C Wright Mills which provides a framework for understanding our social world that far surpasses any common sense notion we might derive from our limited social experiences. The sociological imagination is making the connection between personal challenges and larger social issues. Mills identified “troubles” (personal challenges) and “issues” (larger social challenges). In other words, this mindset provides the ability for individuals to realise the relationship between their personal experiences and the larger society in which they live their lives.

personal troubles:

private problems experienced by one individual and the range of their immediate relation to others

public issues:

issues that lie beyond one’s personal control and the range of one’s inner life, rooted in society instead of at the individual level

sociological imagination:

the use of imaginative thought to understand the relationship between the individual (personal troubles) and the broader workings of society (public

❖ The Sociological Imagination

- **Definition:** An awareness of the relationship between an individual and the wider society.
- It is the ability to view our own society as an outsider might, rather than from the perspective of our limited experiences and cultural biases.

<https://youtu.be/BINK6r1Wy78>

<https://youtu.be/yTcL8cEtCCc>

Watch the videos above

Then with an example that works for you but that can apply to the UK explain the difference between personal problems and public issues.

How/why is Sociology ‘anti-individualistic’?

What is the difference between opinions and arguments?

Why do you think it is important to be a critical thinker?

01 | Developing your sociological Imagination



Learning to think sociologically means cultivating the sociological imagination. Studying Sociology is more than acquiring knowledge. Sociologists need to be able to 'think themselves away' from familiar routines in order to look at them anew.



The sociologist Anthony Giddens developed the idea of the sociological imagination. Think about a cup of coffee. What does it mean to you? list all the ideas you associate with coffee.



Think yourself away from just the product of coffee which millions of people drink every day. There are many other social processes associated with the act. How many concepts can you think of?

The humble cup of coffee:

1. **The symbolic value** - part of our day to day social activities. The rituals associated with coffee drinking are more important than the coffee itself. Eg coffee as part of a morning routine 'I can't get going without my coffee in the morning' or meeting someone for coffee is not just about drinking the coffee but about the catch up! This gives sociologists lots to investigate.
2. **The drug** - caffeine is a stimulant. People drink coffee to aid their concentration or give them a lift. Caffeine is habit forming, many people feel they can't get through the day without it. This drug is legal in the UK whilst others are not. Other societies have different rules about mind altering drugs, why do these rules differ from culture to culture?
3. **The social and economic interactions** - there's a huge global production chain associated with coffee. There could be as many as 6 chains from the often poorer coffee farmer to the consumer from buying, distribution branding to the barista.
4. **The history** - production and consumption is tied up with colonialism. This legacy of colonialism and empire is still evident.
5. **The corporations** - drinking coffee ties us to the world's largest corporations e.g. Starbucks, Nestle. These corporations have been accused of exploiting the coffee pickers and growers by paying little for the product to maximise their profits perpetuating capitalism. Making ethical choices costs the consumer...
6. **The environment** - does growing coffee on such a large scale deplete the soil and reduce biodiversity where it is farmed? What about the pollution associated with shipping it across the globe?

Did you realise drinking a cup of coffee had so much to it!

Cultivate your sociological imagination:

Take any product and ask yourself the following questions

1. What social rituals are associated with consuming the product?
2. What norms and rules exist which limit the use of the product or similar product?
3. How does the product connect you to global economic and social processes?
4. What is the history of the product?
5. What corporations are involved in the manufacture and distribution? Are there ethical alternatives?
6. Does the product harm the environment?

Products you could use footwear, chocolate, mobile phones

Produce a poster to illustrate your ideas.

Section 02

Social Groups

Culture and identity

Research the sociological definitions and add to your glossary of key terms:
Challenge: try to provide an example which illustrates the concept where you can.

Age

Ageing population

Achieved status

Ascribed status

Culture

Ethnicity

Gender

Identity

Institutional racism

Racism

Sex discrimination

Social Class

Society

Class

Complete the following research tasks and answer the questions:

a. Why rich kids are so good at the marshmallow test

Read the article and answer the questions.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2018/06/marshmallow-test/561779/>

Questions: Define immediate gratification and delayed gratification. What does the most recent research tell us about delayed gratification? How does this link to family structure?

b. The stark relationship between income inequality and crime

Read the article and answer the question.

<https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2018/06/07/the-stark-relationship-between-income-inequality-and-crime>

Questions: According this article, how does wealth influence people's perception of crime?

Gender

a. **Miss America waves bye-bye to bikinis**

Read the article and answer the questions.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-44370240>

Questions: What factors have contributed to making this change? How does this link to the objectification of women? How would feminists view this?

b. **The dark side of female empowerment: The rise of Britain's 'gangster girls' running gangs**

Read the article and answer the question.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/10857716/Britains-gangster-girls-The-dark-side-of-female-empowerment-The-rise-of-women-and-females-running-gangs.html>

Question: Are the rise of 'girl gangs' a direct effect of female liberation? How else could they be explained?

Age

a. **NHS faces staggering increase in cost of elderly care, academics warn.**

Read the article and answer the questions.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/may/24/nhs-faces-staggering-increase-in-cost-of-elderly-care-academics-warn-dementia>

Questions: What impact is an ageing population having on public services? Is there anything that can be done to change this?

Ethnicity

a. **Met ‘use more force’ against black people**

the article and answer the question.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-44214748>

Question: Summarise the statistics presented in this article. Is this evidence of institutional racism or wider racism in society?

b. **Secret teacher: The emphasis on British History is depriving students of balance**

<https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2018/may/26/secret-teacher-history-bias-school-fear-student-future>

Question: Define the term ethnocentric curriculum. What changes would you suggest need to be made, if any, to the UK’s education system?

Section 03

Sociological Theories

Key sociological perspectives

Research the following sociological perspectives:

Marxism; Functionalism; Feminism; Interactionism.

For each perspective you must write a paragraph summarising what you have found out.

It **MUST** include:

- A summary of the perspective's outlook on **society**.
- A summary on the perspective's outlook on the **family**.
- A summary on the perspective's outlook on **education**.

It **COULD** include:

- Names of **key sociologists** for each perspective.
- Evaluation - a **criticism/weakness** of each perspective.

Section 04

Research

Independent research - this is an important part of sociology

Complete the following research tasks which focuses on you as an individual in relation to your area and how factors may compare on a national scale. The tasks aim to encourage you to consider a range of sociological themes. Remember to try and view sociology as holistically as possible.

1. Street Check

View the latest demographic information for your area. You'll need to click on the tabs.

www.streetcheck.co.uk

Questions: What are employment rates in your area? What is the gender split in your area?
How does the median age in your area compare to the national age?

2. View Crime Statistics on your street or within a one-mile radius

Compare crime rates for your postcode and/or future university/somewhere you'd like to live.

<https://www.crime-statistics.co.uk/>

Question: What does the crime information tell you about the respective areas? What does the crime information not tell you about the respective areas?

3. What does the fact that these websites exist tell us about society today?

Section 05

Wider reading/viewing

Here are some suggestions:

You will need this textbook and you could get the revision guide for September

Eduqas Sociology for Year 1 student book and revision guide

Download a reputable news app (BBC) and check out stories relating to our course.

Wider reading and research is essential for success in sociology here are some *suggestions* for year One:

A Level Sociology Book 1, Rob Webb et al.

A Level Sociology Student Book 1, Steve Chapman

Respectable: The Experience of Class, Lynsey Hanley (2016)

Watching the English: the Hidden Rules of English Behaviour, Kate Fox (2004)

Gang Leader for a Day, Sudhir Venkatesh (2009)

Black Like Me, John Howard Griffin (1961) you can read articles about this research

Documentaries (these can be found on YouTube)

Back to School with Mum and Dad (BBC)

Black and British: A Forgotten History (BBC)

Beyond the Asylum (BBC)

Harrow: A Very British School (Sky1)

Educating Essex (Channel 4)

Secret Life of Four Year Olds (Channel 4)

The Doctor Who Gave Up Drugs (BBC)

Film

Catfish (2010)

Billy Elliott (2000)

Dangerous Minds (1995)

East is East (1999)

Made in Dagenham (2010)

Freedom Writers (2007)

The Kids are All Right (2010)

The History Boys (2006)

Bowling for Columbine (2002)

If you have any questions or queries about the work or the course please contact:

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