

What is Sociology

1. The study of society, large groups of people and individuals.
2. It studies how and why people behave the way they do in society.
3. Looks at how institutions in society such as family and government influence human behaviour.
4. A social science which uses research to investigate and predict human behaviour to help governments improve the lives of its citizens.
5. A critical and transformative subject, it is about questioning why society is as it is. It is about digging under the surface, looking at what is really going on.

Is sociology for me?

if you're interested in questions like these then Sociology is for you.

- To what extent is the individual shaped by society?
- Is there such a thing as a social structure that constrains individual action, or is society nothing more than a figment of our imaginations?
- To what extent does our social class background affect our life chances?
- To what extent does our gender affect our life chances?
- To what extent does our ethnicity affect our life chances?
- What is the role of institutions in society – do they perform positive functions, or simply work in the interests of the powerful and against the powerless? (a related question here is why do our life chances vary by class, gender and ethnicity)
- How and why has British society changed over the last 50 years?
- What are the strengths and Limitations of macro-scale research in helping us to understand human action?
- What are the strengths and limitations of micro-scale research in helping us to understand human action?
- Is it possible to do value free social research and find out the 'objective' knowledge about society and the motives that lie behind social action?
- Is British Society today better than it was 400 years ago?



- Sociology seeks to understand all aspects of human social behaviour, including the social dynamics of small groups of people, large organisations, communities, institutions, and even entire societies.
- Sociologists are typically motivated by their desire to better understand the fundamental principles of social life, believing that an understanding of these principles will help improve people's lives through more enlightened and effective policies.
- If you choose to study sociology you will discover how to investigate these kinds of questions for yourself and begin to understand more about your own motivations and behaviours, gaining a wide range of very valuable skills that can be applied to almost any career.

Open doors with a Sociology A Level

Sociology is a highly valued subject and prepares students for a variety of courses at higher education. You will also leave the course with skills of use in many careers.

Law • Journalism • Education • Media • Social Work • Market Research • Human Resource • Youth Services • Politics • Social Policy Planning • Probation • Advertising • Criminology • Academic Research • Police

• And many more...

Cross-cultural understanding:

sociology will give you a global outlook and help make you aware of traditional stereotypes

Statistics: In Sociology you will work with others to define a problem or research question, design a study to find answers, analyse the data, report on the findings and then make recommendations based on those findings.

Communication skills:

sociology will give you the skills and confidence to express yourself in both verbal and written forms to a variety of people.

Interpersonal skills:

Sociology include exercises in team working, so as well as learning how to initiate ideas and work independently, you will also learn how to work in collaboration with others.

Leadership skills: Sociology teaches you how to find information, extract what is important and then turn it into a compelling argument, helping you to influence and motivate others

Analytical skills:

Sociology is the study of society and therefore develops great problem-solving abilities and sharp, critical thinking. These skills are essential for all kinds of duties and projects

**A Level Sociology is
the sixth most popular
A Level in the UK
Summer 2021**



**A Level exam results A*- C
2018/2019
88.24 %
2019/2020
82.60%
Above national average for
similar centres**



What is the CCCS Sociology vision?

Sociology is a multifaceted, fascinating subject, where learning opportunities are infinite. Sociology will help you uncover the world you inhabit. It will give you an understanding of how society and its institutions have developed, but also how they can play a part in contributing to society through providing you with an informed voice. Students at CCCS become working sociologists with the ability to navigate the complexity of wider society.

**How do we want students at CCCS to experience the Sociology curriculum?
What do we expect CCCS students to develop from this subject?**

At CCCS, students will experience an inspiring, challenging, thought provoking and transformative subject

- They will be equipped with a strong conceptual knowledge and understanding that will go hand in hand with the specialist skills to become working sociologists who are inquisitive about their learning.
- Students will develop a daily enthusiasm about what they are going to be learning and understanding about society today and their place in it.
- They will be engaging in science in a unique way, examining the wonderful complexity of society, through the lens of different sociological theories, its features and sociological research.
- Students will be daily engaged in the rigour of sociological research, by developing a toolkit of specialised skills, such as explaining differing positions, considering their strengths and limitations, before assessing the impact on themselves and others.
- Equip students with critical thinking skills to see whether sociological perspectives are applicable to the world they now inhabit.
- Create lifelong skills, as students can use these to better facilitate arguments, articulate and debate that are applicable to an entire range of other curriculum subjects.
- Student will also develop social solidarity and an empathetic understanding towards others.
- Develop a strong subject knowledge base through the examination of a vast range of sociological topics. They will understand the essential underpinning elements of society. This will inform their daily sociological areas of enquiry.
- Learn to develop and apply knowledge that is careful, considered, and creative.
- It will make students reflexive, stretch the students to be honest about their own theoretical position, bias an ethics. Students will appreciate the limits to their thinking, to make room for new lines of enquiry.



What is distinctive about the CCCS Sociology curriculum?

School values underpins the Sociology curriculum

- ✓ **Academic Excellence**- Sociology curriculum unashamedly is built on going beyond the textbook and focus is on what you do with what you know.
- ✓ **Love as Brethren** – tolerance, diversity, social solidarity, and empathetic understanding is developed through the exploration of issues and experiences facing different social groups. Sociology is very much in line with school assembly themes.
- ✓ **Extra-curricular** -Sociology Cultural Capital opportunities -school trips/sociology workshops/university links/competitions



**Academic
Excellence**



**Love as
Brethren**



**Extra-curricular
Opportunities**

Sociology student destinations

Sociology is known for being complimentary subject facilitating a range of degree courses to helping student develop the required skill sets needed to gain successful apprenticeships opportunities. Examples of this include obtaining a place to study subjects such as Business ,Law, Languages, Music ,Economics to Science related degrees at university to gaining successful apprenticeships in a range of field e.g. trainee Solicitor to working for big utility firms

Richard Osman

"Sociology should be taught everywhere, that's my view. Even GCSE Sociology arms you against a lifetime of spin, 'fake news' and moral panic".

Nussbaum- "Sociology is central to education for democracy"

How Sociology fits in

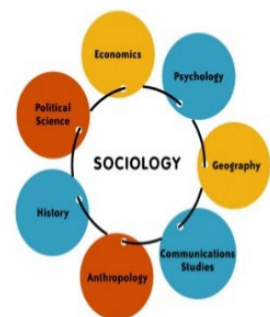


Figure 1.1

The Real World
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Introduction to Sociology: What is Sociology?

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Topics we explore

Year 12

Key Debates

- What is the purpose of education?
- How do in school factors affect student experience? How does school shape identity?
- How do external factors influence a child's educational achievement?
- What has been the impact of the marketisation of education?
- How has globalisation influenced educational policy?
- How has schooling changed in the post-modern era?
- What causes differences in the achievement of different genders, classes and ethnic groups?
- How do governments aim to provide opportunities for all students regardless of background?

Our Education System

"Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid."

- Albert Einstein

FOR A FAIR SELECTION EVERYBODY HAD TO TAKE THE SAME EXAM: PLEASE CLIMB THAT TREE

...in sociology of Education

Key Debates

- How has increased life expectancy influenced family life?
- Is childhood becoming more toxic or is it being extended into young adulthood?
- Why are people delaying marriage and having children later in life?
- Are gender roles and relationships becoming more equal in the family?
- In the contemporary era, is the family losing its functions?
- Does a family have to be made up of blood relations?
- Is the nuclear family still the most common type of family in society?

...in sociology of the family

Key Debates

- How does sociologists own values influence their choice of topic and methods?
- Can sociological research be carried out in the same way as natural science?
- Can sociological research be carried out without the influence of values?
- What is the positivist and interpretivist approach to sociological research?
- Quantitative data vs qualitative data
- Are theoretical factors the main set of issues to consider when picking a method and topic to investigate?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of using primary methods of sociological data collection?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of using secondary methods of sociological data collection?

...in sociology of Research methods

Year 13

Key Debates

- Is crime a working-class phenomenon? Why are ethnic groups over-represented in stats?
- What has been the impact of globalisation on crime?
- What role does the media have in crime?
- What have theoretical approaches contributed to our understanding of crime?
- Who are the victims of crime?
- Why do males commit more crime than females?
- How do we prevent crime?
- What is the role of the legal system and punishment?

...in crime and deviance

Key Debates

- 10 Mark Outline and Explain
- Can Sociology be a science?
- Are we living in a post-modern age?
- Can sociology be value free? Can it be objective?
- What have theoretical approaches contributed to our understanding of society?
- Are positivist or interpretivist methods best for investigating contemporary society?
- 20 Mark Evaluate...
- Can sociologists influence social policy?
- What influences a sociologists choice of methods and topic?
- Are structural theories limited for use in society today?

...in Theory and Methods

Key Debates

- What functions does religion perform for society and individuals?
- Why may people choose to accept scientific explanations rather than religious ones?
- How does religion maintain patriarchy in society?
- What is the extent and nature of secularisation?
- How has globalisation impacted the functions of religion in contemporary society?
- How can religious ideas inspire social change?
- Why do people join sects?
- How does religion benefit capitalism?

...in sociology of religion

Transition activities –intent and outcome

These transitions tasks are designed to develop your understanding on the following

- ❖ An insight into the nature of the subject e.g. What is Sociology? What is society? Why do Sociologists study society?
- ❖ Core themes that underpins the subject
- ❖ What is required of an A Level student Sociology student at CCCS

Why do the transition activities ?

Preparation is crucial for studying A levels. A levels require you to be an independent learner. Although you have fewer subjects, A levels require different study skills and the volume of work is greater due to the increased demand of depth and detail. The tasks are designed to prepare you for exciting challenges of becoming an A level Sociology student in September. These activities will develop your independent enquiry; evidence of reading around the subject and enthusiasm and interest.

Bring your completed tasks with you to your first Sociology lesson in September 2023

If you have any questions please email these to Mrs Sharmin:

nsh@cooperscoborn.co.uk

Success criteria

Quality of Response	Criteria
Excellent-outstanding	A detailed response to the questions in every section, showing in depth research and knowledge. The response is supported by evidence from a wide range of sources and includes research outside the websites provided. Information has been carefully considered and evaluated before reaching judgements, and presented in a clear and organised manner.
Good	A detailed response, showing some good research and knowledge in most of the sections. The response is supported by evidence from a range of sources. Information has been considered in reaching judgements and is presented in an organised manner. Some sections may be completed to a higher standard than others.
Satisfactory	A response which shows limited research and knowledge. The response is supported by some evidence, but is insufficient in preparation for the course. Some sections may be lacking completion.

Recommended sources

To complete the activities, you may find some of these recommended sources useful:

www.sociology.uk.net (see 'student activities' for content that's relevant to the textbook used in class)

www.sociology.org.uk/rload.htm (includes a load of class notes and PowerPoints on a range of Sociological topics)

www.s-cool.co.uk/a-level/sociology (a popular site, that might be worth checking out)

www.tutor2u.net/sociology/blog/videos (video clips and blog comments on a wide range of topics and news stories relevant to Sociology)

<https://thesociologyguy.com/revision-notes/> (many colourful revision notes, but not on all topics)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=68eFC1_nIwA (good video on education)

www.thesociologyteacher.com/a-level-sociology (materials mostly aimed at Sociology teachers, but they cover a good a range of topics)

www.thesociologyteacher.com/education-sociology-revision (same as above, but specifically on education)

www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/sociology/as-and-a-level/sociology-7191-7192 (information on the course studied at CCCS, by the exam board we use to examine our students)

www.bbc.co.uk/news (often has news stories relevant to Sociology)

www.theguardian.com/uk (the UK newspaper probably most relevant to Sociology)

www.independent.co.uk (another UK newspaper that often contains stories relevant to Sociology)

Activity 1: What is Sociology?

Activity 1.1: Using at least two different sources, write your own definition of what 'Sociology' is

What is Sociology?

Activity 1.2: Consider each of these statements about studying Sociology below, and comment on whether you think each of them are true or false (e.g. explain why you chose true or false, and why others might disagree with you).

Statement about studying Sociology	T or F	My thoughts on the statement, and why I chose true or false
1. Sociology is an easy subject		
2. Sociology is mostly 'common sense'		
3. It's assessed entirely by exams		
4. The course is relevant to all careers		
5. You're expected to contribute your own ideas		
6. You don't have to write essays		
7. Studying sociology makes you a nicer person		
8. Some employers and universities don't accept Sociology		
9. Sociology is just a matter of opinion		
10. You can succeed in sociology by simply learning your notes		

Activity 1.3: People talk about the 'society' we live in, and how 'society' has changed. Some say that 'society' influences us e.g. society shapes the way we think and act while others say individuals through the meanings they attach to their action and interactions with others shapes society.

It's argued that the UK is now a multicultural society. But what is 'society'? Using several of the recommended sources , write down a definition of 'society'.

What is a society?

Activity 1.4: You've probably seen programmes in which people like Bear Grylls place people on deserted islands and then watches how they cope, or films in which planes crash land in an isolated mountain range or desert – and the people struggle to cope. Now imagine you're on an aeroplane and it does an emergency landing on an uninhabited island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. There are no 'relationships', no 'customs' and no 'systems' on the island when you arrive. Have a conversation with people in your household or with friends and fill the following boxes with answers to the following question:



What does an island need for it to be considered 'a society'?

Activity 1.5: Sociology is an academic discipline that looks at how people live, behave and work together in groups. It also looks at how societies work – and the roles (or ‘functions’) that their different parts of society play. Select a few of the boxes in activity 1.4, and explain the function they perform for individuals and for society (e.g. if you’re stuck, think about what would happen if they did NOT exist).

Features or parts of society	The function they serve for individuals and for society

Activity 1.6: You no doubt understand that British society is different now to what it was 100 years ago. Sociologists are interested in what they call ‘social change’, which refers to: ‘changes in social attitudes, in social action, in social processes and in the structure of society’. Comment on each of these categories, such as what it might mean and/or an example. Speak to relatives who are older than you if necessary:

Form of ‘social change’	Comment and/or example
Changes in social attitudes	
Changes in social action	
Changes on social processes	
Changes in the structure of society	

Activity 1.9: Sociology explores 'social change' and attempts to formulate explanations for it. Sociology tries to explain why such changes occur. Return to your work for 1.8, and use the table below to provide a possible explanation for why at least three of them have happened.

Example of social change	Possible explanation for such changes

Use this space for any further notes

Activity 2: Coronavirus lockdown and other social problems

Activity 2.1: To understand the role of sociologists in bringing about change /solutions to problems that arises in society , they distinguish between social and sociological problems. Sociology is interested in '**social** problems', which are aspects of society that are undesirable and have a negative impact on a large number of people in society. If a teacher finds classroom behaviour stressful, then this is his/her 'personal problem'. However, if a large number of teachers decided (over a number of years) that student behaviour was so poor that they all left the profession, then this could become a 'social problem' – as a shortage of teachers would impact on many students and would be a problem for wider society. **Sociological problems** is 'any pattern of relationships that calls for an explanation'. This can be something society regards as a problem and also include things that society that does not consider as a problem e.g. why people are law abiding. In the boxes below, add a few aspects of society that provide evidence that society is not perfect, and which might be described as 'social problems'. And provide aspects of society that sociologists may consider sociological problems even though society may not consider them as a problem that needs explaining.

Activity 2.2: Sociology attempts to provide explanations for why things happen in society. They attempt to explain the existence of 'social problems', and challenge the 'common-sense explanations' which are often provided by the mainstream media. For example, a tabloid newspaper might explain the UK's high rate of teenage pregnancy by suggesting British girls don't understand contraception; or that a teacher shortage is caused purely by poor student behaviour. Provide a 'common-sense explanation' for each of the following aspects of society:

How sociologists make sense of the social world		
Specialist vocabulary (body of terms) and concepts (key ideas)	A body of theories about the relationship between the individual and society	A toolkit of research methods to gather empirical evidence to support their theories/explanations

Social problems	Common-sense explanations
Homelessness	
White boys underperforming in exams	

People claiming unemployment benefits	
Young people taking drugs	

Activity 2.3: Sociology investigates 'social problems' to try to explain them effectively. They conduct social research, using questionnaires, observational techniques, interviews, official government statistics and other methods to find a 'valid' explanation for social action, social attitudes and social processes – including those which are negative and are 'social problems'. Now return to the issues above, and provide some possible explanations that a sociologist might find by conducting a thorough sociological investigation using the methods mentioned above. Try to provide more than one explanation for each, if you can.

Social problems	Possible Sociological explanations
Homelessness	
White boys underperforming in exams	
People claiming unemployment benefits	
Young people taking drugs	

Activity 2.4: Consider the meme below , featuring an owl. With examples, explain what you understand by the meme, and how it relates to Sociology.

Analysis of a meme
<div data-bbox="1086 1718 1453 2094" data-label="Image"> </div>

Activity 2.5: The government uses 'social policy' in an attempt to fix certain social problems. For example, one of the problems associated with drug abuse is addressed by providing a 'needle exchange', to discourage heroin users from sharing needles and spreading illnesses like HIV or hepatitis and from discarding dirty needles for children and others to pick up. Sociologists sometimes attempts to influence government 'social policy'. For two of the social problems mentioned in either of the activities above, makes some suggestions for addressing them – to either fix the problem or minimise the negative impact they have on society.

Social problem	Possible suggestions for addressing the problem

Activity 2.5: There are a number of 'social problems' associated with the current Coronavirus pandemic. As news reports show, infection rates are high and hundreds of people are dying every day because of it. As well as the implications for human health, it is also having a negative impact on wider society – both directly and indirectly. In the box below, describe your understanding of the statement that 'phenomena like a global pandemic can have both direct and indirect effects on people's lives'. Provide some good examples, perhaps also related to poverty.

Direct and indirect effects

Activity 2.6: Think about the coronavirus pandemic and the crisis associated with it. Problems linked to the virus might relate to issues like: schools, shops and services having to close, people's freedoms being restricted, criticisms of the government's response, death of loved ones and many more. Add your thoughts to the table below:

Ways the virus is impacting on society – directly or indirectly	Sociological comments (e.g. explain the consequences, explain the behaviour)	Social policy ideas to address the problems

Activity 2.7: In Sociology exams, students are expected to be evaluative, and to present arguments both for and against, or both strengths and weaknesses. Regarding the coronavirus crisis, there have been positive impacts on pollution and wildlife, and perhaps some people have been forced to become resilient and independent – therefore learning new skills. In the boxes below, describe some of the potential positive consequences of the coronavirus crisis.

Positive aspects of the Coronavirus crisis

Task 3: Core Themes in Sociology

The following are tasks to help you understand two of the integral elements and core themes in Sociology. These tasks will help you understand and apply these to substantive areas in your two-year course.

3a: How do you so view society? -An introduction to Sociological theories

- Draw a model of how you view society** (use shapes / key words / images where possible) **Provide a written explanation of your work** to explain what you have done. Include what you see as the main issues/ problems/ solutions you feel as a society we face and why! (at least a side of A4)
- Research the following theories -completing the following grid in your OWN WORDS.**

Theory	Key Sociologists	Main ideas about society	What conflict/debate can arise from this theory's view of society	One question I have about the way this theory views society
https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/reference/sociological-perspectives-introduction-to-sociology What are Sociological perspectives?				
Functionalism https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/reference/what-is-functionalism-introduction-to-sociology				
Marxism https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/reference/what-is-marxism-introduction-to-sociology				
Feminism https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/reference/what-is-feminism-introduction-to-a-level-sociology				
Social Action https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/reference/what-is-interactionism-introduction-to-a-level-sociology				
S+C Postmodernism				

iii. How would the following theories view your society? (What aspects with they agree with/disagree with)

How I view society: a summary		
How each of the following theories may view my society	Aspects they may agree with	Aspects they may disagree with
Functionalism		
Marxism		
Feminism		
Social Action -interactionism		
S+C Postmodernism		

Task 3b: Who are the key social groups that make up our society?

Society is made of individuals from different social groups. As sociologists, we must consider the differences and inequalities between existing social groups in our society e.g., the differences between men and women.

i. Find statistics and fill in each box of the table.

Different areas of society	Social class	Ethnicity	Gender
Crime			e.g., 92% of the first 500 offenders in the 2011 London riots were male
Education		e.g., Only 22% of Pakistani/Bangladeshi boys gained 5 A*-C in their GCSEs in 2000	
Employment			
Religious participation			
Family <ul style="list-style-type: none">domestic rolesexperiences of childrentypes of families that people live in			

- ii. Write a brief paragraph explaining how you think sociologists might use the information that you have collected?
- iii. Pick one of the above areas of inequality in our society (Social class, ethnicity, or gender). Produce a poster using the information gathered in your table and elsewhere, to outline what type of inequality they experience and explain why.



The Potential Advantages of Sociology

Sociology involves constantly examining the knowledge we have of selves and others – this is an ongoing process. If we open ourselves up to these processes then it should have the following benefits

- It should make us more tolerant of diversity.
- It should render flexible that which may have been oppressive.
- It should make individuals more effective agents of social change – realising that society does act as a restraining force in many ways should enable the individual to direct their efforts more effectively at making changes. (A nice quote here – 'Sociology stands in praise of the individual, but not individualism').
- It should enhance social solidarity – as it makes us realise that many of our private troubles are shared by several (possibly billions) of other people.
- Sociology sheds lighter onto the social nature of humans.
- Sociology increases the understanding and power of social action.
- Sociology studies the role of social institutions (home, school, church and more) in the development of the individuals.
- Sociology provides critical insight and perspective to the solution of social problems.
- Sociology has changed our outlook with regard to the problems of crime, its causes and consequences.
- Sociology is of great importance to the understanding of international problems.
- Sociology has helped governments to promote the welfare of tribal and marginalized communities.
- Sociological skills are very complimentary in a workplace/setting

