

A LEVEL SOCIOLOGY - Transition work

Welcome to A-Level Sociology at Haydon Sixth Form! Sociology is in the top 5 most popular A Level subjects in the country and it is a great option to take if you are interested in understanding and explaining the social world we live in.

Sociology has been described as the scientific study of society and this course will help you to become critical thinkers through challenging misconceptions in order to tackle some of the big questions we have about our society such as 'Why are there differences in crime rates between social groups' and 'how has globalisation affected families, education, crime and religious beliefs'?

In order to get you ready for this exciting subject, the Sociology department has included the following tasks we would like you to complete before your first lesson in September which will give you a much better understanding of the most important concepts and principles you will cover in greater depth over the next 2 years. We know that some of you have studied GCSE Sociology and are already familiar with the key perspectives and ideas, but don't worry if you haven't! Some of the content may seem challenging but it is meant to be, so try your best and use the internet/friends/parents to help if you are stuck! One of the ways you can be successful at A-Level is having the desire to think more deeply about ideas, even if at first it seems difficult!

Learning aims:

- Gain a better understanding of the A Level course for Sociology
- Know the meaning of key terms: culture, norms, values, socialisation, status and role.
- Understand the importance of culture and socialisation for explaining human behaviour.
- Understand the difference between structural and social action views, and between consensus and conflict views of society.
- Understand the key features of different types of society
- Know the main patterns of inequality in today's society
- Understand that sociologists use a variety of research methods and that these have both strengths and limitations

IMPORTANT!!

The transition work has been split into 4 different sections and they must all be completed for your first day of Sixth-Form. Ideally, you should print this work off and complete directly onto the sheet, however if you are unable to then you should complete this work by writing your answers handwritten on lined paper.

You will be completing a short assessment based on the transition work in September to assess your understanding of this work.

Part 1 - Find out about the A-Level course

Part 2 - Sociological theory

Part 3 - Culture, norms and values

Part 4 - Researching groups in society

Part 1 - Find out about the A-Level course

Research the A-Level specification for Sociology using the AQA website. What topics are covered in each of the following exam papers?

What topics will I be assessed on (page 13)

Paper 1:

Paper 2:

Paper 3:

What the examiners are looking for (page 13)

Explain what the following Assessment Objectives involve. What do they include? How would you demonstrate this is an exam question?

A01:

A02:

A03:

A03:

What types of questions will appear in the exam?

-
-
-
-
-
-

What command terms are included in exam questions? What do they each mean?

Outline:

Outline and explain:

Analyse:

Apply:

Evaluate:

Part 2 - What are the main perspectives in Sociology?

An important feature of Sociology is being able to look at ideas and social issues from different viewpoints. In Sociology, there are several theoretical perspectives which you need to be able to explain, apply to a particular area of society, and evaluate. The next part of the transition work is aimed to help develop your understanding of Sociological theory which is a crucial part of all topics in the A level syllabus.

You have been given an overview of three sociological perspectives and on the back of each information sheet are some 'knowledge check questions' to test your understanding. You should write your answers directly into the boxes provided.

Social sciences are a group of subjects which focus on society and how it functions as well as how the individuals within that society function and behave. They include sociology, Psychology and Politics.

Social Institutions are the structures in society which influence how society is structured and managed. They include Family, Media, Education and the Government.

Sociological Imagination means the ability to see things socially and how they interact and influence each other. To have a sociological imagination, a person must be able to pull away from the situation and think from an alternative point of view.

Values are the goals that society tells us we should be aiming for in order to be considered a success.

Norms are the unwritten rules of behaviour within a society. The rules which tell the difference between right and wrong as well as rude and polite.

Socialisation means the process of learning the norms and values of society. It happens in 2 stages: Primary socialisation occurs in the family or through the primary care givers. Secondary socialisation reinforces primary socialisation through social institutions such as education and the media.

Definition of Sociology.

The systematic study of society, the groups within and its institutions

Social Groups

C	Class
A	Age
D	Disability
G	Gender
E	Ethnicity
S	Sexuality



Who is Auguste Comte?

August Comte is the father of modern sociology. He gave the science of sociology its name and applied the methods of the natural science to the study of society.

Sociological Perspectives		
Outline	Key Thinkers	
Structural consensus approach to society. Believe that the institutions of society work together in order to maintain social cohesion and social order. They believe that society is similar to the human body – Organic Analogy.	Durkheim Parsons Merton	Functionalism
A structural conflict approach that believes that society is in conflict between the classes. They believe that the Bourgeoisie oppress the Proletariat through various social institutions without their full knowledge.	Marx Engels Althusser Gramsci	Marxism
A set of structural conflict approaches which see society as a conflict between men and women. They look at ways that women are oppressed/disadvantaged by various social institutions and the means by which equality can be achieved.	Oakley Firestone	Feminism
A micro set of approaches which look at how the individual influences their society through their interactions with others and the social institutions. Interactionism includes Phenomenology, Ethnomethodology, Social Action theory and Symbolic interactionism	Goffman Cooley Weber	Interactionism
A broad approach which sees society in a more diverse and less structured way. They believe that people have much more choice which means that they shape their reality and culture to their own needs.	Lyotard Baudillard Foucault Giddens	Postmodernism

KNOWLEDGE CHECK QUESTIONS.



Complete the following questions firstly without your notes and then check using your notes.

Define and give an example of a social norm.

Who is August Comte?

What are the conflict perspectives?

What is meant by the term sociological perspective?

What is meant by socialisation?

What does CADGES stand for?

Define the term sociology.

What are the four main types of feminism?

Define and give an example of a social value.

Define and give an example of a social institution.

A consensus theory is one which believes that the institutions of society are working together to maintain social cohesion and stability.
A structural theory is one which looks at how the social institutions influence the running of society and individuals behaviours.
Value Consensus means that a majority of society agree with the goals that society sets to show success.
Anomie means a feeling of normlessness where a person doesn't know what it means to be normal within society.
What are Social Facts and who is the key thinker?
Durkheim Social facts are things such as institutions, norms and values which exist external to the individual and constrain the individual.
Durkheim's Ideas of Society
1 Society shapes the individual it is a top down theory where the institutions of society influence the behaviour of the individual.
2 Social solidarity socialisation and anomie. Social solidarity and cohesion is achieved and maintained through socialisation process and learning of norms and values. Without this society can fall into anomie (Normlessness)

	What is the Organic Analogy and who used it? Talcott Parsons Society acts in a similar way to the human body through the way that social institutions interact in the same way as human organs. Three similarities between society and biological organisms.
1 System: Society and humans are systems of interconnected and inter-dependent parts which function for the good of the whole.	
2 System needs: Organisms like the human body have needs that need to be met and so does society. Social institutions have evolved to meet society's needs.	
3 Functions: Just as the organs of the body function for the good of the whole so do social institutions, which have evolved functions which benefit society as a whole.	
Two means of maintaining value consensus and social order	
1 Formal Social Control – Official groups who enforce societies laws, such as CJS and the Police.	
2 Informal Social Control – Other social groups such as family and peers who keep us in line through punishment and ostracization.	
The Four Basic needs of society	
G Goal Attainment (Political Function) – Societies set goals and decisions about how power and economic resources are allocated.	
A Adaptation (Economic Function) – every society has to provide for the needs of its members in order of the society survive.	
I Integration (Social Harmony) – specialist institutions develop to reduce conflict in society. For example education and media create sense of belonging.	
L Latency: The unstated consequences of actions – there are 2 types of latency: Pattern Maintenance: Maintaining value consensus through socialisation and Tension Management: Opportunities to release tension in a safe way.	

Internal Criticisms of Functionalism	Key Thinker Robert K. Merton Three Main Criticisms of Parson's Assumptions
1	Indispensability – not all social institutions are functionally indispensable and that there are functional alternatives. For example the family are not the only institution that can perform primary socialisation.
2	Functional Unity – Not all social institutions are a tightly linked as Parsons suggests. Some institutions are quite far removed from each other. For example the rules of banking and Education.
3	Universal Functionalism – Not all the institutions of society perform a positive function for society, instead for some people they are dysfunctional, for example domestic abuse makes the family dysfunctional for its members.
	A Manifest Function is the intended function of a social institution. An example of a manifest function is the rain dance performed by the Hopi Indians with the intention of making it rain. A Latent Function is the unintended function of a social institution. An example of a latent function is also shown by the Hopi Indians, the rain dance also helps to maintain social solidarity

External Criticisms of Functionalism	Logical Criticisms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The theory is teleological – a thing exists because of its function or effect. Contradictory – how can something be both functional and dysfunctional Unscientific – impossible to falsify or verify the theory. 	
	Conflict Perspective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable to explain conflict and change in society. It is a conservative ideology that tries to maintain the status quo. Legitimises the position of the powerful. 	
	Action Perspective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wrong (1961) – Functionalism is deterministic Functionalism reifies society – treating it as a distinct 'thing' 	
	Postmodern Perspective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable to explain diversity and instability in society. Functionalism is outdated due to being a meta-narrative. 	



KNOWLEDGE CHECK QUESTIONS.

Complete the following questions firstly without your notes and then check using your notes.

With which sociologist is the GAIL schema associated?

What is meant by a latent function?

What is meant by the term organic analogy?

What does GAIL stand for?

Give one criticism of the functionalist view of society according to the conflict perspective.

What did Durkheim mean by social facts?

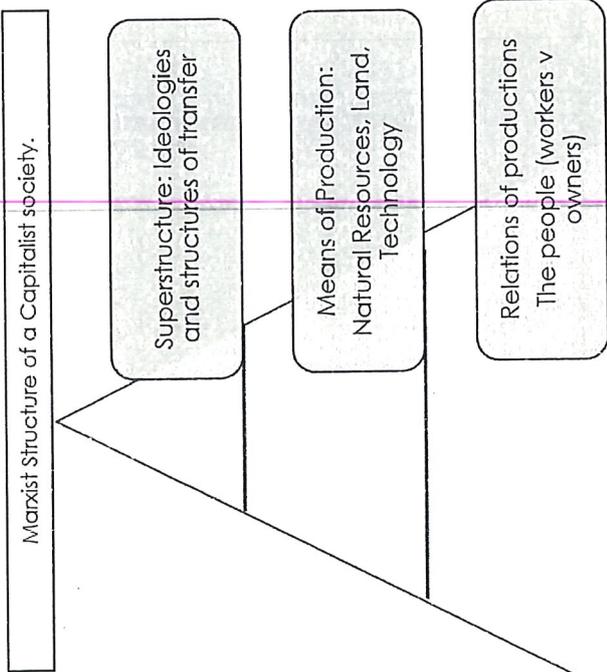
What is meant by a consensus theory?

Which sociologist provides internal criticisms of functionalism?

Give one criticism of functionalism according to the Postmodernists.

What is meant by the term structural differentiation?

A conflict theory is a theory that suggest that society is in conflict between certain groups. In the case of Marxism the conflict is between social classes.
Bourgeoisie means the owners of the means of production and the ruling class.
Proletariat means the workers who are the relations of production and are oppressed by the bourgeoisie.
Alienation means the process whereby the worker is made to feel foreign to the products of his/her own labor.
False Class Consciousness means the way that the proletariat is led to believe their oppression by the bourgeoisie is normal and that if they work hard they can become the bourgeoisie.



Evaluation of Marxism	
Over Simplified	Marx focuses solely on class divisions within society but Weber suggest that inequality can be caused by power and status independently of class structures. Feminists would also argue that there is more inequality between genders than there is between classes. The two class system is also over simplistic – it is currently suggested that there are 7 different classes within British society.
Economic Determinism	Marx's whole system is based on economics, and the view that economic factors are the sole cause of everything in society, from inequality to social change. Weber argues that Marxism completely ignores the role of ideas in social change – e.g. Calvinism's role in the rise of capitalism.
Lack of Revolution	The biggest criticism of Marxism is that the revolution that he said would cause the development to a communist society has yet to occur and Marx was very vague on the conditions that would eventually lead to this revolution. Marx also suggested that revolution would occur in the most advance capitalist societies and yet it has been the most backward countries (Russia and Cuba) that have seen Marxist revolutions.
Out of date	Capitalism has become es exploitative then it was during the industrial revolution. Keynesian Economics has led to more government oversight of businesses and the development of welfare states. A number of social institutions have become autonomous from the bourgeoisie – e.g. the media have become critical of the elite.

The features of Capitalist Society .	The features of Communist Society .
1 The proletariat are legally free and separated from the means of production	1 Collective ownership of the means of production and abolish of production for profit.
2 Competition between capitalists lead to the means of production becoming concentrated.	2 Stateless and Classless society -
3 The proletariat do not receive the value of their goods that their labour produces, but only the cost of subsistence.	3 Reclaiming control over the workers labour and products they create (end alienation)

	Five Stages of society according to Marx
	1 Primitive communism – Classless society
2	Feudal Society – Landowners V Peasants
3	Capitalist Society – Bourgeoisie V Proletariat
4	Socialism – Government Owners V Workers
5	Communism – Classless Society



KNOWLEDGE CHECK QUESTIONS.

Complete the following questions firstly without your notes and then check using your notes.

What is meant by the term alienation?

What are the three successive forms of society?

Identify 2 criticisms of Marxism

What is meant by false consciousness?

What is historical materialism?

What is the superstructure?

In what two ways does Marxism differ from Functionalism?

What is the economic base?

Which two countries can be used as examples of having Marxist revolutions?

What terms does Marx use for the Ruling Class?

Type	Outline	Thinkers	Evaluation
Liberal Feminism	Believes that equality should be brought about through education and policy changes. They try to change the system from within.	Anne Oakley Sue Sharpe	Overly Optimistic about the amount of progress that has been made. Deals with the effects of patriarchy not the causes. Gives other forms of feminism a bad reputation. In this theory gender equality is never full achieved.
Radical Feminism	Believe equality can only be achieved through gender separation and political lesbianism. Change is brought about through protest and violence.	Germaine Greer	Revolution is required for equality and it hasn't happened yet. Patriarchy exists in non-capitalist societies. It is men not capitalism that benefit from women's oppression.
Marxist Feminism	Believe that capitalism is the cause of women's oppression and that this oppression helps to reinforce capitalism. This is done in three ways: Women as reserve work force. Creation of the next gen of workers. Cushioning Effect – Zaretsky	Michèle Bartlett	Focuses on the minutia of oppression which lessens the impact and power in feminism as a whole.
Intersectional Feminism	Believes that other feminisms create a false universality of women's oppression, based on the experiences of western, middle class white women. Different groups of women will experience oppression differently and each of these experiences needs to be	Judith Butler	Patriarchy is not at system in the same way as capitalism instead it is a descriptive term for practices such as male violence and control of women's labour.
Dual systems Feminism	Combines the ideas of the radical and Marxist feminists, and suggests that women are oppressed by two different systems: Capitalism and Patriarchy	Heidi Hartman Sylvia Walby	

6 Structures of Patriarchy - Walby	
1	The state: govt run by men so policies and laws tend to favour men's interests.
2	Violence: Men are able to use their physicality to intimidate women.
3	Domestic Labour: Women still complete the majority of domestic labour even though there is no reason for this.
4	Paid Work: Women earn less than men and they are overwhelmingly in low paid and part time work.
5	Sexuality: The difference in how men and women's sexuality is perceived. Women are sluts, men are players.
6	Culture: portrayal of women in culture and the media is often in a sexual way or in a way that reinforces women's lower status.
General Features of Feminism	
1	There are inequalities between men and women based on power and status.
2	Inequalities create conflict between men and women.
3	Gender roles and inequalities are generally socially constructed.
4	The importance of the concept of patriarchy: A system of social structures and practices which men dominate, oppress and exploit women.

Feminism in general means the belief in the social, economic, and political equality of the sexes.
Malestream means viewing social phenomena mainstream and usual, from the point of view of the man, without regard to gender.
Patriarchy means male dominance over women.
Three Waves of Feminism
1 Early 1900's Suffragettes striving for women's votes. Emmeline Pankhurst
2 1960's "Private made Political" – Gloria Steinem Binging women's issues into the public sphere such as abortion, contraception and domestic violence.
3 1990's #HeForShe, #MeToo Focus on issues such as gender representations in the media and sexual harassment.



KNOWLEDGE CHECK QUESTIONS.

Complete the following questions firstly without your notes and then check using your notes.

What is meant by malestream sociology?

What is the difference between sex and gender?

What is meant by the term patriarchy?

What is political lesbianism?

Which form of feminism suggests education and legal reforms are necessary for equality?

What is intersectional feminism also known as?

Which two concepts do dual systems feminists see as interconnected in the oppression of women?

According to radical feminists how will equality be achieved?

Name 3 ways in which the oppression of women aids capitalism.

Give two criticisms of feminist views of society.

CONSOLIDATION:

Read through the extract and answer the questions that follow.



Reclaiming the F Word (2010)

Source: Haralambous and Holborn (2013)

In their book "Reclaiming the F Word" Catherine Redfern and Kirsten Aune (2010) Argue that while there has been some progress on the demands of the Second wave feminists from the 1970's, there is still much for the third wave to feminist to achieve before women are fully liberated. They suggest seven areas in which contemporary feminists need to campaign for improvements.

1. Liberated Bodies

In the poorer global South, over 500,00 women die each year in pregnancy and childbirth. The lack of health care provision in some places means that women are suffering from rising HIV. Furthermore, there is a very strong pressure on women to conform to beauty ideals promoted in the media.

2. Sexual Freedom and Choice

Cultural practices and inequalities in power continue to limit women's sexual freedom. Furthermore, sexual double standards in which female promiscuity is condemned much more than male promiscuity continue. They also believe that there continues to be significant discrimination against LGBTQ+ people.

3. An end to violence against women

Redfern and Aune provide ample evidence that violence against women continues to be commonplace. In the UK, Home Office estimates suggest that 21% of girls experience some form of sexual abuse as children, while 23% of adult women are sexually assaulted in their lifetime. About one in 20 women, according to the Home Office figures, are likely to be raped in the UK during their lives.

4. Equality at work and at home

While there have been gains for women in the workplace, women are still significantly disadvantaged both in the UK and elsewhere. They argue that women still experience a glass ceiling, finding it hard to be promoted to the top positions in any sphere. As evidence, they quote an example showing that only about one in 11 of the directors of the UK's top companies are women. There are also still significant differences in the amounts of unpaid housework and caring done by men and women.

5. Politics and Religion transformed.

Women are underrepresented in parliaments and in senior political positions in nearly all countries. As of October 2019, the global participation rate of **women** in national-level parliaments is 24.5%. In 2013, women accounted for 8% of all national leaders and 2% of all presidential posts. Redfern and Aune also highlight the lack of power women have in many religions.

6. Popular culture free from sexism

Redfern and Aune identify many ways in which popular culture can be seen as sexist: they report that in 2008, of the 64 band members in the indie chart top 30 only four were women. They discuss "the highlight sexist content of song lyrics" citing Robin Thicke's blurred lines as an extreme example of misogyny and sexualisation.

7. Feminism reclaimed (Redfern and Aune, 2010)

Redfern and Aune finally demand that feminism is reclaimed. They argue that using the "F-Word" (feminism) should no longer be taboo and any negative connotations it has taken on for young women should be challenged and rejected.

QUESTIONS

1. Which of the different types of feminism would be most closely aligned with each of Redfern and Aune's demands? Explain your answer.
2. Rank each of the demands in order of what you think is the most important / urgent to the least important / urgent and explain your reasoning.
3. Redfern and Aune's study was published in 2010, to what extent do you think the issues they have raised are still relevant today?

Part 3 - Culture, norms and values

A - What is culture?

One possible sociological definition might be: **The ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society.** The word 'culture' comes from the Latin *cultura*, meaning 'cultivation'. Through the Middle Ages it was used as an agricultural term. In the seventeenth century the term 'culture' began to be used in relation to the betterment of individuals through education. It was later used to refer to peoples or nations. Today, the concept has become broader still and is now used widely in everyday life to refer to a way of life.

1. Using your own words, define culture.
2. How does someone acquire culture?
3. How might a person express their particular culture?

B - Norms and values

Norms can be defined as what is considered to be normal behaviour. They provide guidelines for acceptable behaviour in certain social situations.

Values are beliefs, which a person feels are important to them.

Norms and values are present in all societies and play a large role in shaping the culture of a group.

Sort the following statements into norms, values or both.

1. Waiting in a queue rather than simply pushing to the front.
2. Holding the door open for someone.
3. The idea that it is wrong to kill another person.
4. Boys wearing trousers and not skirts.
5. The belief that it is wrong to take other people's property.
6. Good manners, for example, saying thank you for something.
7. Using a knife and fork to eat with.

Next, take three examples from the list above and explain what happens if these norms or values are ignored by individuals. What are the consequences?

1.

2.

3.

1. What does this activity tell us about the importance of norms and values in society?

2. Does everyone in your own society agree on shared norms and values?

3. What are some of the possible consequences of there not being agreement over shared norms and values?

4. What problems do you think a sociologist might have in trying to understand another culture?

5. Briefly outline how the following factors may influence the norms and values held by an individual. You should include specific examples to support your explanation.

<u>Factor</u>	<u>Explanation</u>	<u>Examples</u>
Social class		

Age		
Gender		
Ethnicity		

Part 4 Research methods: How do sociologists study society? (page 12)

1. Why is evidence important to sociologists? List as many reasons you can think of

2. Describe three research methods that sociologists use. For each one, suggest an issue with using that method.

3. Researching different groups and issues in Society can be challenging for sociologists for a number of reasons. An important area of the specification will assess your understanding of how research methods have been used to study society and the strengths and weaknesses associated with each of these techniques. For each of the scenarios below, identify some challenges of researching the individuals as well as the topic.

Research topic	Challenges of researching this topic	Challenges of researching this sample (the people involved)
<p>A sociologist is researching cultural practices adopted by different cultural groups living in the UK e.g. polygamy, arranged marriages</p>		
<p>A sociologist is interested in understanding the reasons for why students from low income backgrounds underperform within the education system</p>		
<p>A sociologist is interested in researching how the criminal justice system deal with white collar crime</p>		
<p>A sociologist is interested in understanding the reasons why some individuals choose to join deviant sects or cults</p>		