



Meridian
Trust

Curriculum Overview

Sociology



Curriculum Overview

Key Stage 4

Curriculum Aims

Sociology is the study of society. During key stage four, students will explore social structures through the concepts of families, social class, politics, education, crime and deviance and social stratification. Students will develop their knowledge in the role they all play in determining how we live our lives in the UK today. The GCSE gives a clear contemporary awareness of issues facing society both past and present and develops students extended writing skills. Sociology at key stage four enables students to gain a wider understanding of various topics and apply these to real life situations. GCSE Sociology allows students to become more confident in the skills learnt at KS3 subjects and develops their analytical and communication skills by comparing and contrasting perspectives on a variety of social issues, constructing reasoned arguments. By studying sociology, students will develop transferable skills including research skills, develop opinions and new ideas on social issues, and analyse and better understand the social world.



Key Curriculum Content

Our academies either run the GCSE as the exam board AQA or WJEC. You can find this out from your academies directly. Both courses are very similar in content and provide a broad spectrum of an introduction to sociology.



AQA Sociology

[AQA GCSE Sociology Specification](#)

In year 9:

- **Introduction to Sociology** – the basic key concepts and key theories like Functionalism, Marxism and Feminism.
- **Research Methods** – how Sociologists carry out their research and collect and analyse data.
- **Families** – diversity, theories and changing structure of families.

In year 10:

- **Education** – A continuation from year 9; gender and attainment, sociological theory.
- **Research methods** – how sociologists collect and analyse data.
- **Social stratification and differentiation.**

In year 11:

- **Crime and deviance** – agencies of social control, links of gender and crime, the Stephen Lawrence case study.
- **Exam skills** – AO1/AO2/AO3 skills, essay structures, revision.

WJEC Sociology

[WJEC GCSE Sociology Specification](#)

In year 9:

- **Key concepts and cultural processes** – The meaning of culture, norms, values, socialization, the nature vs nurture debate.
- **Families and households** – Types of family, changes in marriage, changes in divorce, changing role of childhood.
- **Education** – effect of social class, differences in ethnic groups.

Typical Curriculum Allocation:
4-5 lessons per fortnight

In year 10:

- **Education** – A continuation from year 9; gender and attainment, sociological theory.
- **Research methods** – how sociologists collect and analyse data.
- **Social stratification and differentiation.**

In year 11:

- **Crime and deviance** – agencies of social control, links of gender and crime, the Stephen Lawrence case study.
- **Exam skills** – AO1/AO2/AO3 skills, essay structures, revision.



How are students taught and assessed?

This is a holistic course; each unit will interact with other units. Several approaches are taken to the delivery of the course; these include using resources from the recommended textbook, PowerPoints, up to date documentaries / news clips and contemporary articles. Students are able to research information individually and collaboratively in groups, discussing issues and developing ideas together in groups as well as teacher led lessons. Learners show development in their social and communication skills by making presentations and explaining their arguments to others. Many topics covered can be thought provoking, and discussions lead to improved attitudes to working with others and in general society, creating well rounded individuals. Regular feedback (depending on the departments marking policy) will take a few forms including specific Close the Gap activities, praise points, and stamps. Students will be encouraged to respond to feedback, and correct their spelling, punctuation, and grammar on a regular basis.

Homework will be set regularly depending on the individual department's approach, these include specific exam style questions, independent research and tasks in revision books and completing worksheets relating to content learnt to consolidate learning. Students are regularly assessed after each topic to ensure they have understood the content taught and the way in which they will be asked questions in the exam. This also allows time for misconceptions to be allayed through subject intervention or through academic mentoring. Teachers will also use exam style questions throughout the course with writing frames / structures to encourage the correct way to answer specific types of question.

The final GCSE – AQA Sociology

Students are examined across two papers, all sat at the end of year 11:

- Paper 1: The sociology of families and education – exam 1 hr 45mins
- Paper 2: The sociology of crime and deviance and social stratification – exam 1 hr 45mins

The final GCSE – WJEC Sociology:

Students are examined across two papers, all sat at the end of year 11:

- Paper 1: Understanding social processes – exam 1hr 45 mins
- Paper 2: Understanding social structures – exam 1 hr 45mins





Curriculum Overview

Key Stage 5

Curriculum Aims

Our Sociology A-Level curriculum is built upon the AQA specification in most academies, though some do adopt the OCR specification. This A-level is designed to focus on contemporary society and foster the development of critical and reflective thinking with a respect for social diversity. We encourage students to apply perspectives and criticise ideas while being aware of the importance of social structure and social action in explaining social issues. We don't just expect students to learn these issues, but instead to appreciate the complexities in society and use this knowledge to build an understanding that will shape their future. The course complements many other A-level subjects for its contemplative and critical nature of study and favoured by many higher education providers.



Key Curriculum Content

Our academies either run the A-Level as the exam board AQA or OCR. You can find this out from your academies directly. Both courses are similar in content and provide a broad spectrum of an A-Level in sociology

AQA A-Level: [Specification: AQA A-Level](#)

The typical curriculum in the sixth form would run as follows

Year 12 –

- **Education** – including theories of the education system, trends in achievement, organisation of teaching and learning and educational policies.
- **Research methods** – A variety of methods studied referring to how sociology is researched in the real world.
- **(Topic option 1) Families and households** – social structure of the family, marriage and divorce, gender roles, childhood and demographic trends within families and households.

Year 13 –

- **(Topic option 2) Beliefs in society** – ideology, science and religion, social stability, religious organisations and cults, relationships between different groups and religiosity in contemporary society.
- **Crime and deviance** – definitions, social control, distribution by demography, globalisation and crime control and surveillance
- **Theory and methods** – Using knowledge of research methods and applying to sociological perspectives.



The typical curriculum in the sixth form would run as follows:

Year 12 –

- **Culture, society, and identity** – introducing socialisation, culture, and identity.
- **Youth subcultures** – youth as an important period in the socialisation process when individuals are developing a sense of identity within their peer groups.
- **Inequality and gender** – contemporary patterns and trends of social inequality specific to gender
- **Research methods** – A range of methods and sources of data as well as the factors influencing the design of sociological research and the relationship between theory and methods

Year 13 –

- **Globalisation** – what globalisation is and digital forms of communication.
- **Crime and deviance** – The social construction of crime and deviance are considered and the ways in which crime is socially distributed, explained, and reduced.
- **Inequalities and ethnicity** – contemporary patterns and trends of social inequality specific to ethnicity.
- **Inequality and age** – contemporary patterns and trends of social inequality specific to age.

Typical Curriculum Allocation:
9-10 lessons per fortnight



How are students taught and assessed?

Students are regularly assessed after each topic to ensure they have understood the content taught and the way in which they will be asked questions in the exam. Teachers will also use exam style questions throughout the course with writing frames / structures to encourage the correct way to answer specific types of question.

Regular feedback (depending on the departments marking policy) will take several forms including specific Close the Gap activities, stickers and stamps. Students will be encouraged to check and correct their spelling, punctuation, and grammar on a regular basis.

Homework will take a variety of forms, depending on the individual department's approach, these include specific exam style questions, independent research and tasks in revision books. Homework tasks may also re-visit and test prior knowledge.

The final A-Level – AQA Sociology

Students are examined across three papers, all sat at the end of year 13:

- Paper 1: Education and theory and methods – 2 hours
- Paper 2: Topics in Sociology – 2 hours

- Paper 3 – Crime and deviance – 2 hours

The final A-Level – OCR Sociology:

Students are examined across three papers, all sat at the end of year 13:

- Paper 1: Socialisation, culture, and identity – 1 hour 30 minutes
- Paper 2: Researching and understanding social inequalities – 2 hours 15 minutes
- Paper 3: Debates in contemporary society – 2 hours 15 minutes

Curriculum Overview

Enrichment

Beyond the classroom

Students are taught a lot about the extent to which society behaves, so having the opportunity to see this first-hand adds to the enrichment of their learning of sociology. Students have the opportunity to visit a variety of relevant establishments and institutions. For example, most schools are able to organise visits to Shrewsbury prison, Cambridgeshire Rape crisis team, Luton crown court visits, and hopefully more exciting trips relevant to the topics students are covering. Students are also able to experience professionals coming into school delivering sessions in a specialist area. This is usually done every term. These include Cambridgeshire County Councils exploitation team, police teams and a crime scene investigation team. The enrichment within sociology is broad in order to show students how accessible the subject is in society.

As well as trips and visits beyond classroom learning, we also support student learning through providing supplementary curriculum support. This includes after school revision support and drop-ins, gifted sessions every half term and Sociology mentors which involve A-Level students supporting GCSE groups.







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