

# AQA A2 SOCIOLOGY SPECIFICATION

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## **Paper 1: 4.1 Education with Theory and Methods**

The study of the topics in this paper should engage students in theoretical debate while encouraging an active involvement with the research process.

The study should foster a critical awareness of contemporary social processes and change, and draw together the knowledge, understanding and skills learnt in different aspects of the course.

In their study of the topics, students should examine:

- Topic areas in relation to the two core themes (socialisation, culture and identity; and social differentiation, power and stratification)
- Both the evidence of and the sociological explanations for the content listed in the topic areas below.

### **4.1.1 Education**

Students are expected to be familiar with sociological explanations of the following content:

- The role and functions of the education system, including its relationship to the economy and to class structure
- Differential educational achievement of social groups by social class, gender and ethnicity in contemporary society
- Relationships and processes within schools, with particular reference to teacher/pupil relationships, pupil identities and subcultures, the hidden curriculum, and the organisation of teaching and learning
- The significance of educational policies, including policies of selection, marketisation and privatisation, and policies to achieve greater equality of opportunity or outcome, for an understanding of the structure, role, impact and experience of and access to education; the impact of globalisation on educational policy.

### **4.1.2 Methods in Context**

Students must be able to apply sociological research methods to the study of education.

### **4.1.3 Theory and Methods**

Students must examine the following areas:

- Quantitative and qualitative methods of research; research design

- Sources of data, including questionnaires, interviews, participant and non-participant observation, experiments, documents and official statistics
  - The distinction between primary and secondary data, and between quantitative and qualitative data
  - The relationship between positivism, interpretivism and sociological methods; the nature of 'social facts'
  - The theoretical, practical and ethical considerations influencing choice of topic, choice of method(s) and the conduct of research
  - Consensus, conflict, structural and social action theories
  - The concepts of modernity and post-modernity in relation to sociological theory
  - The nature of science and the extent to which Sociology can be regarded as scientific
  - The relationship between theory and methods
  - Debates about subjectivity, objectivity and value freedom
  - The relationship between Sociology and social policy.
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## **Paper 2: 4.2 Topics in Sociology**

### **4.2.2 Families and Households**

Students are expected to be familiar with sociological explanations of the following content:

- The relationship of the family to the social structure and social change, with particular reference to the economy and to state policies
  - Changing patterns of marriage, cohabitation, separation, divorce, childbearing and the life course, including the sociology of personal life, and the diversity of contemporary family and household structures
  - Gender roles, domestic labour and power relationships within the family in contemporary society
  - The nature of childhood, and changes in the status of children in the family and society
  - Demographic trends in the United Kingdom since 1900: birth rates, death rates, family size, life expectancy, ageing population, and migration and globalisation.
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#### **4.2.5 Beliefs in Society**

Students are expected to be familiar with sociological explanations of the following content:

- Ideology, science and religion, including both Christian and non-Christian religious traditions
- The relationship between social change and social stability, and religious beliefs, practices and organisations
- Religious organisations, including cults, sects, denominations, churches and New Age movements, and their relationship to religious and spiritual belief and practice
- The relationship between different social groups and religious/spiritual organisations and movements, beliefs and practices
- The significance of religion and religiosity in the contemporary world, including the nature and extent of secularisation in a global context, and globalisation and the spread of religions.

#### **Paper 3: 4.3 Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods**

The study of the topics in this paper should engage students in theoretical debate while encouraging an active involvement with the research process.

The study should foster a critical awareness of contemporary social processes and change, and draw together the knowledge, understanding and skills learnt in different aspects of the course.

In their study of this topic, students should examine:

- Topic areas in relation to the two core themes (socialisation, culture and identity; and social differentiation, power and stratification)
- Both the evidence of and the sociological explanations for the content listed in the topic areas below.

Throughout, students should be encouraged to use examples drawn from their own experience of small-scale research.

Attention should be given to drawing out links with other topics studied in this specification.

#### **4.3.1 Crime and Deviance**

Students are expected to be familiar with sociological explanations of the following content:

- Crime, deviance, social order and social control
- The social distribution of crime and deviance by ethnicity, gender and social class, including recent patterns and trends in crime

- Globalisation and crime in contemporary society; the media and crime; green crime; human rights and state crimes
- Crime control, surveillance, prevention and punishment, victims, and the role of the criminal justice system and other agencies.

#### **4.3.2 Theory and Methods**

Students must examine the following areas:

- Quantitative and qualitative methods of research; research design
- Sources of data, including questionnaires, interviews, participant and non-participant observation, experiments, documents and official statistics
- The distinction between primary and secondary data, and between quantitative and qualitative data
- The relationship between positivism, interpretivism and sociological methods; the nature of 'social facts'
- The theoretical, practical and ethical considerations influencing choice of topic, choice of method(s) and the conduct of research
- Consensus, conflict, structural and social action theories
- The concepts of modernity and post-modernity in relation to sociological theory
- The nature of science and the extent to which Sociology can be regarded as scientific
- The relationship between theory and methods
- Debates about subjectivity, objectivity and value freedom
- The relationship between Sociology and social policy