



# Sociology GCSE

REVISION GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

JONATHAN TRIDGELL

## Contents (Click a topic)

HOW IS THE COURSE STRUCTURED? .....	3
Paper 1: Sociology Basics (25% of the course).....	3
Paper 2: Socialisation, Culture and Identity (50% of the course) .....	3
Paper 3: Applying Sociological Research Techniques (25% of the course).....	3
Exam Technique .....	4
PAPER 1: Sociology Basics (Research Methods and Concepts) – 25%.....	4
PAPER 2: Socialisation, Culture and Identity (Family, Education and Mass Media) – 50% .....	4
PAPER 3: Applying Sociological Research Techniques - 25% .....	6
FOUR TOP TIPS.....	7
Paper 1: Sociology Basics .....	8
SECTION A: Research Methods and Evidence.....	8
THE RESEARCH PROCESS.....	8
PRIMARY RESEARCH METHODS .....	9
SAMPLING METHODS.....	13
FACTORS AFFECTING RESEARCH.....	15
TYPES OF STUDY.....	15
EVALUATING DATA .....	16
SECONDARY EVIDENCE .....	16
SECTION B: Key Concepts in Sociology .....	18
SOCIALISATION.....	18
IDENTITY.....	19
DIVERSITY .....	21
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOCIALISATION.....	22
AGENTS OF SOCIALISATION .....	23
AGENTS OF SOCIAL CONTROL.....	26
GENDER.....	27
Paper 2: Socialisation, Culture and Identity.....	32
SECTION A: The Sociology of the Family .....	32
THE PURPOSE AND FUNCTION OF THE FAMILY .....	33
THE TRADITIONAL FAMILY .....	34
CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND THE FAMILY .....	35
CHANGES TO THE BRITISH FAMILY .....	36
FAMILY DEMOGRAPHICS .....	38

CONJUGAL ROLES.....	39
THE DARK SIDE OF THE FAMILY .....	40
ALTERNATIVES TO THE FAMILY.....	41
SECTION B: The Sociology of Education.....	42
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION? .....	42
TYPES OF SCHOOL .....	45
CHANGES IN EDUCATION?.....	47
ACHIEVEMENT.....	48
SOCIAL CLASS AND ACHIEVEMENT .....	49
ETHNICITY AND ACHIEVEMENT .....	50
GENDER AND ACHIEVEMENT .....	51
OTHER FACTORS AND ACHIEVEMENT .....	53
SECTION C: The Sociology of the Mass Media .....	55
PURPOSE OF THE MASS MEDIA .....	55
AGENT OF SOCIALISATION .....	56
AGENT OF SOCIAL CONTROL .....	58
CHANGES TO THE MASS MEDIA.....	58
CONTROLLING CONTENT .....	60
STEREOTYPES AND THE MASS MEDIA .....	61
THE AUDIENCE AND THE MASS MEDIA .....	63
Paper 3: Applying Sociological Research Techniques .....	65

## HOW IS THE COURSE STRUCTURED?

GCSE Sociology is assessed in three exams at the end of Year 11.

### Paper 1: Sociology Basics (25% of the course)

Sociology Basics introduces you to the key elements of Sociology thinking and research practice. For this exam you need to know the key terms for Sociology as well as how gender identity is socialised and the processes for carrying out sociological research. The exam is one hour long and has two sections:

- Section A: Research Methods & Evidence
- Section B: Key Concepts in Sociology

### Paper 2: Socialisation, Culture and Identity (50% of the course)

This unit is also known as Sociology Topics. In this unit you study three areas of sociology. For each of them you need to be able to explain and assess their purpose and function, how they have changed and their relationships to specific groups in society (or demographics). The three topics we study are:

- Sociology of the Family
- Sociology of Education
- Sociology of the Mass Media

This exam is one and a half hours long so you would spend thirty minutes on each section. It is important to remember that you should not answer questions on any of the other topics on the paper!

### Paper 3: Applying Sociological Research Techniques (25% of the course)

This paper expects you to apply your knowledge of research methods and evidence (as learned for Paper 1) to a pre-released pair of sociological investigations. This exam is one hour long and will ask you questions on the pre-release and to explain how it could be improved.

## Exam Technique

### PAPER 1: Sociology Basics (Research Methods and Concepts) – 25%

This is made up of a series of 1 and 2 Markers and two 12 Markers. You should expect to spend a minute per mark in this paper.

#### **1 Mark Questions: CRITERIA**

These answers should be brief – no more than a sentence. Where possible, sociological language should be used.

#### **2 Mark Questions: CRITERIA**

These answers should be more developed. They may be 2 sentences and should definitely use sociological language and an example to show understanding.

#### **Question 5 (12 Marks): CRITERIA:**

- You will be asked to design a piece of research for a specific hypothesis. To do this you will need to ensure you include everything on this list provided by the exam board.
- Your research methods, sampling methods, secondary evidence and the potential problems with the design must all be linked back to the hypothesis

#### **Question 9 (12 Marks): CRITERIA:**

- This is an essay question. You will need to include an introduction, argument for, argument against and a conclusion.
- You will need to make sure your opinion is laid out clearly.
- To be successful you need to have two or three arguments for and against the claim. Excellent answers will criticise each argument directly using words like ‘however.’

### PAPER 2: Socialisation, Culture and Identity (Family, Education and Mass Media) – 50%

#### **Source Questions (4 Marks): Criteria:**

This will ask you to analyse a source in the exam paper and then to use your wider sociological knowledge. Answers should be brief (each sub-question is worth 1 mark) and be answered after you have read the source. You should spend 3-4 minutes here.

#### **Key Terms Questions (4 Marks): CRITERIA:**

You need to just write out the correct key term that matches the definition given on the paper. There is a list of key terms to choose from. Read the definitions carefully. You should spend 3-4 minutes here.

### 8 Mark Questions: CRITERIA:

You should spend about 7 minutes on this.

- You must give two separate reasons. It is sensible to lay this out as two distinct paragraphs and use opening sentences like “One reason is...” And “A second reason is...”
- Each reason to be **sociological** and to be fully explained, avoiding ‘common sense’ reasons.
- Understanding should be demonstrated with an example
- There should be **no** evaluation in this answer. Any evaluation will not be marked.
- Only two reasons should be marked. A third reason should be discarded. Where there is only one reason, the maximum mark is 4/8.

### 24 Mark Questions: CRITERIA:

You should spend 15 minutes on this. This is an essay question so needs an introduction, argument for, argument against and a conclusion.

Excellent essays will have evaluation throughout. This means that every statement made will follow the same format: Point, Example/Evidence, Evaluation.

<b>AO1: Knowledge and Understanding (8)</b>	<b>AO2: Application of Knowledge (8)</b>	<b>AO3: Analysis and Evaluation (8)</b>
Top Level AO1 answers will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be accurate</li><li>• Demonstrate wide sociological understanding of the topic</li><li>• A good grasp of sociological language and concepts.</li><li>• Apply sociological theory (e.g. Marxism) and thinkers to the debate</li><li>• Include only relevant information that has been expressed clearly.</li></ul>	Top Level AO2 answers will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clearly answer the question - every point should be clearly linked to it.</li><li>• Each claim fully developed – statements should be extended using words like ‘because.’</li><li>• All claims to be backed up with examples or specific evidence to show a wide ranging understanding</li></ul>	Top Level AO3 answers will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make a clear argument from the beginning of the essay, showing whether the claim is correct.</li><li>• Clearly lay out a range (three or four) of reasons for the claim that have been evaluated.</li><li>• Clearly lay out a range (three or four) of reasons against the claim that have been evaluated.</li><li>• Finish with a clear conclusion</li></ul>

## PAPER 3: Applying Sociological Research Techniques - 25%

This is made up of a range of short questions on the Pre-Release and extended question on how you would improve one or both of the Investigations in the Pre-Release.

For this paper you need to carefully read the question and wherever possible quote from or directly use the Pre-Release. You should spend one minute per mark in this assessment.

### **Section A (24 Marks)**

This focuses on the first Investigation in the Pre-Release. This will be made up of 1,2,4 and 6 mark questions all asking you to use the Pre-Release and assess it using your wider sociological knowledge.

### **Section B (24 Marks)**

This focuses on the first Investigation in the Pre-Release. This will be made up of 1,2,4 and 6 mark questions all asking you to use the Pre-Release and assess it using your wider sociological knowledge.

### **Section C (12 Marks)**

This is a 12 mark question asking you to assess one of the Investigations in the Pre-Release or to compare the two Investigations, usually focusing on one element of research, such as sampling or ethics.

## FOUR TOP TIPS

### 1. KEY TERMS / SOCIOLOGICAL LANGUAGE

It is vital that before you sit your exams you have learned all of the key terms for this unit. These will be highlighted in **BOLD** throughout this revision guide. For Sociology Basics, you do need to know key terms as you will be expected to define them in answer to questions as well as using them in longer answers. For Paper 2, you will also be expected to be able to use sociology theory, such as Marxism and Functionalism.

### 2. ANSWER THE QUESTION

Read the questions **very carefully**. You need to make sure you are giving answers that are relevant to the question. Try and use the same language as the question in your answer. For example, if your 12 mark question is asking you about how good the peer group are at socialisation, use sentences like “The Peer Group is very effective at socialisation because...” or “this shows us that the Peer Group is not useful because...”

### 3. STICK TO TIMINGS

Make sure you have carefully learned exactly how long you need to spend on each question for the three exams. You need to make sure you have writing the amount you are expected to!

### 4. USE EVIDENCE

In Sociology, you need to ensure that you have relevant and accurate evidence. Don't just say that “some people think...” Try and name individuals or types of thinkers and always make sure you are using “because...” Evidence can be studies or examples or key ideas. When answering questions on sources, make sure that you use the source accurately – read it **VERY** carefully before writing anything down!





2. Write a **hypothesis**. This is a statement about what you expect to find out during your study. You will be trying to prove this correct so it must be a statement it would be possible to prove true or false. For example, a hypothesis might be that “Differences in achievement at GCSE are primarily the result of social class inequality.”
3. Review the literature. What have other sociologists done in this area already?
4. Select your **primary methods**. Good sociologists will attempt to use a blend of **qualitative** and **quantitative** research methods here. You would need to consider if this is an **ethical** study and what potential barriers you might face.
5. Select your **sample**. This is the group you are going to collect data from.
6. Carry out a **pilot study**. This is a smaller version of your research. You do this to see if the research will work.
7. Carry out your research using your sample group and then analyse your findings, writing this up in a report.
8. Evaluate your results. You would need to consider if they prove or disprove your hypothesis and how successful your research was.

## PRIMARY RESEARCH METHODS

### What is a Primary Research Method?

Primary Research refers to any research carried out as part of the study by the sociologist themselves. There are five main primary research methods that you have studied. For each you need to explain how it used, with examples, and explain its pros and cons (why it is useful and why it is not useful).

Sociologists usually use two or three Primary Research Methods along with some Secondary Evidence. This is called **triangulation**. This is because research based on different methods usually has more evidence and is therefore stronger. You should also try and ensure you have different types of data as well.

**Quantitative Data** is numerical. This means that it can be explained in graphs and charts and might be based on percentages. For example, you might find that 1 in 20 (or 5%) of a group believe one statement about society. This data is easier to analyse and is good for showing **trends** (that certain groups behave in a certain way in certain situations).

**Qualitative Data** is wordy. This means that it is not possible to put into graphs or numbers – it is collected through discussion, written answers and written observations. The sociologist has to consider the message/key ideas expressed in qualitative data and summarise it for use in their research. This is useful for developing our understanding of what a social agent means when they make a statement.

When deciding which method to use you must make sure that you consider why this method is particularly good for this hypothesis – be precise.

## PRIMARY RESEARCH METHOD 1: QUESTIONNAIRES

### What is a questionnaire?

A questionnaire is a list of written questions. These are usually completed by the respondent without supervision. These might be sent to respondents via post, email or social media, or handed out in person. However, sometimes they are done with the researcher present. There are two types of question used in a questionnaire:

1. **Closed** Questions: these collect quantitative data and will give the respondent a set range of answers. This can be a simple yes/no question or ask respondents to select answers from a field.
2. **Open** Question: these do not have a set field of answers. Open questions are more general and create qualitative data.

Most successful questionnaires will have several closed questions, which can be easily analysed, and one or two open questions that allow the researcher to fully investigate the respondent's views. Good questions should be impersonal and should be clear. Key concepts should be explained. Researchers need to avoid leading the respondent into specific or expected answers.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cheap, quick and easy to use</li><li>• Wide range of respondents</li><li>• Closed Qs used for statistics</li><li>• Standardised questions make it easier to compare answers</li><li>• Generally anonymous, so people may be more honest – avoids <b>interviewer bias</b>.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Low response rate</li><li>• Not always taken seriously or fully completed by respondents</li><li>• Closed questions can be not very insightful</li><li>• It could be completed incorrectly or by the wrong person due to lack of supervision/guidance</li></ul>

## PRIMARY RESEARCH METHOD 2: INTERVIEWS

### What is an interview?

This is when a researcher asks an individual directly. This can be done as part of a **focus group** or on a one-to-one basis. This may be done in person or over the phone or through social media. The data from an interview is largely qualitative. There are three main types of interview:

1. **Structured**: this is when the interviewer reads a list of questions and records the answers of the respondent. These questions might be open or closed.
2. **Unstructured**: this is when there are no pre-prepared questions. The interviewer and the respondent discuss and issue and ideas/comments are recorded.
3. **Semi-Structured**: this is when the interviewer has some pre-set questions, but does ask unplanned questions in response to the respondent's comments.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews have a much higher response rate than questionnaires</li> <li>• Allows us to elicit (draw out) more detail from respondents and explain any misconceptions.</li> <li>• Respondents can use their own ideas and words in answering.</li> <li>• Respondents are able to form a bond with the researcher, which can lead to more detail being shared.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Success depends on the skills and personality of the researcher</li> <li>• Time-consuming</li> <li>• Difficult to interview a large number of people</li> <li>• As you will have a small sample, this may not be representative</li> <li>• Interviewer bias (where the respondent changes to please the interviewer). This is linked to our wish to be <b>socially desirable</b>.</li> </ul>

### PRIMARY METHOD 3: OBSERVATION

#### What is observation?

Observation is a method used by sociologists to focus on how individuals or groups behave and interact. Data can be quantitative (e.g. if the researcher is counting how many times the observed do something) but it is usually qualitative. These observations can be **covert** (done with the knowledge of the group or individual being observed) or **overt** (done with the knowledge of the group or individual). There are two types of observation:

1. **Participant Observation:** this is when the researcher joins the group being observed as a member.
2. **Non-Participant Observation:** this is when the researcher remains outside the group and does not participate in what is going on.

#### Which is the best? Why?

As with any form of research, you need to pick the appropriate method for the appropriate situation. For example, if you wanted to research gang relationships you are likely to gain more useful and reliable data if you use covert participant observation. However, this can be very risky.

A key concept in observation is **The Hawthorne Effect**. This states that those who are observed change their behaviour. Another key area is **ethics** – is it acceptable to lie to someone to develop our sociological knowledge? What happens if you are asked to become involved in illegal activity? There are many good examples of covert participant observations, such as the MacIntyre infiltration of the Chelsea Headhunters, a well-known group of football hooligans.

Observation	Pros	Cons
Covert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoids the Hawthorne Effect</li> <li>• The observed behaviours and interactions are likely to be more honest if the individual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This can raise questions around ethics as the observed have not given their <b>consent</b></li> <li>• This could become dangerous</li> </ul>

	does not believe they are being watched.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficult to record findings effectively</li> <li>• Access to a group can be difficult to achieve</li> </ul>
Overt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honest, so does not raise ethical questions</li> <li>• Safer, as if people know you are observing you are unlikely to get into trouble.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Hawthorne Effect can take place</li> <li>• People may be less open or honest if they know they are observed.</li> </ul>
Participant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct experience of the group and of social interactions</li> <li>• People are more open to participants.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It can be difficult to remain <b>objective</b> and not become too involved in the group.</li> <li>• Gaining acceptance to the a group can be difficult</li> <li>• Difficult to record findings / observations</li> </ul>
Non-Participant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safer, as you sit outside the group and cannot be associated with it.</li> <li>• Easier to remain objective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hawthorne Effect</li> <li>• Distrust for researcher</li> <li>• More difficult to build a rapport as observers may feel awkward.</li> </ul>

#### PRIMARY RESEARCH METHOD 4: CONTENT ANALYSIS

##### What is it?

This is used to study the content of the Mass Media. Sociologists can collect either quantitative or qualitative data through Content Analysis. Quantitative is the most common and involves recording how often something appears, e.g. how many times a woman is represented as a housewife in a TV programme. Before performing content analysis the researcher must **operationalise** all technical language being used. In the example above it would be necessary to decide what factors indicate a housewife.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is generally cheap as all you need is your operationalised grid and different types of media.</li> <li>• Media is wide and varied so it is possible to gather a representative sample</li> <li>• As many forms of media are archived (not thrown away) it is possible to compare media over time.</li> <li>• Data is generally quantitative so can be used to generate statistics</li> <li>• It can be used to identify the connection between the media and other trends in society, e.g. the use of sexist stereotypes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It relies on successful operationalising of key categories</li> <li>• The Mass Media is itself generally biased as it is shaped by individuals with their own views and agendas. This can mean that examples of Mass Media may not be representative</li> <li>• As data is generally quantitative it does not provide explanations</li> <li>• Deciding how to categorise elements of the mass media can be a subjective (personal) choice, which can undermine a study's validity.</li> </ul>

## SAMPLING METHODS

### What is sampling?

Sampling refers to the process where the researcher selects the people they wish to study. This could be those receiving questionnaires or being asked to participate in interviews.

### Why is this important?

It is important to have a representative sample – one that includes different people from the same demographic (group in society). If you are researching women’s attitudes, you need to ensure you get a range of age groups, social backgrounds and ethnicities so that you can generalise your findings across women. Sampling can be difficult to do. The source from which you are creating your sample (e.g. the Electoral Register or everyone you see who is female) is called a **sampling frame**.

### What does a good sample look like?

A good sample should be as strong as a castle. This is a way to remember what you need to consider in your sample: Class, Age, Sex, Time, Location, Ethnicity



### What different types of sampling are there?

There are four types of sampling. The one you choose will depend on your research design and on your resources as some require more previous information, time and therefore money. When selecting your sample you need to consider what you want from your sample group if you are going to have a representative and generalisable response to your hypothesis.

### The Methods

1. **Simple Random** Sampling: participants are selected at random from the sample frame. This is often done by a computer. Random sampling can also involve asking anyone you meet.
2. **Systematic** Sampling: participants are selected according to a chosen system by the researcher. An example might be selecting every sixth name from the sample size.
3. **Stratified** Sampling: the researcher organises the sample frame into different groups (e.g. by profession or gender or ethnicity or all three) and then randomly selects people from different groups (or stratas). If you know your target demographic is 75% black this then allows you to ensure that your sample is 75% black as well.
4. **Snowball** Sampling: when the researcher does not have a sample frame (as in research into gangs, for example, or unidentified groups like homosexuals) they may collect their sample by asking respondents to suggest other potential respondents.

	PROS	CONS
1	There is no bias from the researcher	The sample is unlikely to be

		representative
2	There is no bias from the researcher	The sample is unlikely to be representative
3	More of a risk of bias as the researcher has to categorise	The sample is likely to be much more representative as it covers a cross-section of society.
4	Allows the researcher to access difficult-to-reach respondents	As there has only been one source, the sample is likely to be unrepresentative of the group.

TIP: when creating a sample group, you should avoid only talking to your family and friends as this is unlikely to be representative of wider society.

## FACTORS AFFECTING RESEARCH

### What does this mean?

When you carry out sociological research it is important to consider the different factors that might act as a barrier to your research. These fall under two main categories: resources and ethics.

### Resources

- **Time:** most studies take time and this needs to be factored in – particularly if you are considering the cost of your (and other people's) time. You also need to consider how much time a respondent may have for you and any deadlines you have for publication
- **Expenses:** you need to consider how much money you have to spend on your research. Possible expenses include paying yourself or other researchers, transport costs, postage and printing and any other equipment or fees that need paying.

### Research Ethics

This refers to the obligation to act morally as set out by the British Sociological Association (BSA). Researchers should ensure that no-one is emotionally or physically harmed as result of the research. There are several questions raised by sociological research and you need to consider potential answers:

1. Should all participants know what they are involved in / have volunteered (have given **informed consent**)?
2. Should sociologists intervene if they witness something unethical or remain **impartial** / objective?
3. Should sociologists always maintain **confidentiality**?

## TYPES OF STUDY

### What does this mean?

We have looked at different methods, types of data, sampling and barriers to research. You also need to know the different types of study that can be carried out by researchers.

1. **Pilot Studies:** these are small-scale versions of a final research study. These are done to test out the research and sampling methods chosen to see if they are successful.
2. **Case Studies:** this is a detailed study of one specific group or situation. These are often used when the individual has limited resources or when they want to focus on a specific group. An example might MacIntyre's investigation of the Chelsea Headhunters or a student researching their own school. One problem with a Case Study is that it cannot be generalised.
3. **Longitudinal Studies:** this is when a group are studied over a long period of time. This might involve revisiting a group or individual at set times over a set period or it could involve staying with a group for that entire time. These studies can help us develop a



long-term picture of a group, but they are time-consuming, expensive and difficult to manage. This is because people may drop out of the study for a wide variety of reasons.

## EVALUATING DATA

### Why is this important?

In order for sociological research findings to be taken seriously and published, they need to be based on accurate data. In order for data to be considered accurate it must demonstrate the criteria below.

Useful Data	Useless Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Generalisability:</b> we should be apply it to a wider group. For example, the entire prison system.</li> <li>• <b>Reliability:</b> this is data that can be trusted as accurate. This means that another researcher should be able to repeat it easily and get similar results.</li> <li>• <b>Representativeness:</b> The people studied should represent a good cross-section of that group, which helps us generalise.</li> <li>• <b>Validity:</b> the research measures what it is supposed to measure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bias:</b> when a researcher carries out their research to try and prove a personal belief.</li> <li>• <b>Distortion:</b> when a researcher alters the data they have collected.</li> <li>• <b>Exaggeration:</b> when a researcher focuses on one aspect of the data collected and increases its importance.</li> <li>• <b>Selective:</b> when a researcher picks and chooses which data to use, based on their argument.</li> </ul>

### How do you apply this?

When creating a research design you need to consider whether your method and sample will produce good data and what you are going to avoid your data becoming useless.

A key point to remember is that Sociology is a **SOCIAL SCIENCE**.

## SECONDARY EVIDENCE

### What is this?

Secondary Evidence refers to any evidence used in the study that was not collected by the sociologist or their research team. There are many types of secondary evidence that sociologists use to further develop their hypothesis or to assess their primary research. Secondary Evidence can be quantitative and it can be qualitative.

### Qualitative Secondary Evidence: Statistics

Statistics are usually presented as percentages and take many different forms and can come from different sources. They are usually accessible to the public. There are two kinds of statistics:

1. **Official** Statistics are those collected by the government and other official bodies. A good source for this is the Office of National Statistics.
2. **Non-Official** Statistics are collected by non-official bodies like universities or research groups.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to analyse as they are quantitative</li> <li>• They are often freely available</li> <li>• OS in particular can cover a huge number of people (often the whole UK)</li> <li>• OS are often up to date as they are collected regularly (not always the case for NOS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The source of NOS can sometimes be unclear.</li> <li>• The statistics may not exactly show the information you are looking for</li> <li>• You are relying on other researchers having collected their data accurately</li> <li>• Statistics don't explain anything</li> </ul>

### Qualitative Secondary Evidence: Documents and the Media

Researchers often use old documents and evidence for their research – this usually involves analysing other people's observations of society. This could include:

1. **Historical Documents / Evidence:** these are often the only evidence we have of what society was like. These can be formal or informal descriptions of events or social interactions
2. **Personal Documents / Diaries:** the ideas and thoughts of individuals that we may not be able to talk to.
3. **Media material:** this could include old broadcasts or newspapers.
4. **Sociological Literature:** the published findings of other sociologists based on their own research

When you use these types of Secondary Evidence you are considering the observations and findings of other people, many of them not sociologists. This requires you to consider what they have found.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These sources are often accessible online or at low cost</li> <li>• They can provide a good insight into society and social interactions</li> <li>• They allow us to sometimes understand how people perceive events and therefore how society functions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are based on other people's observations (many of them not trained sociologists or researchers) so we cannot be sure of their accuracy</li> <li>• Writers may have been dishonest or exaggerated for effect</li> <li>• Some of these documents can be hard to locate.</li> </ul>

When using Secondary Evidence or Secondary Data you must still consider how useful (or useless) and factor this into your findings.



**4. Deviance:** any action or belief that goes against society's norms and values is considered to be **deviant** or a product of **deviancy**. The word literally means "not the way."

#### How does this work?

Sociologists believe that we learn what is good or bad behaviour from our society and upbringing. This process is called socialisation and is always happening. It is carried out by specific **social institutions**. The main institutions that teach us norms and values include: The Family, Education, The Mass Media, The Workplace, Religion and The Peer Group. Each of these will be discussed later on. Different types of sociologist have different opinions on whether this socialisation is good for us.

Norms and values are closely linked. For example, if I value respect and order, then I may follow the norm that we should queue. The values I hold shape the norms that I follow.

## IDENTITY

#### What is this?

Your identity is what makes you who you are – everything that contributes to how you see yourself and how others see you. A person's identity is shaped by their values – whether something is an important part of your identity can be affected by what you believe to be significant. For example, for some people their job is a large part of their identity, while for others it is only a small part of who they are.

#### What factors affect your identity?

Aside from our hobbies, interests and personality, our identities are shaped by several sociological concepts. Our family, education, work, peers, religion and entertainment choices all have an effect on our identity, as well as our gender, ethnicity, sexuality, age and body shape. A good way to think about your identity is to think about how you would introduce yourself. Two important sociological concepts linked to identity are **social roles** and **social status**. You need to be able to explain these in your exam.

## *SOCIAL ROLES*

#### What is this?

A social role is the part (or parts) you play in society. Certain norms are linked to specific roles. For example, the Prime Minister is expected to behave in specific ways that are in keeping with his role. Sociologists believe that we learn our roles in society through socialisation and they become part of our identity.

Most people have **multiple roles**; we are not limited to just one part in society. For example, I might be a teacher, brother, son, friend, peer and manager, all at the same time. Each of those roles has with it certain norms that I would be expected to follow. The difficulty comes when we experience **role conflict** – when one of my roles clashes with another of my

roles. For example, my role as a teacher is to mark my students' work. But what if there is a family crisis and I cannot get my marking done due to my role as a son and brother?

## *SOCIAL STATUS*

### What is this?

Social status refers to your position in society. This is generally imagined as a sort of hierarchy. We gain our position in society in two main ways:

- 1) **Ascribed Status:** this is when you have no control over your status; it is given to you. Examples of this could be being born into a specific family (e.g. the Royal Family) or inheriting wealth that affects your status (e.g. make you a millionaire.) A person might have an ascribed status as a widow or an orphan as well.
- 2) **Achieved Status:** this is when you have earned your status. This could be done through education, getting a new job, becoming a parent or even getting married or committing a crime. An achieved status is any position you gained due to your own actions.

### What does status mean in the UK?

Your status can vary depending on the group you are in. For example, you can be high status in your peer group at work, but low status in society as a whole.

Another term associated with social status is **socio-economic status** or **social class**. In the UK, there is a social hierarchy to which different people belong. This is known as the social class system. In this country, social class is generally determined by our job. If you are child, it would be determined by your parents' jobs. However, some sociologists have also said that social class is affected by a person's education and their connections in society.

There are three main classes in British society:

- 1) **Upper Class:** this refers to small proportion of people who are at the top of British society. They often have a lot of influence and generally have a lot of money.
- 2) **Middle Class:** this class is generally well-educated and tends to be made of professionals like doctors or of people in managerial positions.
- 3) **Working Class:** there are different levels of working class, but many working class people are likely to do jobs that do not require a university degree. Within this group you can find skilled workers and unskilled workers.

Traditionally, sociologists believed that your class was determined by your job. Some argued it is possible to change class (**social mobility**) through self-improvement. **Postmodern** sociologists argue that nowadays we select our class ourselves – it is a label we choose.

As part of Paper 2 you will be able to discuss if you think the class system is fair. A brief overview is:

- 1) **Functionalist** sociologists believe the system is fair

- 2) **Marxist** sociologists believe it is unfair – it is a way to keep the rich (bourgeoisie) and the poor (proletariat) in their current place
- 3) **Postmodernists** argue that social class doesn't really exist anymore.

## DIVERSITY

### What is this?

Diversity is another word for difference. As Sociologists, we must compare differences within British society and between our society as a whole and other societies around the world. Doing this helps us better understand the way we have developed. Academics who study other cultures are sometimes called anthropologists.

Some important key terms:

1. **Culture:** The whole life of a society, including its norms and values, language and traditions.
2. **Dominant Culture:** The main culture of a society or country
3. **Subculture:** A culture within another culture. This has its own norms and values, but will often share some norms and values with its Dominant Culture
4. **Cultural Relativity/Diversity:** when a culture has different norms and values and traditions to another culture.

In the exam it is particularly important that you have examples of both British subcultures (e.g. the Emo subculture below) and of cultural diversity (cultures that are different to Britain.) In Britain our dominant culture is generally seen as white, Christian and straight, focused around the traditional nuclear family.

### **Case Study One:** Emo Subculture, UK

This subculture began with rock music in USA, but has since become a more general term for a whole subculture. "Emos" are often recognized through long dark hair and dark clothes, as well as an 'angst' attitude, where the individual is seen to be depressive or very introverted/shy. This sets them apart from the mainstream, dominant British culture.

**Other British subcultures** vary enormously. These can be associated with a person's sexuality (there are many different homosexual subcultures for example), music taste, dietary choices, style of clothing, religion or other interests.

### **Case Study Two:** The Maasai Tribe, Kenya

This is an example of cultural diversity. The Maasai Tribe have very different social norms and values to the UK. They practice polygamy (where a man has several wives) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), also known as female circumcision, where parts of the vagina are cut away. Both of these practices are illegal in the UK and most societies condemn FGM as abusive. However, for the Maasai, both practices are very normal.

**Other examples of cultural diversity** include different attitudes towards the roles of men and women (e.g. the Hibito tribe in New Guinea) or subtler differences – e.g. that in South East Asia it is inappropriate to point at anything with your foot as this is seen to be offensive.

### Why is this important?

For sociologists, this is seen as evidence that we **learn** our norms and values as we grow up and from our own culture. It suggests that there not being a universal standard of good behaviour.

For us more generally, it can be useful to try and understand why people might act the way that they do. Remember, norms are based on values. This suggests that people may value different behaviours or attributes more or less than we do in the dominant British culture.

## PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOCIALISATION

### What is this?

Socialisation is the process by which we learn norms and values. Sociologists argue that this happens in two stages: **Primary** and **Secondary**.

### Primary Socialisation

This takes place in the first five years of a person's life. The main agent of primary socialisation is the family. This teaches you the fundamental norms and values of society and continues to do so later in life.

The mass media is also increasingly involved in the process of primary socialisation, as children are now exposed to the media from a very young age through children's books, TV shows, films and apps.

### What do you learn in Primary Socialisation?

A whole range of skills, from learning to speak to basic manners (such as saying please and thank you). During this period you learn the fundamental skills for getting on in your society.

### What if you don't receive Primary Socialisation?

Children who do not receive primary socialisation (usually because they have been isolated from other human beings) are known as **feral children**. There have been many cases of feral children, though some are believed to have been faked. There are many fictional stories of children raised without humans (like Tarzan and Mowgli) and some real-life stories that are similar (e.g. Amala and Kampala, raised by wolves in India), but most sociologists believe that the children are not 'raised' by the animals – they just grow up near them. Most cases of feral children are the result of **neglect** (they are ignored by their parents). This might

include the Ukrainian girl Oxana Malaya, who grew up in a kennel, or Danielle Crockett, a girl from Florida, USA, who was kept alone in a locked room.

Feral children are important to sociologists as they can be seen as more evidence of the importance of socialisation to help us learn. Feral children are generally unable to communicate and are often unable to walk properly or use their hands well.

### Secondary Socialisation

This is the second wave of socialisation that we receive when we begin to interact more with others. This performed by several other social institutions, including:

- Education
- The Mass Media
- Religion
- The Workplace
- The Peer Group

The Family also continues to teach us norms and values (and reinforce them) throughout our lifetime.

### What do you learn in Secondary Socialisation?

During secondary socialisation you learn the more complicated norms and values of our society and how to interact well with those who do not know you. You will also learn about your own status and the different roles you are expected to play in society.

### AGENTS OF SOCIALISATION

For the exam, you need to be able to explain how each Agent of Socialisation teaches us norms and values **and** you need to be able to critically compare them. For example, you may be asked to write an essay on whether the family is the best agent of socialisation. To do this, you would need to say why it is better or worse than the other agents of socialisation.

### What makes an agent a good agent of socialisation?

It is really important to remember that an agent of socialisation is good if it socialises someone – not if it is nice! An agent might successfully teach a person to be deviant – but that does not mean it was unsuccessful.

### **AGENT 1: THE FAMILY**

The Family is an agent of primary and secondary socialisation. It has a great deal of authority over the individual. The Family socialises us using three main methods:



1. **Manipulation:** when parents encourage children to behave in a certain way. This is often done through guilt or fear or simply emphasising certain types of behaviour as good.
2. **Canalisation:** when parents push a child down a particular path by dressing them in a specific way or making them take up particular hobbies. For example, you could be canalised into being a Manchester United fan by being given Man U clothes from a young age, attending games and having Man U toys and decorations in your bedroom.
3. **Conditioning (Rewards & Sanctions):** when parents punish (sanction) you if you break social norms or reward you when you follow them. This would encourage you to obey norms and values.

The Family is very powerful as an Agent as it is involved from the very beginning of your life. As we often love our families, we also try not to disappoint them. However, it is sometimes unsuccessful as an Agent as children may rebel against their parents' norms and values. Not everyone turns out as their parents wish them to.

## **AGENT 2: EDUCATION**

This is an agent of secondary socialisation and begins as soon as children are in education. Sociologists argue that we learn two things in school:

1. **The Formal Curriculum:** this refers to the knowledge and skills we learn in school, e.g. history or mathematics.
2. **The Hidden/Informal Curriculum:** this refers to the norms and values we are taught at school, e.g. punctuality, respect for authority, working hard and getting on well with other people, even if we don't like them.

You will need to know more about this for Paper 2. Education can be a powerful agent of socialisation, but, like the family, it can be ignored and many people are still deviant.

## **AGENT 3: THE WORKPLACE**

The workplace teaches (and reinforces) norms and values in a similar way to education. Adults spend the majority of their waking week at work so it is understandable that their behaviour is influenced by it. We value how we are seen by our employers and colleagues, so we are likely to act in a way that pleases them.

## **AGENT 4: THE PEER GROUP**

Your peers are those people who have a similar social status or social position as you. When you are at school, your peers are other students; when you get older you have many different peers dependent on your social role. A peer is usually someone you spend time with regularly. The main way through which the peer group socialises is through **peer pressure**. We learn to behave as our peers expect us to behave.

The peer group is very powerful, though it can lead to deviance. Studies have shown that people do not like to feel excluded from the group or to feel judged by others. They are therefore more likely to act in a way that is accepted by those around them. Peer pressure can be both verbal and non-verbal (i.e. through body language). However, some people do ignore peer pressure and social expectations so the peer group is not always a successful agent of socialisation.

### **AGENT 5: RELIGION**

Religion acts to teach norms and values by encouraging us to think about what it means to be a good person and trying to fulfil it. This is done through direct preaching in sermons (perhaps in a place of worship) but also through stories about religious figures. An example could be the Parable of the Good Samaritan in Christianity. Through religion, we learn what is seen to be good or bad behaviour.

This is only useful, however, in societies that are religion. Britain is increasingly secular (non-religious) so religion has become a less effective agent of socialisation for many people.

### **AGENT 6: THE MASS MEDIA**

The term 'Mass Media' refers to any form of communication that can reach a wide audience. This includes online media like Facebook or Wikipedia, broadcast media like TV, radio and films and print media such as books, newspapers and magazines. The Mass Media is very influential and widespread in modern Britain. The main way in which the Mass Media socialises us is through the repetition of norms and values, including stereotypes. The more ideas are repeated, the more they stay in our mind.

## AGENTS OF SOCIAL CONTROL

### What is this?

It is very easy to confuse SOCIAL CONTROL with SOCIALISATION. It is very important you remember the difference. Socialisation is the process by which we learn norms and values. Social Control refers to how society controls our behaviour and forces us to follow norms and values.

There are two kinds of social control: **formal social control** and **informal social control**. Our behaviour is controlled through the use of consequences (sanctions). These consequences are either positive sanctions (rewards) or negative sanctions (punishments).

### Agents of Formal Social Control

Agents of Formal Social Control are supported by the law. These include the police and the law courts. They are able to use the law to punish those who break the law through formal warnings, imprisonment, fines and community service etc.

The main purpose of these agents is to enforce the laws of society and regulate social behaviour.

### Agents of Informal Social Control

These agents are still very influential. However, they do not have the backing of the law by themselves (though they can bring in the courts or the police). These agents still apply their own positive and negative sanctions. Each of the Agents of Socialisation we have looked at can also act as Agents of Informal Social Control as they have the ability to sanction different behaviour and force people to follow norms and values. As with socialisation, you need to be able to explain why each of these is a successful or unsuccessful agent of social control. The chart below shows different sanctions some agents may use:

Agent	Positive Sanction	Negative Sanction
The Family	Praise, pocket money, presents	Punishment (verbally or physically), withdrawal of support, guilt
Education	Rewards (e.g. House Points), prizes, praise, recognition, stickers	Detentions, guilt, being told off, exclusion, isolation, withdrawal of privileges
Peers	Praise, popularity, respect	Disrespect, bullying, isolation, name-calling
Religion	Promises of heaven / good afterlife, praise	Threats of hell / bad afterlife, guilt, isolation (excommunication).
Workplace	Praise, pay-rise, promotion, opportunities, bonus	Disciplinary, withheld promotion or pay-rise, sacking

The Mass Media does not directly sanction an individual, but it can help force us to behave by showing us how we should or should not behave and what happens to those who do or do not behave themselves. As example of this might be in a soap where the villain gets his or her comeuppance.

### In the exam...

If, in the exam, you are asked about a type of social control or if one agent is better than another, you **must** make sure you distinguish between formal and informal agents. Do NOT discuss socialisation if you are asked to discuss social control.

## GENDER

When talking about the differences between men and women, sociologists use some very important key terms.

1. **Sex:** this refers to the biological differences between males and females, particularly in terms of genitalia.
2. **Gender:** this refers to the social differences between males and females. Sociologists believe that these differences are learned (socialised), particularly in early childhood, but reinforced throughout our lifetime.
3. **Feminine:** anything that is associated with being female in our society. Typically 'feminine' characteristics include being caring and thoughtful.
4. **Masculine:** anything that is associated with being male in our society. 'Masculine' traits include being strong, emotionally tough and protective of others.

### What do you need to know about gender?

For this unit, you need to be able to explain:

- Examples of cultural diversity where other societies have different gender roles to the UK
- How gender is socialised by the different agents of socialisation
- How men and women are forced to conform to gender identity by agents of social control
- The ways in which gender roles have changed in the UK for both men and women.
- The impact of changing attitudes to sexuality on gender identity in the UK

## CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND GENDER

The sociologist Margaret Mead (1935) investigated three different tribes in New Guinea and found that they had different approaches to masculine and feminine roles that traditional British culture did.

1. The Arapesh: among this tribe, both men and women displayed 'feminine' characteristics, with no difference between them. They cared equally for children and were equally sensitive.
2. The Mundungamar: men and women are both 'masculine', demonstrating a lack of compassion for children and a general disgust with giving birth.
3. The Tchambuli: men displayed what we might see to be 'feminine' characteristics and women were what we might call 'masculine'.

Other tribes have also shown very different gender roles than in the UK. The Hibito Tribe, for example, have gender roles that are the opposite of traditional British gender roles. Women do all the manual labour, while men are more concerned with beautifying themselves. Sexual intercourse is done as a duty; men are more likely to want to have sex with each other.

### Why is this important?

This suggests that our gender identity (what makes us who we are) is actually learned rather than being a natural occurrence. However, some have argued that we are genetically programmed to follow certain masculine or feminine behaviours. For example, some biologists believe that women have a 'maternal instinct' that causes them to want to become mothers and care for their babies. However, many sociologists have argued that this is simply something that girls are taught.

## **SOCIALISING GENDER**

### How is this done?

You need to be able to explain how each of the Agents of Socialisation could teach us our gender roles and reinforce our ideas about how a man and a woman ought to behave – what makes someone a normal man or a normal woman.

### The Family

The family might use canalisation to get a girl to conform to (fit in with) feminine characteristics. For example, she may be bought pink clothes as a baby, a toy kitchen and lots of dolls and be sent to ballet lessons. She could be manipulated as parents might be disappointed with her if she does not enjoy feminine hobbies. She might even be punished (perhaps ignored or told off) if she does not stick to these hobbies. The same might happen to a boy if he does not like sports or playing at being a soldier.

### Education

School might socialise gender roles by encouraging students to do gender-appropriate subjects or by teaching about girls and boys conforming to specific roles (e.g. in history).

Teachers might also do this themselves by expecting girls and boys to behave differently. The Hidden Curriculum then reinforces ideas about feminine and masculine.

### Mass Media

This might repeat the same images of men and women, so encouraging boys and girls to act in a certain way. As this happens over and over, it becomes more difficult for a boy or girl to not conform.

### The Peer Group

People may feel pressurized to conform to masculine or feminine gender roles by their peer group. If they do not act as expected they may be isolated or bullied. One sociologist, Sue Lees (1993) found that men and women are treated different by their peers when it comes to sex. Men who had lots of different sexual partners are praised by the peers, while women are criticised (called slags or sluts) if they have lots of sexual partners. This means that women are then socialised to believe that women should not have sex unless they are in love.

### Religion

Religious groups like churches are influenced by holy books like the Bible. These often have a very set view on how men and women are supposed to behave and how families and relationships should function. These ideas of masculine and feminine are then reinforced through stories and through rules. For example, in the Bible, Eve is made to be Adam's helper.

### Workplace

There is still a divide in Britain between men and women when it comes to work. Some jobs are seen as more appropriate for women than for men and vice versa. In addition to this, it is much more common for a man to be in management than women. This can socialise gender roles by reinforcing the idea that men are stronger and better at management than women, while women are more caring.

## **SOCIAL CONTROL**

You also need to consider how society **forces** men and women to conform to society's expectations about what it means to be a man and a woman. In some cultures this is done through the law, but in the UK it is illegal to treat men and women differently. However, informal agents are still able to use sanctions to make men and women conform.

## CHANGES TO GENDER IDENTITY

### How has our society changed?

The UK has been traditionally **patriarchal**. This term means that our society has been controlled by men. However, our society has changed dramatically over the last sixty years. This has been influenced by **feminism** (the belief that men and women should be equal) and by big social upheaval. In the modern UK, several laws have been passed that mean men and women should not be treated differently, e.g. The Equal Pay Act (1975).

### How have women's roles changed?

Women are traditionally seen as housewives and mothers. In the 1950s a working woman would have often been expected to give this up when she got married.

In the modern UK, girls aspire to many different roles and are found in all different workplaces. However, many sociologists argue that they still do not have full equality as they are still usually the primary caregivers at home and are more likely to not be in management than men. Women who completely reject feminine gender roles are still often perceived as deviant and the majority of people in positions of power (such as in government) are male.

### How have men's gender roles changed?

Men were traditionally the **breadwinners** in the family (they provided the main source of income) and were not responsible for emotional support. They were the dominant force in the workplace and in government. However, there have been some important changes to the traditional man. These changes have come about for important reasons:

- The disappearance of many traditionally masculine jobs, meaning men have had to adjust to different types of jobs
- Feminism has meant that women have taken on more power and authority in the workplace and the home, so men have had to adjust.

These changes have led to changes in masculinity:

1. **The 'New Man'**: a man who is supportive of his partner and is equally responsible for the household and finance. The New Man supports his partner's career.
2. **The 'Lad'**: as women no longer need to be protected or provided for, the 'lad' has appeared. He has little respect for women and can be resentful of them. He is happy to have a female partner provide for him.
3. **The 'Metrosexual'**: as gender roles blur, it has become increasingly common for men to worry more about their appearance. There is increased emphasis on men having very expensive haircuts, designer clothing and skincare regimes which would have been

traditionally seen to be feminine. In the last ten years, there has been an increase in men sculpting their bodies at the gym as men become more body-conscious.

Do you think masculine roles have fully changed? Or is there still an element of the traditional masculine role in our society today?

## **GENDER AND SEXUALITY**

Since the legalisation of homosexuality in 1967, laws have changed so much that it is now illegal to discriminate against gay people and they are now allowed to get married and have children. This has had an impact on gender roles and socialisation, as men and women are no longer expected to be attracted to the opposite sex.

However, sociologists have argued that our society is still **heteronormative**. This means that we still expect people to be straight (heterosexual) in our culture. This is shown by the process of 'coming out' when a person has tell people that they are gay or bisexual.

Many people have also come out as **transgender**. This means that they do not fit in with the sex they were born with them. They may choose to live their life as a different sex or go through a full transition (involving an operation) to a different biological sex from the one they were born with. This also affects gender identity as it suggests that this is not necessarily fixed.





## THE PURPOSE AND FUNCTION OF THE FAMILY

### What is a family?

A family is a unit of people connected by legal and biological ties. There are many different types of family, which will be discussed later in this guide. Sociologists believe that the family plays an important role in society. The Roman philosopher Cicero called the family 'the seed-bed of the state.' By this he meant that it is the basis of society.

**Functionalist** and **Marxist** sociologists have different views on the family. For Functionalists, the family exists to help prepare its members for functioning in society. Marxists see the family as helping keep the proletariat (the lower classes) in their place.

### What are the functions of the family?

Functionalists believe that all of the institutions in society work together to help society function effectively. These institutions, including the family, are good for the members of society. Functionalists have identified seven key functions of the family:

1. Regulates sex (it gives people an appropriate place for having sex – within marriage)
2. Reproduction (it provides the support needed for reproduction)
3. Physical care (members of the family are physically cared for by the family in terms of food and warmth etc.)
4. Economic support (those in a family are in a stronger position financially as wealth can be shared. Children require economic support in particular.)
5. Emotional support (the members of the family provide love and support to help members cope with life and succeed).
6. A place in society (our social status and roles are supported and shaped by the family)
7. Socialisation and Social Control (the family teaches us norms and values and then ensures that we follow them. This is linked to canalisation, manipulation and conditioning).

### What did Talcott Parsons argue?

Talcott Parsons was an important Functionalist. He argued that all of society worked like a giant organism/body. He believed that in order for society to work, all of its different parts had to work as well. In the same way, if our heart or brain or stomach stopped working then our body would not function. Each social institution is part of society, just like an organ is part of the body. This is known as the **Organic Analogy**.

For many sociologists, the family is the heart of society. Parsons believed the family was particularly important as it provides support and care for its members. He propose **The Warm Bath Theory**:

1. A person has a warm bath in order to relax and de-stress.

2. A person living in society often faces many challenges that can cause stress and make it difficult to live in the society.
3. Our families are **like** warm baths – they exist to help us feel better and to de-stress us so we can go back out into society.

This analogy was developed particularly with the image of a male breadwinner in mind. Parsons argued that if a man was working all day, he needed a family as this would act like a warm bath and help him prepare for returning to work the following day.

This idea has been criticised, particularly as it does not seem to recognise that for many people coming home is not relaxing as the family is to always like a warm bath. It is also very sexist, as it assumes that the women's main purpose is to care for her husband.

### Marxists and the Family

Marxists believe that society is controlled by the bourgeoisie (the ruling classes), who use the different institutions to control the proletariat (the working class) and keep them in their place. The family is seen as a good tool of oppression, as people with family commitments are unlikely to be able to rise up against the bourgeoisie as they worry that they will put their children at risk.

### Feminists and the Family

Feminists argue that the traditional family exists to oppress women in particular. This will be developed later in this revision guide.

## THE TRADITIONAL FAMILY

### What are the traditional family types?

In Britain there have been two traditional types of family living together in a household.

1. The **Nuclear** Family: this consists of a married couple and their children (between 1 and 3 children is average). These families were often more self-contained and self-sufficient.
2. The **Extended** Family: this consists of a wider family circle, including aunts and uncles, grandparents and cousins. This family was often matrilineal (meaning it was focused around the mother/daughter relationship). In extended families, different members of the family spent a lot of time together.

Both these family types were the most common in Britain during the 1950s. An important part of both family types is the concept of **marriage**. Marriages in the 1950s generally had similar characteristics:

- Couples did not live together (or have sex) until they were married
- Divorce was very unlikely and was frowned upon – it was hard to obtain

- Husbands were generally breadwinners, while wives were primarily responsible for childcare and housework, though they may have had part-time jobs. There was a clear **division of labour**.

Sociologists belonging to the **New Right** generally see these family types as superior to other, more modern, types of family.

## CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND THE FAMILY

The functionalist sociologist George Murdock (1949) researched many different societies and argued that the nuclear family was found in all of them. This led him to claim that the nuclear family is the universal (and best) family type. He felt this was the natural family group for humans.

However, other examples contradict this. Many societies practice **polygamy** (legally having more than one spouse). There are two types of polygamy:

1. Polygyny: having more than one wife. This is quite rare.
2. Polyandry: having more than one husband. This is much more common than polygyny.

### CASE STUDY 1: The Nayar (researched by Kathleen Gough)

Among the Nayar, a young woman would take a 'ritual husband' when she was still a child. She would have little or no contact with him until his eventual funeral. When she was older, she would take up to 12 'visiting husbands' who could spend the night with her. The first husband to arrive in the evening would simply lean his weapons against her house so that other visiting husbands would know to go elsewhere. The woman and her children would be supported by her family. A man supported his sister's children, rather than her own.

### CASE STUDY 2: Tibetan Polyandry

In Tibet, it was not uncommon for a woman to have several husbands as when she married a man she also married his brothers. The eldest brother was seen to be the father of all the children, while the younger brothers were all called uncle, regardless of which brother was the child's biological father.

### CASE STUDY 3: The Maasai Tribe, Kenya

As we have already covered, the Maasai practice polygyny, as tribesmen have more than one wife. The wives have a complex hierarchy, with senior and junior wives.

### CASE STUDY 4: Western polygamy and polyamory

It is rare for people in the UK and the USA to live in polygamous relationships, but it does take place. In some subcultures men take several wives. This is particularly the case in some religious groups. However, only one of these wives is legally recognised as the husband's wife. In the UK it is illegal to be formally married to more than one person at once. Polyamory refers to people who live in 'open' relationships where they may have more than one boyfriend or girlfriend.

#### Why is this important?

This suggests that the nuclear family is not universal, as George Murdock claimed. Sociologists would argue that our family relationships are the product of our society.

### CHANGES TO THE BRITISH FAMILY

#### Why has the family changed?

While the nuclear family is still the most common type of family in the UK, other family types are increasing in number. The family has changed for a number of reasons:

1. **Feminism** has encouraged women to seek out different family relationships or reject the traditional family types. They are also more likely to delay having a family to focus on having a career and are to keep their career if they do have a family.
2. **The Gay Rights Movement** has brought about several important changes in the law and allowed gay families to exist:
  - 1967: Homosexuality legalised
  - 2002: Gay people allowed to adopt children
  - 2005: Civil Partnerships legalised
  - 2007: Illegal to discriminate against gay people
  - 2013: Gay marriage legalised
3. **Divorce** has become easier since the **Divorce Reform Act (1969)**. Now around 3 in 5 marriages end in divorce
4. **Secularisation** (society is less religious) means that people are less worried about conforming to Christian ideas about the family.
5. **Cohabitation** refers to a couple living together in a sexual relationship without being married. This is more socially acceptable, as is the use of contraception.
6. The Economy being weaker means that many children stay at home much longer and are likely to start their own families much later in life.
7. Multiculturalism means that our society is increasingly diverse. Different cultures have brought their own ideas about the family to the UK.
8. People expect more from life; they are less likely to remain in a marriage or relationship if they are unhappy. Research shows that people expect to have several long-term relationships in their lifetime. This is called **serial monogamy**.

#### What are the modern family types?

You need to be able to define each family type and explain the benefits or problems with living in this type of family. You should think about how this is good or bad for socialisation or fulfilling any of the functions of a society. Remember, the nuclear family and the extended family are still very popular in the UK.

Type	Definition
Lone-Parent	This is a family with only one parent (sometimes called single-parent families). This is more commonly matrifocal (based around a mother rather than a father). Most lone-parent families are the result of divorce or separation.
Reconstituted	This is also known as a step-family. This is when two different families join together, usually through the marriage or partnership of two parents after the collapse of two nuclear families.
Gay	This is a family where the parents are in a homosexual relationships. Children may have been conceived through surrogacy or been adopted or have come from previous heterosexual relationships.
Couple	This is a family where there are no children. This is becoming an increasingly common choice.
Boomerang	This is a family where the children leave home (perhaps to go to university) before returning to live at home, often because living alone is very expensive. This has becoming increasingly common, but can be controversial.
Beanpole	This refers to a family which has only one child in each generation. This is increasingly common as well.

### EVALUATING CHANGES

Changes to the family have been received differently by British society. You need to be able to evaluate these changes and different family types. When you do this, you need to be able to use the views below:

- 1. The New Right** are a conservative group, who believe that the nuclear family is the best kind of family. They argue that other types of family do not provide good socialisation and are harmful to society. In particular, the New Right reject homosexual families and lone-parent families as they believe that children who do not have both a mother and a father cannot be socialised successfully.
- 2. Liberals** argue that it does not matter what type of family a child is raised in as long as he or she is loved and care for. They do not believe a child needs a mother and a father to be successful. They also may point out that sometimes a family is better off without their father or mother if that parent is abusive.
- 3. Feminists** see these changes as fundamentally good for women as they are no longer forced to stay in family types that might oppress them.

## FAMILY DEMOGRAPHICS

### What is this?

A demographic is a group in society. For this unit, you need to explain how family type is affected by social class and by ethnicity. This is based on statistics.

### **SOCIAL CLASS AND FAMILY TYPE**

Certain family types are more common among different social classes. This can be linked to wealth and also to location and culture.

#### The Middle and Upper Class Family

People from wealthier and more educated backgrounds have increased life chances. This demographic are more likely to:

- Delay marriage and having children in favour of life experiences like further education, travel and career.
- Less likely to have unplanned pregnancies
- Later in life, they are more likely to form nuclear families.
- They are more likely to live in a different town or part of the country to their parents.

#### The Working Class Family

People from lower-income families are more likely to:

- Live nearer to their own parents and maintain extended family ties
- Get married and become parents earlier than middle class people
- Form a lone-parent or reconstituted family than middle class people

This may be due to their having less opportunities to move away from home than middle-class, wealthier individuals.

### **ETHNICITY AND FAMILY TYPE**

There is a great deal of variation between and within family types. However, there statistics show that family types are more common among different ethnic backgrounds. Some important trends are:

- Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistani families are more likely to be extended than any other family type, with sons remaining at home and wives moving in with them and their parents. These families are known as **patrilocal**, as they are based around the husband and his parents.

- Black families are likely to be lone-parent than other ethnicities. Research shows that these families are more likely to be **matrifocal** (focused around a woman rather than a man.)

It is not always clear how closely these types are related to ethnicity, however. There is often an overlap between social class and ethnicity. For example, black people from middle class backgrounds are likely to live in a nuclear family.

## CONJUGAL ROLES

### What is this?

**‘Conjugal Roles’** refers to the roles played by a cohabitating heterosexual couple, usually married. A great deal of research has gone into determining how fair this relationship and if the man and woman have an equal and fair **division of labour**.

You need to be able to describe the findings of several different sociologists and evaluate the claim that conjugal roles are fair. Bear in mind that many of these studies are several decades old, which could question how useful they are for discussing modern conjugal roles.

### Conjugal roles are fair:

There are two different interpretations of ‘fair conjugal roles.’

1. Men and women do the same amount of work, but they have gender-specific roles. For example, men are breadwinners while women are homemakers. This is supported by **Wilmott & Young (1974)**, who proposed the idea of the **Symmetrical Family**. This is the belief that men and women do the same amount of work as each other, but that they have their own gender-specific work. Women did feminine jobs, while men did masculine jobs.
2. Men and women do the same amount of work and share all tasks, regardless of gender. This generally means that both men and women work and they share housework and childcare equally. This is supported by the rise of the **New Man** and the increase of women in positions of authority in the workplace. Some sociologists now write about househusbands.

### Conjugal roles are unfair:

1. **Ann Oakley (The Sociology of Housework, 1974)** argued that the family was not symmetrical – women did more work than men did and were socialised to think that this was acceptable and dislike it when their husbands did housework.
2. **Stephen Edgell (1980)** found that men made more important decisions in the household, while women were only allowed to be responsible for less important decisions like what to have for dinner or what the children wore.



3. **Jonathan Gershuny (1992)** found that while roles were becoming fairer, women still did more work than men. He called this process **lagged adaptation** – society was adapting, but it was still behind or where it needed to be.
4. **Duncombe & Marsden (1995)** found that while a man generally did one ‘shift’ of work a day (his paid job), women worked three shifts:
  - i. Paid work (her normal job)
  - ii. Housework (this included caring for the house and the children)
  - iii. Emotion work (she had to provide emotional support for all the other members of the household)
5. Women are also much more likely to work part-time than men. Research shows that the husband’s career often takes precedence.

#### What do you think?

You need to decide whether or not you believe men and women are equal in a married relationship. While you can call on your own experience, it is important that you also include sociological research to develop your views.

#### THE DARK SIDE OF THE FAMILY

##### What is this?

This refers to the negative aspects of family life. You can use this to criticise the functionalist view that the family is good for us. For many people, the family is a very negative place.

##### What is the Dark Side of the Family?

There are three ways in which the family can be seen as negative:

1. **Edmund Leach** argued that the nuclear family is too small to be successful. Too much is expected of a family and it is not possible for a family to do all these things (such as the seven functions).
2. **Abuse** exists in the family. This can take many different forms:
  - a. **Child abuse:** this can involve neglect (not caring for a child), physical, sexual or emotional (being horrible to a child) abuse.
  - b. **Domestic violence:** this usually refers to one partner physically, sexually or emotionally harming another. Abuse of women is better documented than abuse of men, but both forms often go unreported. Many people do not feel able to leave a violent partner.
  - c. **Honour-based violence:** when a family harms its own members because it has caused embarrassment or disgrace. For example, if an individual has a relationship that the family disapprove of.
  - d. **Parent abuse:** when children are abusive towards their parents. This is very rarely reported or recognised for what it is.

- e. **Elder abuse:** when adults are abusive towards their parents or elderly relatives. This can involve physical abuse, but can also involve theft.
3. **Negative socialisation:** this is when a family teaches its members deviant norms and values. Should a child be brought up by those who break the law, for example, he or she may be more likely to do so. This suggests that some families are not good for society.

#### How does society deal with this?

Schools, health care services and the police, as well as other groups, have a responsibility to report any concerns that a family is failing to care for its members appropriately. They may then inform social services. In extreme cases, children are sometimes removed from the home and the police can become involved in abusive cases. There are many charities that also seek to protect those who have been abused.

#### ALTERNATIVES TO THE FAMILY

Not everyone wishes to live in a family, whether it be a modern or traditional family type. They may choose to live in other forms of home:

##### Non-Family Households

These are households where people do not live with family members. This might include:

- Living alone: this is increasingly common, with 12% of people living on their own. While many are elderly people who have survived their husband or wife, many are young or middle-aged.
- House-sharing: this may involve living with friends or moving into a house that has a spare room. With the growth of the internet, many people advertise for a housemate to share rent and bills with

##### Communal Living

A commune is a term for a large household where roles like childcare, economic support and housework are spread among several adults. A good example of this is found in Israeli kibbutzim. While couples on the kibbutz would share a room, children lived separately and were raised together by the whole kibbutz. All resources were shared and decisions were made about the community together. There are some other examples of communes such as the Redfield Community in Buckinghamshire.

##### Is the family necessary anymore?

You may be asked if you believe the traditional family or any family is necessary anymore for us to be happy. You need to be able to compare these alternatives, modern types and the traditional family.



for living in society. As well as this, he argued that schools are a **meritocracy**. This is the belief that schools are fair – a person will only succeed in school if they are clever and work hard. It does not matter what a person’s social class or background is.

#### What did Parsons say?

Talcott Parsons used the term ‘Value Consensus.’ This is when everyone in society shares the same norms and values. Education should help us develop this so that we are adults we hold the same things to be important. This will help society function more successfully.

He also argued that school prepares us for society by helping us move from **particularistic** to **universalistic** standards. He argued that:

1. When we are children our parents judge us against ourselves. Every achievement is measured against our other achievements so we are praised for whatever we do. These are particularistic standards.
2. When we are adults we are judged against our peers by society. Every achievement is measured against the achievements of other people who are the same age as us. These are universalistic standards – they’re the same for everyone.
3. Schools helps prepare us to face universalistic standards by getting us ready for exams. By the time we have left school we are used to being judged against other people.

#### What did Davis & Moore say?

Davis & Moore argued that the main purpose of school was **role allocation**. The process of education allowed us to find out what role we are best suited for in society, whether that be in terms of job or of our role as a parent. School (in particular exams), helped put people in the job they are best suited for and was the most helpful for our society.

### **MARXISTS**

There are two main Marxist approaches to education, both focusing on how education keeps the bourgeoisie in power and stops the proletariat from rising up. Marxists believe that education is under the control of the bourgeoisie.

#### What did Pierre Bourdieu argue?

Bourdieu believed that it was easier to achieve at school if you have **cultural capital**. This refers to the skills and experiences that will make it easier for you to do well in exams and get on well with your teachers. He believed that middle class children had more cultural capital, so school was biased towards them.

High Cultural Capital	Low Cultural Capital
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Has a good vocabulary and can communicate well with teachers</li><li>• Has been to museums and travelled so</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Limited vocabulary and finds it difficult to get on well with teachers, who seem very different to them.</li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has a wider range of experiences</li> <li>• Likely to have access to books and other sources of knowledge</li> <li>• Parents are supportive of education and know how to support progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has had limited experiences, so may not be aware of cultural concepts or ideas.</li> <li>• Parents find it difficult to communicate with teachers and are less likely to be able to help with education</li> </ul>
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This means that education is fundamentally unfair – those from wealthier backgrounds are more likely to do well. We will discuss this later in this guide when we consider the relationship between social class and achievement. It undermines the belief that schools are meritocracies.

### What did Bowles and Gintis claim?

Bowles and Gintis proposed Correspondence Theory. This is the belief that school prepares us for the workplace by using the Hidden Curriculum. During school we learn to:

1. Be **subservient** – this means we follow instructions when given to us without questioning them.
2. Accept **hierarchy** – this means we become used to the idea of being unimportant and that there are other people who have more power than we do
3. **Cope with boredom** and focus on **external rewards** – we get used to being bored or miserable in exchange for a future reward. At school this reward is our qualifications or prizes. At work, this external reward is our salary or wages.
4. Deal with **fragmentation** – we are used to not really understanding how things work or why we do the things we do. Our understanding of the whole organisation is fragmented. This makes it harder for us to overthrow the bosses or set up our own business.

For Marxists, the whole purpose of education is to teach us to be **compliant** (follow orders) and to **conform** (stick to the rules and expectations of society).

## LIBERALISM

### What is it?

This is the view that education exists to help develop young people to be the best that they can be. Most people working in education have this view.

### Why is this view important?

It contradicts the view functionalist and Marxist view that the school exists to benefit society and prepare you for adult life as a worker. Some have argued that functionalism focuses too much on how school prepares you for value consensus, while others see Marxism as too negative and unrealistic.

## TYPES OF SCHOOL

### What are the rules about school in the UK?

All children up until the age of 18 in the UK must be in some sort of education. After the age of 16, this can be in a college, Sixth Form, apprenticeship or work-based training. From the age of 4-16 most children attend school. However, there are many types of school and it is also possible to be taught at home. For each type of school you need to be able to explain its benefits and problems.

### What types of schools are there?

The most common type of school is the **Comprehensive**. A comprehensive school, also sometimes known as a state school, is open to all students regardless of religion, ethnicity, past behaviour or academic ability. These are run by the Local Authority (LA), which owns the buildings and pays the staff. Their student population is decided by their catchment area. Comprehensive schools follow the National Curriculum and are free to attend. All children in the UK are entitled to a place at a comprehensive school. They are funded by the government. BCC is a Comprehensive.

**Independent Schools** are split into two categories: **Private** and **Public**. Neither of these are free. Independent schools often have entrance exams as well as charging parents, which means they can select their students. Their funding does not come from the government. Private schools are newer independent schools. The name 'public school' is used to describe the oldest independent schools like Eton and Harrow, which were called public as they were not controlled by the Church. Independent Schools have the right to determine their own curriculum. Teachers do not need to be qualified and the school can set its own pay and terms of employment.

Another type of government-funded school is a **Grammar School**. Grammar schools are selective. Students must take an exam (called an 11+), which they must pass if they are to attend the school. Those who do not get into the grammar school must attend the comprehensive. Most counties in England do not have a grammar system. Buckinghamshire is a grammar county: for example, The Royal Latin is the grammar school, while student who do not get into the Royal Latin must attend Buckingham School.

Some other state-schools are selective, accepting students who have a special educational need. These **Special School** could be focused on children with learning difficulties (e.g. Frank Wise School in Banbury) or might be focused on students with behavioural problems. This might include Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), which students might attend after being excluded from a comprehensive. These special schools are focused on meeting the specific needs of certain children.

**City Technical Colleges** are not very common. These are also funded by the government. These focus on teaching practical subjects to students who might not be suited to academic subjects taught in comprehensive schools, though they still must teach the National Curriculum. Many CTCs are now academies.

**Academies** are set up by sponsors from business, religious or voluntary groups with the Department for Education. They are independent from the Local Authority. All schools can now apply for academy status. Academies can change their selection criteria and their own curriculum.

Another type of state-funded school is the **Free School**. This is relatively new with only a small number of Free Schools in the country. These are set up by local people. These are run like independent schools but are funded by the government. Groups apply for permission to set up a school but do not need to have any educational background to succeed. Like Independent Schools, Free Schools do not need to follow the National Curriculum or to employ qualified teachers.

**Faith Schools** are also state-funded. In many ways these resemble comprehensives, except that they have a religious nature. An example of a Faith School might be Blessed George Napier (BGN) School in Banbury. At a faith school students will be encouraged to participate in the school's religion, perhaps attending religious services and participating in prayers. Religious Studies lessons will be taught from that religion's perspective. The majority of Faith Schools are Christian, though there are many Faith Schools based on Jewish, Muslim, Sikh or Hindu beliefs.

Which type of school is the best?

In order to decide this, you need to decide what you think makes a school a good school. What do you think is the most important function of a school?

## CHANGES IN EDUCATION?

You need to be able to explain the principle changes to education in the UK and explain whether these changes have been positive or negative.

### Middle Ages – 1944

Over this time, education became more accessible. Originally, the church provided most education for poor people, teaching children to read at Sunday School. Only the very wealthy could afford to send their children to a proper school. However, by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century most children attended school.

**The Fisher Act (1918)** made education compulsory for all children up until the age of 14, when it was legal to leave school, though you were expected to stay in some sort of part-time education.

### 1944-1988

The Education Act (1944), called the Butler Act, had several important consequences:

1. It raised the leaving age to 15
2. Split education into Primary and Secondary
3. Introduced the Tripartite System, where after sitting the 11+ exam students were split into three different types of school depending on their ability:
  - i. Grammar Schools: these were for those who passed the 11+
  - ii. Secondary Moderns: these were for most of those who failed the 11+
  - iii. Technical Colleges: these were for those who failed the 11+ particularly badly

The Tripartite System was controversial, so by the 60s several 'comprehensive schools' existed, which accepted all students.

During this time students were most examined through the O'Level (Ordinary Level) at 16 and the A'Level (Advanced Level) at 18. Some students did complete NVQ (National Vocational Qualifications).

### 1988-Present

In 1988 the Education Reform Act (ERA) was passed. As a result, the Tripartite System was removed. The ERA made several important changes:

- Introducing the **National Curriculum**
- Split education into **Key Stages** and introduced the SATs to test progress at the end of each KS. These have now been scrapped.
- Made schools competitive – parents had more choice over schools, meaning schools had to compete with each other to attract parents
- Introduced **league tables** so that schools could be judged against one another



- Created the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), who could then judge schools and their progress and publicise their findings.
- Replaced O'Levels with GCSEs.

Since the ERA, there have been several important changes. In particular:

- A wider range of qualifications, including BTECs
- Introduction of Academies and Free Schools and increased marketization of education

In the last year, changes have also been made to GCSEs and A'Levels. There have also been an increase in apprenticeships and university places.

## ACHIEVEMENT

### What is this?

This refers to how well students do in education. The main way in which achievement has been measured is to see how many students achieve five or more 'good' GCSEs – that is, five GCSEs at A\*-C including English and Maths. In 2015, this is still the main measure of academic success.

We can see from educational statistics that some groups are more likely to succeed in education than others. A way to remember this is to think about MAGGIE.

**M**iddle-class

**A**sian

**G**irl

**G**ood

**I**n

**E**ducation

Statistics tell us that girls are more likely to do better than boys, that middle-class children tend to do much better than working class children and that the most successful ethnic groups in British society are Chinese or Indian pupils, while black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi students tend to underachieve.

### What do you need to know?

You need to be able to explain how each factor can affect a student's chances of achieving 5 good GCSEs and the different explanations of why this might be the case. The main factors include: social class, ethnicity, gender, the role of the school and attendance.

Bear in mind that functionalists would say that schools are **meritocracies** so children are successful or unsuccessful dependent on how clever they are and how hard they work. None of these other factors matter.

## SOCIAL CLASS AND ACHIEVEMENT

### What do the statistics show us?

The statistics suggest that students from less economically wealthy (working class) backgrounds tend to underachieve at school in relation to those from richer families. In education, we measure social class by looking at whether students are entitled to Free School Meals or are on the Pupil Premium register. This is determined by the earnings of the parents, as well as some other factors.

Research has also shown that children whose parents went to university are much more likely to go to university themselves.

There are two main explanations of working class underachievement: **material deprivation** and **cultural deprivation**.

### The Material Explanation

This is simply the statement that working class children have less financial resources so are disadvantaged. A working class child is less likely to have:

- Their own space for private study so they can complete their work
- Time to study as they may need to be work or care for younger siblings
- Money for textbooks and revision guides or for extra private tuition
- Money to go on school trips that can help develop learning
- Appropriate school uniform as this can be expensive. This can cause conflict at school
- Access to the internet or other ICT resources to do homework or revision
- A good, healthy diet or healthy hobbies. This can affect their health and ability to concentrate.

### The Cultural Explanation

This is closely linked to the work of Bourdieu on Cultural Capital. Working class students may not have the necessary skills to be able to interact positively with the system and can be left behind.

Working class children are less likely to:

- Have parents who are able to successfully challenge schools and ensure their child has appropriate support
- Have help at home with their homework, as parents may not be well-educated themselves
- Have had cultural experiences like going to museums or travelling abroad.
- Be understood by teachers, most of whom are middle-class and may not have the same vocabulary or accent
- Come from a background that supports and values education.

This means that school will often be more challenging or difficult experience for working class children and they may be more likely to get in trouble or be stereotyped by teachers.

However, research has also shown that many working class families are very supportive of education and of their child's school, but still may struggle to support their child in making progress due to their own educational background.

Remember: Marxists would argue that the school sets up working class children to fail!

## ETHNICITY AND ACHIEVEMENT

### What do the statistics say?

The statistics show us that the most successful demographic in education is made up of Indian and Chinese students. This is followed by white children. The most unsuccessful students in the UK are those from a black, Pakistani or Bangladeshi background. These children are also more likely to be excluded.

### What leads some ethnic minorities to underachieve?

**The Language Barrier:** In many ethnic minority homes, English may not be the first language. This can make it hard for parents to engage with schools or to help with homework. It can also have an impact on the student's ability to understand and communicate in written English and understand technical terms.

**Parental Attitudes:** Some cultures place a very high importance on education and on respecting teachers – this is particularly found in Indian and Chinese families. A great deal of pressure is often placed on children from these backgrounds to do well at school and try hard, with lots of ambition. However, Pakistani and Bangladeshi families, for example, are often led by adults who have not got qualifications – in 2004, research showed that a third of these families had no qualifications. This can lead to education being seen as irrelevant.

**Social Class:** Some ethnic minorities in the UK are predominantly members of a specific social class. For example, the majority of families from a black, Pakistani or Bangladeshi background are working class, so may also have to deal with material and cultural deprivation, much like any working class family. Chinese and Indian families are far more likely to be middle class so have all the advantages in education of this demographic.

**Labelling:** Many teachers have preconceptions linked to ethnicity and accent. They may therefore label students and give out negative prophecies about students from an ethnic minority that the student may then fulfil. Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi students are more likely to be in lower sets and streams at school, which can have an impact on attainment. This can also be shown in exclusion rates. Could these be because teachers assume they will be badly behaved? This might be done subconsciously by teachers.

**Role Modelling:** The majority of teachers in the UK are white middle class, in particular there is a lack of teachers from the lowest achieving ethnic groups. This could lead to a sense of alienation for ethnic minority students. These groups may have less academically gifted role models to show them that learning is positive and to be sought after.

**The Curriculum:** The school curriculum in the UK is largely ethnocentric (focused on one ethnicity). This means that what is taught in the UK may be seen as irrelevant for students from ethnic minority backgrounds. For example, history lessons are generally focused on white Western history in Britain, America and Europe. In RS, the primary focus is often on Christianity. Many textbooks focus on white examples or can be very stereotypical.

**Life Chances:** Many children from ethnic minorities are socialised to believe that they have limited life chances. They may not see people from their own background in successful positions in the media. They may feel that there is no point in education as it will not do anything for them. This can be linked to **status frustration**.

## GENDER AND ACHIEVEMENT

### What do statistics tell us?

There is clear statistic evidence to show that girls outperform boys at GCSE. This has been a consistent trend for many years. Boys are also more likely to be excluded than girls.

### Why do girls outperform boys?

**The Role of Women:** Traditionally, women expected to be wives and mothers. This expectations was dominant up until the 1960s, though many women had jobs during the War. Women accepted that they were subservient to men in society and that their role was to support their husbands. This idea was challenged, successfully, by the feminist movement. This included female thinkers like Ann Oakley. This meant that girls began to work harder at school.

**Equal Opportunities in School:** Feminism and the women's movement pressurised the government to bring about laws that prevented discrimination against women. The Sex Discrimination Act (1975) outlawed discrimination against female students. This means that girls and boys are able to study any subject this wish. Girls are no longer always represented in sexist roles in textbooks. Teachers are also not allowed to stereotype or treat girls differently to boys. This allowed women to reach their potential in school.

**Change in Female Employment:** Once, higher-paid jobs with greater responsibility were limited to men. This is still often the case. For example, we have only had one female Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. Women are no longer limited to being secretaries or shop assistants with a poor wage. Women are actively encouraged to take positions of responsibility in the workplace. However, men are still generally better paid than women.

**Sue Sharpe: *Just Like a Girl* (1994):** Sue Sharpe, a feminist sociologist, investigated three schools in Ealing. Her study was longitudinal. She spoke to a selection of students at the schools in 1974 and then again in 1994. In 1974, Sharpe found that most of the girls wanted

to go into some sort of 'feminine' job. 40% wanted to work in an office, while most of the rest wanted by teachers, nurses, shop assistants, receptionists and air hostesses. When Sharpe returned to the schools in 1994 she interviewed a new sample of students. She found that many of these aspirations had not changed – most girls aimed to work in 'feminine' jobs. However, far fewer did want to work in an office or be a secretary. The girls were more aware of their rights and put a lot of focus on being equal to men. They were far more assertive.

**Motivation and maturity:** Biologically-speaking, girls mature much more quickly than boys do. They hit puberty earlier and become more focused on adult roles and responsibilities. This maturity may also be because girls are often still expected to help out at home by looking after younger siblings. This maturity often means girls are more motivated, more likely to do their homework and to behave during lessons.

**Masculinity:** Masculinity is a set of values associated with being male. These include values such as toughness, physical ability and having fun. These can conflict with education as working hard is not seen as very masculine. This can be seen when a boy is called or a girl or even gay. This is a way of making that person and their behaviour seem un-masculine. Boys trying to appear masculine might not only avoid doing work – they might be actively disruptive in order to be seen as masculine. Boys are much more likely to be in anti-school subcultures than girls.

**The Changing Job Market:** There are now far more manual jobs available in the UK. These jobs were traditionally masculine (though there were many feminine jobs in factories). With the disappearance of these jobs, many women have moved to work in the service industry in restaurants, hotels and shops. However, this has not always been the case for men, many of whom expected to go into the same jobs as their fathers, uncles and grandfathers. This has left many boys disillusioned about their futures and less motivated about education.

**The Role of Men:** Until recently, the role of the man in society was to be the major provider and breadwinner in society. They were expected to care and support their wives and children. As women have become more independent, many men cease to be the major wage-earners in society. This led some to embrace the idea of the 'new man' in the 1990s, where the man helps at home with chores and childcare. For some boys, there is less motivation to work hard as they do not believe it will be necessary for them to get good, well-paid jobs.

**Teachers:** The self-fulfilling prophecy and labelling can have a big impact on educational achievement. Girls are generally more likely to be positively labelled and teachers often have higher expectations of them as they are more likely to work quietly. Boys are much more likely to be sent out of classrooms or even be excluded for poor behaviour, which can impact on their achievement. Teachers are more likely to apply a negative label to a boy. Boys also tend to be more confrontational, which leads to more conflict with teachers.

## OTHER FACTORS AND ACHIEVEMENT

Some have argued that the main group responsible for achievement and underachievement are the schools themselves, in particular teachers. Research shows that quality of teaching has a massive impact on educational success, as well as your family background.

### SETTING AND STREAMING

#### What is this?

Setting is when schools organise classes according to ability. This will be done subject-by-subject so a student could theoretically be in top-set for English but bottom-set for Maths. Streaming is when a student is in the same class for everything and there is a top, middle and bottom stream. This is controversial.

#### How can this lead to underachievement?

Students placed in lower sets are more likely to underachieve as these are more likely to develop into Anti-School Subcultures. This means that behaviour in bottom sets is often poor and students who do wish to work hard may find it difficult to do so.

#### How can sets lead to achievement?

By putting students in sets, it can be argued that teachers are better able to meet their needs. Sets can help students achieve their potential as more able students can be stretched, while less able students can receive more support.

### SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY

#### What is this?

Robert Merton argued that when a prediction (prophecy) is made about a student in their hearing they are likely to fulfil it. This means that if I tell a student he is stupid, he is likely to think he is and underachieve. If I tell him he is very clever and can achieve, he is more likely to do so.

#### How does this affect achievement?

**Self-fulfilling prophecies** can be extremely positive; they can motivate a student to achieve highly as they are supported by their teacher. However, if a student is negatively **labelled** by their teacher as a failure or as a trouble-maker they are likely to be so.

#### How does this link to social class, ethnicity and gender?

Research suggests that teachers are more likely to negatively label and make negative prophecies about students from black, Pakistani or Bangladeshi ethnic backgrounds. They are also more likely to do this for working class children or boys as well. This can then lead these groups to make their own self-fulfilling prophecies.

### LOW QUALITY TEACHING

It is also important to remember, that location can also have a big impact as it may influence the quality of teacher. Schools that are seen to be failing often struggle to attract high quality teachers, which can then have a big impact on student success rates.

## **ATTENDANCE**

### What do the statistics say?

It is clear to see that low attendance results in poor academic results. This is not a surprise, as children will have missed lessons and not completed necessary work with their teacher. Attendance can drop for many reasons. However, statistics have also shown that truancy (skiving) is more common among working class children than middle-class.





3. **Online** media: this refers to any media accessed through the internet. In the modern world, this may include broadcast and print media as they access different platforms. For example, you can now read newspapers or watch TV online. Online media also includes social networking like Facebook and Twitter.

### What is the Mass Media for?

The main purpose of the mass media is to communicate with audiences. The interesting question for sociologists is why people choose to communicate with each other (their personal purpose) and what else is communicated to their society.

There are five key purposes of the Mass Media and they can be remembered using the phrase, "The Mass Media will never CEASE." Cease means to stop.

#### Communicate Educate Advertise Socialisation Entertain

These different purposes of the media often overlap. For example, a Channel 4 TV documentary on Henry VIII might:

- **COMMUNICATE** information about Henry VIII and his life and times to a wide audience
- **EDUCATE** us about Tudor history
- **ADVERTISE** Hampton Court Palace as a great place to visit, as well as advertising lots of other products during the ad break.
- **SOCIALISE** us by showing that we should value human life and our history
- **ENTERTAIN** us by keeping us focused and engaged for an hour

Similarly, a TV advert can also communicate key norms and values of a society as well as advertise a product, while a really entertaining blockbuster might teach us about a period in history or an aspect of science while encouraging us to be kind to one another.

For the exam, it is really handy to have examples from the mass media to illustrate a point. However, make sure examples would work for people who haven't heard of them before and that they are brief.

We should also bear in mind that all different types of the mass media have to keep themselves going so they do need to make money and attract audiences.

As sociologists, we are particularly interested in how the Mass Media acts as an agent of socialisation and an agent of social control. As part of this unit we will also consider whether the mass media is really good for society.

### AGENT OF SOCIALISATION

#### Why is it an important Agent?

The Mass Media is present in nearly all aspects of our modern lives. It therefore transmits a huge amount of information about our society, including our norms and values.

### How does the Mass Media socialise us?

The main way in which the Mass Media socialises us is through the repetition of norms and values which we then absorb. It acts as an agent of secondary socialisation and can have a big impact on an individual's identity, particularly if they identify with a group or individual who they can only access through the mass media.

### CASE STUDY: British Asian identity

Researchers have found that second and third generation immigrants (people whose parents or grandparents moved to the UK) often struggle to balance their parents' culture with their new British culture, as they are often very different. In these situations, the Mass Media is an excellent source for young people in trying to understand how their peers will expect them to behave.

**Gillespie (1995)** found that young Punjabi people used TV soaps to help them understand Western norms and values. **Ali (2003)** found that young Asian Britons used the Mass Media to help them develop a "Brasian" identity.

### CASE STUDY: Gay Identity

Most young gay people come from a family where every other member is heterosexual. This can mean that young gay people often have no openly gay role models in their life, especially if there are no gay people in their school. The Mass Media can be really helpful in helping them understand what it means to be gay as there may be gay characters or gay celebrities they can look up to and use to learn more about being gay.

However, this can be risky as the Mass Media does contain many stereotypes that can cause some young people to feel alienated and even more alone if they do not correspond to the images of gay people in the Mass Media.

### What else does the Mass Media socialise?

The Mass Media does more than just socialise individual identity. Some thinkers have argued that the Mass Media actively shapes our whole society. **Gerbner and Gross (1976)** argued that the Mass Media has helped developed a consumerist/materialist culture where we value owning nice things and having it all. A good example of this could be the media hype surrounding Christmas and Valentine's Day, where we learn to see these as days where we should behave in certain ways and we should be giving and receiving presents.

### Why is the Mass Media so useful for sociologists?

Sociologists argue that the Mass Media is a great source for helping us interpret our own culture as it projects our own beliefs, norms and values back to us. It is also useful to examine certain aspects of the mass media in order to help us understand some subcultures.

### What did Trowler (1996) claim?

Trowler claimed that the media is received by its audience in eight different ways. This can be linked to the different purposes of the mass media.

A window	A mirror
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An interactive link	A barrier
A carrier of information	An interpreter
A filter	A signpost

## AGENT OF SOCIAL CONTROL

### How might it control us?

The Mass Media cannot directly sanction behaviour, but it can have a big impact on how we choose to behave. It is an Agent of Informal Social Control in that it supports society's social control. It does this in several ways:

1. It **demonises** undesirable or deviant behaviour. The audience are clearly shown that deviancy is bad and should be avoided.
2. It shows **consequences** for our actions. This is particularly the case in fiction, where good people have a positive reward and bad people are punished or get their comeuppance.
3. Giving positive **role models** that we are encourage to copy
4. **Repetition** of positive/desirable norms and values

### How useful is it as an Agent of Social Control?

The Mass Media cannot control behaviour on its own. All it can do is reinforce or communicate society's expectations about behaviour. The direct social control must then be performed by other agents like the peer group or the police.

## CHANGES TO THE MASS MEDIA

### Why is this important?

As sociologists, we need to understand how the mass media has changed so that we can assess if these changes have been good or bad for society. We are not overly worried about the technological changes themselves, but rather their impact.

For the exam, you need to be able to explain and evaluate five changes to the Mass Media. For each, consider why this can be good or bad for society.

### What are the changes?

The first three changes are interlinked. Together they have led to media being more accessible and interconnected.

1. **Convergence** of technology: this is the coming together of different forms of media. For example, we can now access many types of media through one platform.
2. **Interactivity**: this is when the audience is encouraged to interact with / participate in the mass media. In the past, the Mass Media was simply presented to its audience as authoritative. Interactivity has been made even easier through the internet.

3. **Intertextuality:** the media now constantly refers to itself. Most media makes reference to other types of media either in passing or as the main focus of the media itself.

These changes have all led to the mass media being **self-perpetuating** – it keeps itself going.

What is Globalisation?

The fourth change we have studied is **globalisation**. This refers to the opening up of the world economically through trade and the mass media. We are now able to communicate instantaneously with people on the other side of the world.

Has Globalisation been good for society?

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Countries are less able to hide immoral behaviour from the global community</li> <li>• It is easier to form links with different cultures and learn from them</li> <li>• We can enrich our own culture and learn about the world</li> <li>• It is easier to trade and so improve our economy</li> <li>• It is easier to communicate with friends and family</li> <li>• It can give people from poorer countries more opportunities.</li> <li>• It can raise awareness of suffering.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This gives richer countries more opportunities to exploit poorer countries who do not have our wealth or our resources or take advantage of those who do not understand how the world works.</li> <li>• It is possible for governments to censor information, so it does not always help freedom of information</li> <li>• The transmission of Western media can lead to other cultures being damaged or eroded in the face of ‘Americanisation.’</li> </ul>

How has ownership changed?

**Ownership** of the mass media has also changed dramatically and is also controversial. There are two main types of modern media owner:

1. Media baron: these are private businesses that own several types of media. An example of this is Rupert Murdoch, who owns News International.
2. Public corporations: these are organisations, usually funded by the taxpayer, that run types of the media. An example of this the BBC.

As technology has changed and globalisation has taken place, so has ownership. There are three main changes to the Mass Media:

1. **Concentration:** a small number of companies own the majority of the mass media. Ownership has become more concentrated.
2. **Globalisation:** media organisation are often international, operating in many different countries.
3. **Diversification:** media organisations now often own lots of types of media. For example they might own a radio station, a newspaper and a TV channel.

Where once a company might have owned one local newspaper or a national TV station, it is more likely that one company owns a range of different types of media in a range of different countries.

#### Have changes to ownership been bad for society?

**Marxist** sociologists argue that these changes are bad. They have left a small number of people (all part of the bourgeoisie) in charge of how information is delivered to millions of people. They argue this allows them to continue to control the proletariat and maintain their authority.

**Pluralist** sociologists argue that these changes are irrelevant. They claim that it is the audience who truly control the mass media – the owners of the mass media have to produce the content that the audience wants to receive, so they are ultimately in control.

#### Have the changes been good for society?

You could well be asked if changes have generally been good or bad for society or if a specific change has been good or bad for society. You need to be prepared to discuss all the changes.

### CONTROLLING CONTENT

#### What controls the content of the mass media?

The content of the Mass Media is carefully selected by different groups and is influenced by several important factors. You need to decide which controller you think has the most power over the content of the mass media. The main controllers are:

1. The **Owner** has control as they hire (and fire) those who work in their organisation and are likely to set the overall ethos and tone of the organisation.
2. The **Audience** decides what it chooses to watch and is the main source of funding for the mass media, so the mass media needs to respond to what the audience wants. This view is supported by pluralists.
3. **Advertisers** are a major source of funding for the mass media. They may be able to exert pressure on mass media to present issues in a certain way or lose their funding.
4. **Journalists** (editors and gatekeepers) actually create the media that is produced and shared. They decide on the day-to-day content.
5. The **Law / Government** have some control over the content of the media. It is illegal, for example to tell lies about someone – to do this is called **libel** and the mass media can be prosecuted for doing this.

#### What about censorship?

**Censorship** refers to when a government or official body restricts freedom of speech (the right to share any information or make any comment you wish without punishment). In the UK, the government carry out some forms of censorship, usually in the name of protecting the vulnerable. This could include:

- Preventing young people from accessing inappropriate content

- Preventing state secrets from becoming general knowledge. This is done through the Official Secrets Act.
- Preventing the mass media from commenting on certain stories that have been protected by legal injunctions (as in the case of Ryan Giggs' super injunction to keep his affair a secret.)

People have mixed feelings about censorship and whether it should be allowed. Some argue that having any form of censorship goes against our right to freedom of information and freedom of speech. This is particularly a Marxist worry. Others argue that it makes sense for the government to keep some secrets, as long as it does not become corrupt. This is a more functionalist attitude.

### What else affects the content of the mass media?

The content of the news and other mass media is also shaped by several factors. This is interesting to sociologists as we might be concerned about how **valid** (trustworthy) the mass media is as a source of information as a result of this. Different factors include:

- Legal constraints: journalists must obey the law and not be **libellous**.
- Practical and financial factors: how much can you write and how much time and money do you have to spend on the content?
- **Agenda-setting**: the organisation is likely to value certain ideas and concepts over others and share information that it feels needs to be shared. This can be influenced by an organisation's political bias.
- **News value**: as the media wish to attract an audience, they will likely print or broadcast stories that are of more interest to the audience. The value of a story may depend on the type of media. For example, a tabloid paper might be more likely to value celebrity gossip than a broadsheet.

### Can we trust the media?

Due to **selection bias** and agenda setting, it can sometimes be hard to trust the media. A good example of this can be seen in national newspapers. These tend to be associated with specific political views. For example, the Guardian is Left Wing while the Telegraph is Right Wing.

## STEREOTYPES AND THE MASS MEDIA

### What is a stereotype?

A **stereotype** is a generalised and simplistic view of a group of people. The Mass Media is in many ways responsible for the creation and spreading of these representations. Stereotypes often begin with an experience of an individual belonging to a group that is then generalised across the entire group (or demographic).

### How does the Mass Media reinforce stereotypes of different groups?

It does this in five main ways:

1. **Distortion:** information about individuals or groups or information about them are changed to give us a specific view (this can be linked to Trowler's filter).
2. **Repetition:** the same image of a group is constantly repeated, so that the audience come to accept it as a reality
3. **Socialisation:** norms and values are constantly shown in the media, showing us how a group does or does not fit in
4. **Invisibility:** those who do not fit the stereotype are hidden in the Mass Media
5. **Role models:** we are given role models who fit in with the stereotype.

### What examples could we use?

You can use any number of examples of different stereotypes and how these are reinforced and represented by the Mass Media. Key examples given by the exam board are **gender** and **race**.

**Provenzo (1991)** found that in video games women are generally passive (a love interest or person to be saved) or belonging to traditionally feminine roles. There are some exceptions, but these are still sexualised.

**Ferguson (1983)** researched women's magazines and found a 'cult of femininity' that effectively gave instructions on how to be a woman.

We can see similar trends in the Mass Media regarding gender; where female characters in fiction are powerful they also tend to be represented as against the norm. They are often cast as either the sex object (Tunstall) or as a housewife/mother.

There are also many stereotypes of ethnic groups found in the Mass Media. This can be seen in the presentation of black women, for example. **Mirza (1997)** argued that black British women are only represented in specific roles such as grateful worker, dutiful daughter or powerful mother figure. Other stereotypes might be that black men like rap and come from housing estates or that Asian children are geeks.

Other examples could be different religious groups, age groups, gay people, different social classes, students and the unemployed.

### Is the media responsible for stereotypes?

Some people have argued that the media creates and maintains stereotypical views. However, some have said that the stereotypes must have come from somewhere. This suggests that the media is simply reflecting our society's own prejudices. For example, if the media is supporting sexist stereotypes maybe this is because our society is sexist.

## THE AUDIENCE AND THE MASS MEDIA

### What is the debate?

Sociologists argue over how passive the **audience** is. The audience are those who receive the media. The question is to what extent the media affects the audience's view of the world.

### Media Effects Models

There are four different models (explanations) for how the mass media and the audience relate to one another:

1. **The Hypodermic Syringe Model:** this is the belief that the media 'injects' us with norms and values. This has an immediate effect on the audience, who accept everything the media broadcasts. For example, if I watch something violent, I am more open to violence.
2. **Cultural Effects Model:** this is sometimes called the 'drip drip' or 'leaky tap' model. The audience are passive, but it takes time for them to absorb the norms and values. Ideas have to be repeated again and again but eventually they become 'normalised.'
3. **Two-Step Flow Model:** The audience does not always trust the mass media, but many figures in the media are seen to be opinion leaders. When they state something to be true we tend to believe them.
4. **Uses and Gratifications Model:** this argues that the audience are not passive – they control the media by choosing what media to access. We only use the media that gratifies us (that we like) so the media has to produce what we want it to. This can be linked to **pluralism**.

### What are moral panics?

A moral panic is when the media causes a group, person or situation to be seen as a threat to society. For example, in the 1990s, there was a great deal of concern (fuelled by the media) that girls were deliberately getting pregnant to get council flats. Other examples of moral panics could be fears about paedophiles having access to children or that 'chavs' represent a danger to 'normal people.' A famous study was done by Stanley Cohen, who found that the media made a conflict between two different groups (Mods and Rockers) become a national conflict between *all* Mods and Rockers in the UK. This would also suggest that audience is passive and is easily controlled or manipulated by the mass media.

### How are moral panics spread?

The media spread moral panics by:

1. Focusing on one group, individual or situation
2. Repeating the same coverage of that group
3. Sensationalising coverage (making it sound more exciting)
4. Distortion
5. Exaggeration
6. Stereotyping and the creation of **folk devils** (individuals or groups that are seen to be the enemy of society, e.g. chavs)
7. Calling for immediate action against the group, person or situation.



A modern example of moral panic could be the current concerns over immigration and benefit fraud. Newspapers often find sensational examples of people who have immigrated or of those who are claiming high benefits and use this to create a moral panic.

## Paper 3: Applying Sociological Research Techniques

### **RESEARCH METHODS AND TECHNIQUES**

#### How does this exam work?

The focus of this exam is on applying the research techniques you learned about for Paper 1: Sociology Basics. You need to have carefully analysed the Pre-Release (this will have been covered by Mrs Wilson) and then you need to ensure that you have evaluated it using the technical language you have learned.

#### What is the Pre-Release?

The Pre-Release is made up of two investigations into similar issues. Each of them will have strengths and weaknesses which you will identify with Mrs Wilson. In the exam you will then be asked questions on the Pre-Release itself.

#### What do you need to be able to do?

1. **Identify and describe** the methods and techniques used in both investigations
2. **Explain** how methods have been used
3. **Interpret** the results of the investigations
4. **Explain** how well the methods and techniques have been applied
5. **Identify and explain** any problems or weaknesses in the investigations
6. **Evaluate** the investigations and identify **improvements**
7. **Compare** all or any of the parts of the investigation. For example, you may be asked to compare the sampling methods of the investigations.

Make sure you have identified the **hypothesis, primary methods, secondary evidence, sampling methods, findings, types of data** and **strengths and weaknesses**.

# GOOD LUCK!