



Welcome to Sociology

Part of the Social Science Department at King Edward VI Lichfield School

The purpose of this pack is to prepare you for your studies in September by getting you more familiar with the subject of sociology, which should help you in making the transition from GCSE to A Level study.

This document aims to provide you with:

- basic information about the course
- guidance on how you can prepare for a successful start to your A Level course

We follow the AQA A Level Specification which you can view [here](#).

The course at a glance

As you can see from the diagram below, there are three exam papers (2 hours long) that are all taken in the summer of Year 13. There is no coursework or modular exams in this course. Don't worry if you are not a massive fan of exams, as we spend a huge amount of time on improving our exam technique, so you'll be an exams expert by the end of the two years.

A LEVEL SOCIOLOGY

7192 - Paper 1	7192 - Paper 2	7192 - Paper 3
<p>- Education - Theory & Methods</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"></div> <p style="text-align: center;">Summer Exam (2 hours) 80 marks - 33.3% of A Level</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4 marks - Education 6 marks - Education 10 marks - Education 30 marks - Education</p> <p style="text-align: center;">20 marks - Methods in Context 10 marks - Theory & Methods</p>	<p>- Families & Households - Belief Systems</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"></div> <p style="text-align: center;">Summer Exam (2 hours) 80 marks - 33.3% of A Level</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10 marks - Family 10 marks - Family 20 marks - Family</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10 marks - Beliefs 10 marks - Beliefs 20 marks - Beliefs</p>	<p>- Crime & Deviance - Theory & Methods</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"></div> <p style="text-align: center;">Summer Exam (2 hours) 80 marks - 33.3% of A Level</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4 marks - Crime 6 marks - Crime 10 marks - Crime 30 marks - Crime</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10 marks - Theory & Methods 20 marks - Theory & Methods</p>

What will I be studying in Year 12?

With sociology being an unfamiliar subject for most students (we don't teach it as a GCSE at KES), we spend a couple of weeks at the beginning of the course looking at the origins of social thought and the key themes and concepts that run throughout the subject. Sociology is the study of contemporary society, so we spend a lot of our time in exploring the issues that currently affect us in British society. Sociologists are inquisitive (that is a nice way of saying 'nosey') about what is going on and why people are behaving in the way that they are.

Match up the examples of social issues below with the three topics that we study in Y12 (Research Methods, Family and Education – the first one has been filled in for you)

- Why do girls perform better at GCSE than boys? Education
- Who should look after the elderly (ageing population)? _____
- Can sociology solve society's problems? _____
- What impact will same-sex marriage have? _____
- Should we get rid of examinations? _____
- What is the best way to study domestic violence? _____
- Why are people having less children? _____
- Do teachers have their 'favourite' students? _____
- What is it like to be a member of a gang? _____

As part of your Y12 trial exams during the summer term, there will be a single 2-hour paper for sociology (usually containing questions on the topics of 'Education' and 'The Family').

What will I be studying in Year 13?

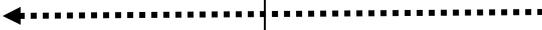
We try and get through the majority of course content in Year 12, which enables us to spend more quality time in Year 13 looking at why people commit crime and believe in all sorts of weird and wonderful things (including ghosts). We aim to finish the course content by Easter at the latest, to give us plenty of time to prepare and revise for the final examinations.

Background reading and viewing

With sociology being about social groups and behaviour, anything that you can read or watch relating to society will help you prepare for the course. It goes without saying that we would prefer you to improve your reading skills, as sociology is very much a reading and writing subject, but this is also a legitimate opportunity for you to watch as many films and documentaries as possible.



We live in a particular type of society, so it's interesting to look at alternative societies. To get you thinking, place the words that are connected to British society in the list provided into the box below:

 <p><u>BRITISH SOCIETY</u></p> 	<p><u>WORD LIST</u></p> <p>Tribal Advanced Industrial Agricultural Republic Monarchy Democracy Dictatorship Capitalist Communist Multi-cultural Mono-cultural Utopian</p>
---	--

If you read only one book to prepare for the course, then make it '1984' by George Orwell (who also wrote the amazing 'Animal Farm'). Even though it was published all the way back in 1949, it is still one of the best descriptions of a possible future society. Spoiler alert! We now know that Orwell's prophecies did not actually occur by 1984 but his work has influenced recent 'dystopian' writers such as Margaret Atwood ('The Handmaid's Tale'). It is from '1984' that we get the idea of 'Big Brother', 'Room 101' and 'The Thought Police' from. Even though the book is older than your grandparents, it is a captivating story, not too long and easy to read.



[Free online book](#)

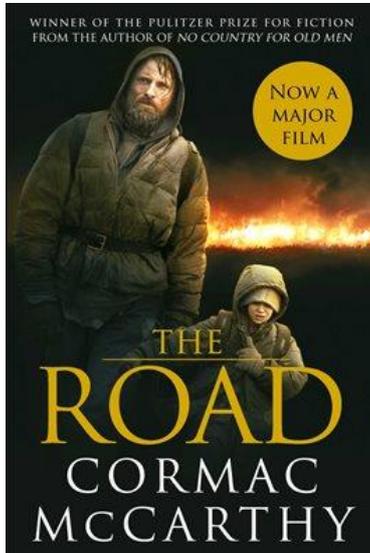
Some clips to watch:

[Why '1984' still matters – BBC](#)

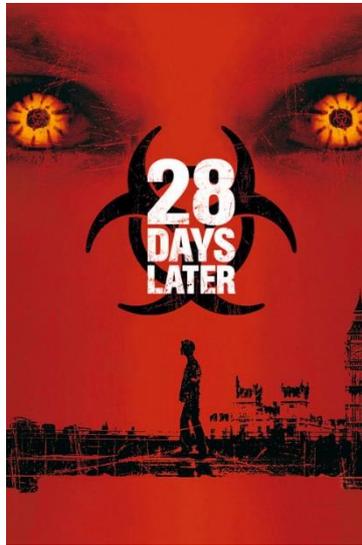
[Film trailer – interestingly from 1984](#)

Note down the key ideas from '1984':

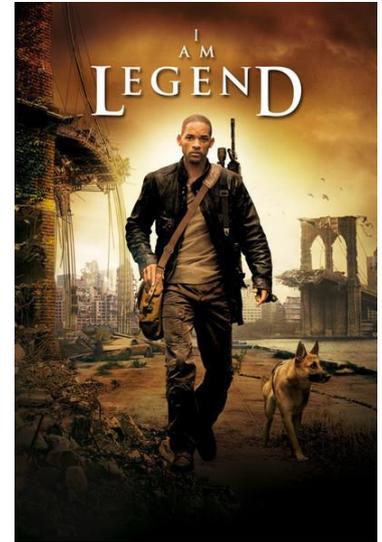
One way of understanding how our large and complex society functions (even during a crisis) is to look at what happens when society breaks down, so we would encourage you to explore the growing genre of apocalyptic literature. A very dark but gripping read is Cormac McCarthy's 'The Road', which was also turned into a feature film. We can also highly recommend '28 Days Later' (with a very young Cillian Murphy from 'Peaky Blinders') and 'I Am Legend'.



[trailer](#)



[trailer](#)



[trailer](#)

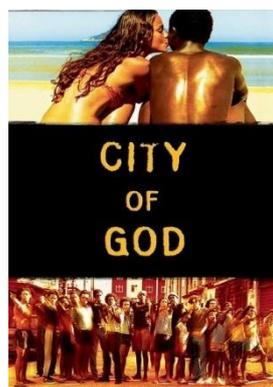
What do films, like those above, suggest will happen to society in a post-apocalyptic world?

Here is a selection of films, some old and some new, that have strong sociological themes:



Useful for: mental health, power of institutions

[trailer](#)



Useful for: crime, ethnicity, Social class, inequality

[trailer](#)



Useful for: education, ethnicity, social class, labelling, methods

[trailer](#)



Useful for: gender, equality, power, identity, feminism

[trailer](#)

Transition Pack - A Level Sociology

The following films will provide you with a better understanding of some of the historical eras that we examine in the course:



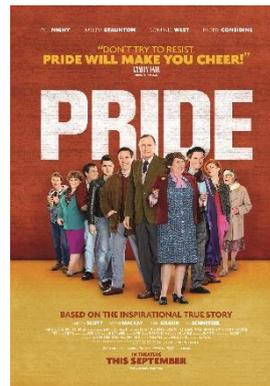
Useful for: youth culture, 1960s, mass media

[trailer](#)



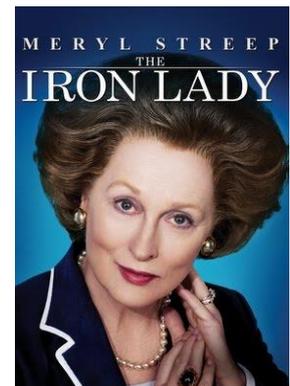
Useful for: feminism 1960s, gender inequality

[trailer](#)



Useful for: sexuality, 1980s, identity, Marxism

[trailer](#)

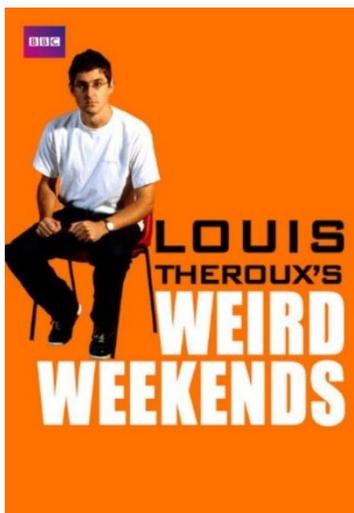


Useful for: Thatcherism, 1980s, politics

[trailer](#)

There is also an abundance of really good documentaries and films on Netflix, Amazon Prime, etc. connected to crime and deviance, so anything that you watch on serial killers and true crime stories will be useful for Year 13.

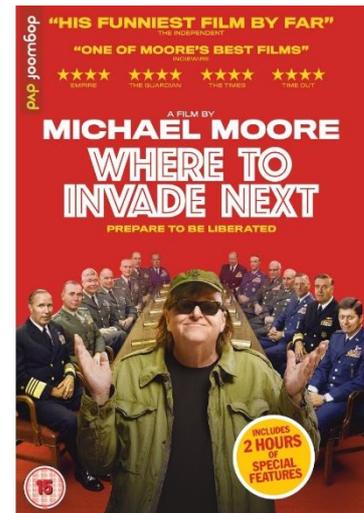
A great deal of sociological research involves spending time with people in order to understand their way of life and how they view the world; a technique used in the following documentaries:



[trailer](#)



[trailer](#)



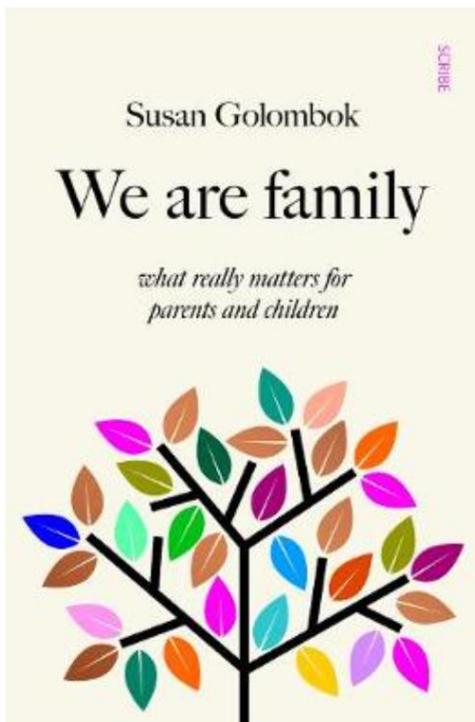
[trailer](#)

Note down any books, films or documentaries that you have read or watched that would be good for sociology (we always like to hear new recommendations from students):

Carrying out sociological research

Even though there is a lot of theorising and debating within sociology, it is actually a very practical subject, with sociologists carrying out research into all sorts of weird and wonderful aspects of human life. Sociologists tend to be based in universities, dividing their time between giving lectures to students and conducting research, which they will either publish in a journal or a book.

Here are a couple of examples of recent pieces of published research:

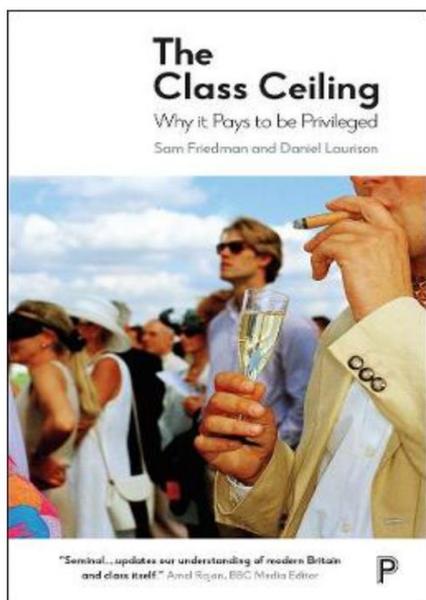


Our understanding of what makes a family has undergone a revolution in the last few decades, from same-sex parenthood to surrogacy, donor conception, and IVF. But what has the impact been on children?

In *We Are Family*, Professor Susan Golombok visits lesbian mothers, gay fathers, single parents, donor conception parents, co-parents, trans parents, surrogates, and donors, and, more importantly, their children, to find out if they are as well-adjusted, happy, and emotionally stable as children from traditional nuclear families. And she discovers that the answer is yes - and sometimes even more so.

Susan's work at the Centre for Family Research at Cambridge University proves that any family set-up can provide a loving, secure home for a child - although, the children from these families will often face prejudiced attitudes from others. Since the 1970s, when she was first drawn to this area of research after reading about lesbian mothers whose children were being removed from their care, Susan has worked tirelessly to challenge outdated attitudes and prevent families being split up for no good reason. This book tells the stories of those families - their struggles and their triumphs - while celebrating love and family in all its wonderful variations.

Publisher: Scribe Publications (2020)



Politicians continually tell us that anyone can get ahead. But is that really true? This important, best-selling book takes readers behind the closed doors of elite employers to reveal how class affects who gets to the top. Sam Friedman (Associate Professor of Sociology at The London School of Economics) and Daniel Laurison (Assistant Professor of Sociology at Swarthmore College USA) show that a powerful 'class pay gap' exists in Britain's elite occupations. Even when those from working-class backgrounds make it into prestigious jobs, they earn, on average, 16% less than colleagues from privileged backgrounds. But why is this the case? Drawing on 175 interviews across four case studies - television, accountancy, architecture, and acting - they explore the complex barriers facing the upwardly mobile. This is a rich, ambitious book that demands we take seriously not just the glass but also the class ceiling.

Publisher: Policy Press (2020)

As well as carrying out their own independent research, sociologists often work for, or are commissioned by, government organisations, think tanks, charities, pressure groups, etc. Read this report on ['Troubled Teens'](#) (you can read as deeply as you feel that you can cope with) and try to answer the following questions:

1	Who wrote the report and what job does he do within The Children's Society? (here is some help) ?	
2	Who did he work for prior to joining The Children's Society? (here is some help)	
3	What is The Children's Society? (here is some help)	

4	What is the 'hidden' background to The Children's Society? (here is some help)	
5	When was the report written?	
6	What was the aim of the study?	
7	What method was used to carry out the study?	
8	How many teenagers were involved in the study?	
9	Note down three key findings from the research (in your own words).	
10	This is a tricky one, but thinking about The Children's Society's Christian values; what changes in society do you think that they would they recommend to prevent teenagers being neglected?	

What are the lessons like?

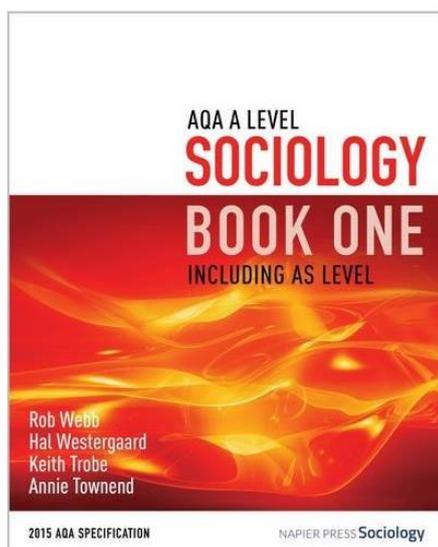
Your sociology lessons will be similar to what you've experienced going through this pack, as they tend to be a combination of reading, taking notes, watching clips, exploring research and discussion. You will be encouraged to develop your organisational skills, your independent learning and also your confidence in speaking and presenting in front of your peers. As mentioned previously, there is a strong emphasis on exam technique, but we also like to foster a wider interest in the subject, rather than relentlessly focusing on the specification and examination.



What books will I need?

Rather than relying on one specific textbook, which can quickly get out of date, we tend to use handouts (very much like the format of this pack) which contain some narrative, images and blank space for us to note down our own thoughts or observations. You will also be asked to complete self-study sheets for homework, where you will in essence be creating a set of notes through answering questions and completing activities.

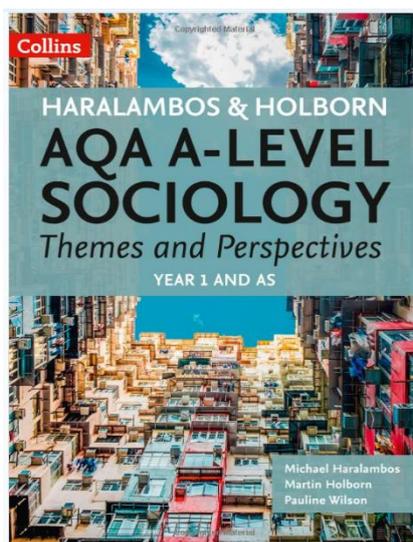
The following textbooks are probably some of the best if you are looking to do some background reading for Year 12:



AQA A Level Sociology Book One
Including AS Level

by Rob Webb, Hal Westergaard,
Keith Trobe, Annie Townend

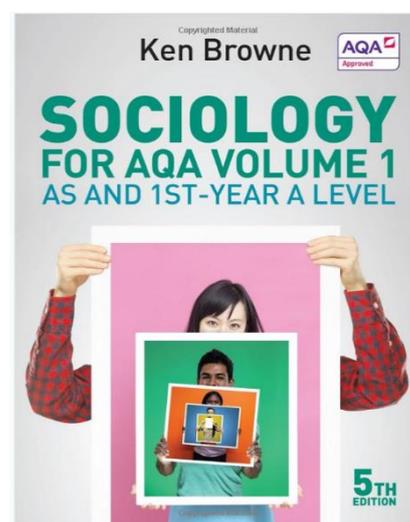
Published by Napier Press



AQA A Level Sociology Themes and
Perspectives: Year 1 and AS

by Michael Haralambos, Martin
Holborn, et al.

Published by Collins



Sociology for AQA, Vol. 1: AS and
1st-Year A Level Paperback

by Ken Browne

Published by Polity Press

Who will be teaching me?

You will likely have the experienced 'tag team' of Mr Shaw and Ms Bailiss teaching you. Mr Shaw has been teaching sociology for over 25 years. He's also taught history, geography, health & social care, and even a spot of PE in the distant past. He's a stereotypical Scot, with a love of bagpipes and wearing skirts. Ms Bailiss has been teaching sociology for about the last 8 years and English for considerably longer. She's got a 'wicked' sense of humour and a soft centre surrounded by a tough radical feminist coating. You will usually have four lessons a fortnight with Ms Bailiss and five lessons with Mr Shaw. In Year 12, Ms Bailiss with focus on the topic of 'Families and Households' whilst Mr Shaw will concentrate on 'Research Methods' and 'Education'.



It would be useful to become familiar with some of the terminology that we use throughout the course, so your final task is to write down a definition for the following key words and draw a 'symbol' that could be associated with it.

Term	Definition	Symbol
Society	A grouping of individuals who are connected by a network of social relations, traditions, culture and institutions.	
Culture		
Socialisation		
Social Control		
Social Construction		
Theory		

If you would like any additional information about the course, then please e-mail

mshaw@kingedwardvi-lichfield.staffs.sch.uk

We look forward to meeting you in September.