

Sociology A Level

Sociology is the study of human social life. There are many different aspects of Sociology to address, so you must be curious and attentive to looking at the world in a different way!



Look at this photograph the other way; not everything is as it seems!

There is usually another way of looking at things – and that is what we do as sociologists.

We take normal, taken-for-granted life and turn it upside down, looking for meanings and very often we end up seeing things very differently.

Social Change

The social world is changing. Some argue it is growing; others say it is shrinking. The important point to grasp is: society does not remain static over time; it constantly changes

– Through decades, centuries; and across countries, societies.

Task 1

Think of 3 different ways society has changed over the last 100yrs.

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Name three ways in which British society is different to another (America, Italy, Afghanistan etc)

Why has society changed? Why are societies different

Norms

Norms are social rules that define correct and acceptable behaviour in a society or social group to which people are expected to conform. They are essential to human society. They guide and direct our behaviour and allow us both to understand and predict the behaviour of others.

Norms exist in all areas of social life. In Britain, being late for work or an appointment; jumping queues in supermarkets; never saying hello to friends are likely to be seen as rude or annoying because they are not following the norms of accepted behaviour.

Norms are usually enforced informally—by the disapproval of other people, embarrassment, or a ‘telling off’ from parents.

Task

Think of some examples of how you behave differently for each of the environments below.

School:

Home:

Friend’s house:

Values

Values are less specific than norms. They are general guides for behaviour. Values are ideas and beliefs about what is ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ and about standards which are worth maintaining and achieving in any society. In Britain, values include beliefs about respect for human life, privacy and private property, about the importance of marriage and the importance of money and success.

Task What do you hold strong views on?