

2b. Content of A Level in Sociology (H580)

The A level specification content is set out in **three** parts:

- 1 Key questions** – the key question to be explored.
- 2 Content** – sociological themes, concepts, theories and ideas which should be included for each key issue.

- 3 Learners should** – this provides content amplification to explain in more detail what learners need to know for the assessment of this qualification.

Although not directly assessed, learners are encouraged to carry out their own small-scale research projects as a way of enhancing their sociological understanding of methodology, substantive topic areas and core themes.

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2c. Content of Socialisation, culture and identity: (01)

This component introduces learners to the key themes of socialisation, culture and identity and develops these themes through the context of **one** of three options either: Families and relationships, Youth subcultures or Media. These options develop skills that enable individuals to focus on their personal identity,

roles and responsibilities within society and develop a lifelong interest in social issues.

The following tables outline the content that must be studied. This is split into two sections, Section A and Section B.

Section A: Introducing socialisation, culture and identity		
Key questions	Content	Learners should:
1. What is culture?	Culture, norms and values Types of culture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subculture • high culture • popular culture • global culture • consumer culture Cultural diversity Cultural hybridity	be able to understand the relative nature of culture, norms and values. Cross-cultural material should be used here.
2. What is socialisation?	Primary and secondary socialisation	be able to link definitions of primary socialisation and secondary socialisation to relevant agencies of socialisation, understanding that socialisation is a lifelong process.

Key questions	Content	Learners should:
<p><i>cont.</i></p> <p>What is socialisation?</p>	<p>Agencies of socialisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • family • peer group • media • religion • education • workplace <p>Nature/nurture debate</p> <p>Formal agencies of social control:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • police • law/legal system • courts • government • military <p>Informal agencies of social control:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • family • peer group/subcultures • media • religion • education • workplace 	<p>understand the link between socialisation and the creation of identities.</p> <p>consider the implications of the nature/nurture debate for an understanding of socialisation.</p> <p>explore the overlap between formal and informal social control for work, education and religion.</p>
<p>3. What is identity?</p>	<p>The concept of identity</p> <p>Aspects of identity and the associated cultural characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethnicity • nationality • gender • social class • sexuality • age • disability <p>Hybrid identities</p>	<p>understand how identities are created including the influence of agencies of socialisation.</p> <p>understand the different aspects of an individual's identity, their relative importance to individuals and ways in which they may intersect.</p> <p>consider changing identities.</p>

Section B Option 1: Families and relationships

This option focuses on the family as a central agency of socialisation and a main transmitter of culture in contemporary society. It allows learners to explore contemporary family structures and relationships.

Key questions	Content	Learners should:
<p>1. How diverse are modern families?</p>	<p>The diversity of family and household types in the contemporary UK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nuclear families • extended families • lone parent families • reconstituted families • same-sex families • non-family households <p>Aspects of and reasons for family and household diversity in the contemporary UK, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trends in marriage, divorce and cohabitation • demographic changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ birth-rate ○ family size ○ age at marriage ○ age of child-bearing ○ ageing population • family diversity in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ social class ○ ethnicity ○ sexuality <p>The ideology of the nuclear family and the theoretical debates about the role and desirability of the nuclear family in contemporary society:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • functionalism • New Right • Marxism • feminism • postmodernism <p>Debates about the extent of family diversity in the contemporary UK</p>	<p>also consider newer/emerging types of families and households.</p> <p>have an overview of trends over the last 30 years and consider the key reasons for these changes. Detailed knowledge of statistics on marriage, divorce and demographic changes is not required.</p> <p>consider issues of consensus versus conflict, social order and control in relation to theoretical views of the role of the family in contemporary society. A theoretical approach to considering the extent of family diversity should be taken.</p>

Section B: Understanding social inequalities

Within this section learners will have the opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding of contemporary patterns and trends of social inequality. Learners are able to engage in theoretical debate, explore conceptual issues and develop skills of analysis and evaluation of sociological research and evidence.

Key questions

Content

Learners should:

1. What are the main patterns and trends in social inequality and difference?

Social inequality and difference in relation to:

- social class
- gender
- ethnicity
- age

consider the main patterns and trends in relation to work and employment.

consider evidence of social inequalities from a range of areas of social life.

consider how social inequalities affect life chances.

2. How can patterns and trends in social inequality and difference be explained?

The main sociological explanations of social inequality and difference:

- functionalism
- Marxism
- Weberian
- feminism
- New Right

have an understanding of the distinctive concepts and ideas associated with each theory.

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Section B Option 1: Crime and deviance

This option focuses on debates in contemporary society through a detailed study of crime and deviance. The social construction of crime and deviance are considered and the ways in which crime is socially distributed, explained and reduced. This option introduces a global dimension, with reference to patterns and trends. It aims to give an understanding of different theoretical approaches to the study of crime and deviance.

Key questions

Content

Learners should:

1. How are crime and deviance defined and measured?

- Definitions:
- crime and deviance
 - social order
 - social control
 - the relativity of crime and deviance
 - the social construction of crime and deviance
- Measuring crime:
- official crime statistics
 - victim surveys
 - self-report studies

- consider the relativity of crime and deviance over time, between societies and within societies.
- consider the advantages and disadvantages of each way of measuring crime.
- have awareness that official crime statistics could include police recorded crime figures and the Crime Survey for England and Wales.

2. What are the patterns and trends in crime?

- The social distribution of offending and victimisation:
- social class
 - gender
 - age
 - ethnicity
- Patterns of crime in a global context:
- global organised crime
 - green crime

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