

# TCEAT Curriculum & Assessment Overview: Sociology

## Course description and overarching aims (Intent)

The study of Sociology focuses on contemporary society and fosters the development of critical and reflective thinking with a respect for social diversity. It provides an awareness of the importance of social structure and social action in explaining social issues. Students are encouraged to develop their own sociological awareness through active engagement with the contemporary social world. Students will acquire knowledge and a critical understanding of contemporary social processes and social changes; appreciate the significance of theoretical and conceptual issues in sociological debate; develop skills that enable individuals to focus on their personal identity, roles and responsibilities within society and develop a lifelong interest in social issues. A-level Sociology offers an engaging and effective introduction to Sociology. Students will learn the fundamentals of the subject and develop skills valued by higher education (HE) and employers, including critical analysis, independent thinking and research. The course is accessible to a cross-section of students, regardless of whether they have studied the subject before. Students build on skills developed in the sciences and humanities, enabling progression into a wide range of other subjects.

Sociology is about developing a critical awareness of how society works. In developing this understanding, sociology can itself contribute to changes in society for example by highlighting and explaining social problems. Sociological theory helps students to become a critical thinker because it exposes them to many different ways of seeing the social world and with so much political and ethnic friction at the moment, having an informed sense as to why this is happening helps them to engage with many different kinds of people, subjects and careers.

## Curriculum model overview (Implementation)

How is our curriculum planned and why:

The A-level sociology curriculum is delivered across a two-year linear course, with all exams taken at the end of year 13. However, the curriculum areas covered in the first year of study are those which meet both the AS and A-level specification (to allow for rare cases where students may end up taking the AS level at Twyford or another centre).

The ordering of the teaching units has been arranged in a way that allows students to develop their writing skills incrementally. For example, starting year 12 with the Work, Poverty and Welfare unit (a Paper 2 unit) enables students to attempt, practise and develop their writing of 20 - mark essay questions before they move on to tackle the 30-mark essay questions required for the Education unit (a Paper 1 unit). This ordering of the teaching units also allows students to build up their sociological knowledge and understanding cumulatively and maximises on opportunities for synopticity as students are able to link curriculum areas together in a way that makes sense. The learning students establish in their Research Methods unit for example, facilitates a much easier delivery of the Methods in Context curriculum contained within the Education unit. By the time students move on to study their final unit on Crime and Deviance (which not only requires students to produce 30-mark essays but also a much more sophisticated appreciation and application of complex sociological theory), students are well equipped to master the unit because of the broad understanding they have developed throughout the prior units taught.

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The main teaching units are all delivered by the February half term of year 13. The remainder of year 13 is given over to revisiting the curriculum, consolidating students' sociological understanding and fine-tuning students' exam skills. This is delivered through a comprehensive scheme of revision lessons, lesson prep activities and 'surprise assessments', tweaked each year according to student demand and need. A full programme of mock exams is also arranged for the spring and summer terms of year 13.

Throughout the course students are kept abreast of sociologically relevant current affairs by their teacher. They are also provided with much opportunity for enriching and extending their sociological imaginations. Stretch opportunities are taken seriously and students are always made aware of how these link to and support the curriculum.

## Assessment Objectives

We have overarching objectives which summarise the skills covered, or the handling of content involved. The internal school assessment system has integrated assessment objectives so that students can be aware of and consciously work on the different strands of content and skills within the subject /course. The internal school system uses the same objectives from Year 7 to Year 13 so that students can build the habit of subject specific self-review as a continuous process from KS3 to KS5

### **Sociology Assessment Objectives**

#### **AO1 Knowledge and understanding**

This involves demonstrating knowledge and understanding of sociological theories, concepts and evidence, and of the range of research methods and sources of information used by sociologists, and the practical, ethical and theoretical issues arising in sociological research.

#### **AO2 Application**

This involves applying sociological theories, concepts, evidence and research methods to a range issues.

#### **AO3 Analysis and evaluation**

This involves things like being able to recognise and criticise sociologically information, to recognise the strengths and weaknesses of sociological theories and evidence, to present information, to recognise the strengths and weaknesses of sociological theories and evidence, to present arguments, make judgements and reach conclusions based on the arguments and evidence presented.

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## Knowledge:

**Substantive knowledge** - The main categories that account for the accepted conventions and facts of our subject:

The study of Sociology must focus on contemporary society and foster the development of critical and reflective thinking with a respect for social diversity. It must provide an awareness of the importance of social structure and social action in explaining social issues. Students must be encouraged to develop their own sociological awareness through active engagement with the contemporary social world.

- Students must study the following two core themes:

1. Socialisation, culture and identity
2. Social differentiation, power and stratification

These themes are broad threads running through many areas of social life so are not regarded as discrete topics.

- Students must understand the significance of conflict and consensus, social structure and social action, and the role of values.
- Students will study the nature of sociological thought, including concepts such as social order, social control, social change, conflict and consensus.
- Students will learn methods of sociological inquiry, including research techniques and practical and ethical issues in collecting data.

**Disciplinary knowledge** - The main subject skills, procedures, thinking structures and behaviours of our subject such as:

- Acquire knowledge and a critical understanding of contemporary social processes and social changes
- Understanding sociological theories, perspectives and methods
- Appreciate the significance of theoretical and conceptual issues in sociological debate
- Understand and evaluate sociological methodology and a range of research methods through active involvement in the research process
- Critically assess the design of the research used to obtain the data under consideration, including its strengths and limitations
- Develop the synoptic ability to draw together the knowledge, understanding and skills learnt in different aspects of the course
- Understand of UK society today, with consideration of the comparative dimensions where relevant, including the sitting of UK society within its globalised context.
- Develop skills that enable individuals to focus on their personal identity, roles and responsibilities within society
- Develop a lifelong interest in social issues.

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## Disciplinary Literacy -

Opportunities for promoting and developing students' literacy are fully embedded throughout the A-level course and these are reviewed and improved on continuously. Students are well supported through the gradual approach taken towards building up their writing abilities incrementally. This has been created in consultation with the guidance and recommendations set out by the EEF in their Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools report:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/guidance-reports/improving-literacy-in-secondary-schools/>. Some strategies for developing students literacy in sociology include using pre-writing activities, question deconstruction and interpretation tasks, writing introductions, writing good paragraphs (the sociology sandwich), writing conclusions, planning whole essays, using model essays to embed the writing process and upskilling to A/A\* essay writing.

## Curriculum two-year plan:

The Sociology curriculum is designed to converge at key points throughout the academic year. Students will follow the TCEAT curriculum as mapped below:

### Course content is split into 6 teaching units:

- Work, Poverty and Welfare
- Research Methods
- Education with Methods in Context
- Global Development
- Crime and Deviance
- Theory and Methods

### The Sociology curriculum map is as follows:

	Year 12	Year 13
Autumn Half term 1:1	Work, Poverty and Welfare	Theory and Methods
Q1 assessment		

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<b>Autumn Half term 1:2</b>	Work, Poverty and Welfare  Research Methods	Theory and Methods  Crime and Deviance
Q2 assessment		
<b>Spring Half term 2:1</b>	Education with Methods in Context	Crime and Deviance
<b>Spring Half term 2:2</b>	Education with Methods in Context	Revision
Q3 assessment		
<b>Summer Half term 3:1</b>	Global Development	Revision
Q4 assessment		
<b>Summer Half term 3:2</b>	Global Development	Study leave

### Curriculum Content in depth:

#### Work, Poverty and Welfare

- The nature, existence and persistence of poverty in contemporary society
- The distribution of poverty, wealth and income between different social groups
- Responses and solutions to poverty by the state and by private, voluntary and informal welfare providers in contemporary society
- Organisation and control of the labour process, including the division of labour, the role of technology, skill and de-skilling
- The significance of work and worklessness for people's lives and life chances, including the effects of globalisation

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## Research Methods:

- Quantitative and qualitative methods of research; research design.
- Sources of data, including questionnaires, interviews, participant and non-participant observation, experiments, documents and official statistics.
- The distinction between primary and secondary data, and between quantitative and qualitative data.
- The relationship between positivism, interpretivism and sociological methods; the nature of 'social facts'.
- The theoretical, practical and ethical considerations influencing choice of topic, choice of method(s) and the conduct of research.

## Education:

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

## Methods in context:

- The application of the range of primary and secondary methods and sources of data to the particular topics studied in education, with specific reference to the strengths and limitations of the different methods and sources of data in different educational contexts.

## Global Development

- Development, underdevelopment and global inequality
- Globalisation and its influence on the cultural, political and economic relationships between societies
- The role of transnational corporations, non-governmental organisations and international agencies in local and global strategies for development
- Development in relation to aid and trade, industrialisation, urbanisation, the environment, and war and conflict
- Employment, education, health, demographic change and gender as aspects of development.

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## Theory and Methods

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

## Crime and Deviance

- Crime, deviance, social order and social control
- The social distribution of crime and deviance by ethnicity, gender and social class, including recent patterns and trends in crime
- Globalisation and crime in contemporary society; the media and crime; green crime; human rights and state crimes
- Crime control, surveillance, prevention and punishment, victims, and the role of the criminal justice system and other agencies.

## Approaches to learning

Lessons are sequenced chronologically within each teaching unit, according to the detailed curriculum overviews provided by AQA. There are 6 teaching units altogether with each broken down into further sub-sections. All sociology classes are mixed ability and lessons tend to follow established patterns and routines which students become familiar with over time. Every lesson starts with a 'do now' task, linked to students' lesson prep task or learning from a previous lesson. Learning is then scaffolded – starting with the minimum essential knowledge for a C grade student, gradually building up to more detailed knowledge. Writing frames allow for introductory information to be delivered and recorded effectively with students only writing in the key terminology/concepts to save time and keep attention. Students will then complete additional tasks independently. These activities range in difficulty and are graduated with additional extension stretch tasks available as needed. This part of the lesson is flexible and may include paired work, whole class discussion, targeted questioning and further teacher explanation where necessary. Understanding is checked and/or solutions are provided. Lessons finish with plenary that checks the learning aims by way of a low-stakes assessment or relevant assessment planning task.

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## Assessment

The Trust assessment policy is central to support the 10:10 ethic which informs the ethos of all of the Trust's schools. Effective assessment allows students to know when and how they have done well, it identifies areas of weakness and supports students to know where they have got to improve. The school assessment system is entirely formative as all assessments are designed to be diagnostic for both the students and the teacher, designed to provide information on progress and provide feedback on areas for improvement as part of a feedback loop. The delivery of the curriculum in all subjects allows for a range of assessment activities including:

### AfL – Assessment for Learning

AfL is critical to learning. Throughout each lesson students will be given opportunities test their understanding and give their teacher opportunities to identify issues and correct misunderstandings on the spot. All teachers utilise strategies to ensure they can assess whole class progress rapidly & target support within lessons. These strategies include the use of mini whiteboards, green pens (used to distinguish student self-marking /correction from that of the teacher), self-assessment, peer-assessment, circulation, live marking using a visualiser and various types of questioning.

### Prep

Prep is designed to support learners to retain and retrieve information therefore strengthening long-term memory. In KS5 preps are no longer than 60 minutes in length, set each lesson with a due date of the next timetabled lesson. This work is to be completed outside of the classroom (at home or in study club) and is designed to consolidate learning and prepare students for their next lesson.

Year 12 students are provided with booklets and reading packs for the completion of their lesson prep. Their guided lesson prep tasks encourage good note-taking habits, slowly preparing students for their own independent revision in year 13, but also helping students to develop a skill set that will be useful for further/higher education. Year 13 students complete a series of revision tasks and exam questions for lesson prep – this is focused on recalling, consolidating and retaining the year 12 curriculum whilst we cover the remaining year 13 units in lessons. It also starts students off on their independent revision. In the final two terms, year 13 students are given considerable freedom with their revision, presenting their work weekly within an agreed set of expectations and formats.

### Standardised assessments

In Sociology, students complete four timed mini assessments each term. This is in addition to the formal quarterly assessment points. The frequency of in-class assessments is intended to improve students timing, particularly with regards to their essay but also to foster a familiarity with the pressure of writing



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under timed conditions in silence. Mini assessments are based on the unit currently being studied using exam paper sections and questions to allow students to build up their exam skills gradually. In year 13 students complete two series of mock exams before and after the Easter break in preparation for their final summer exams in June.

Students always complete sociology assessments under traditional exam style timed conditions but benefit from structured and scaffolded support which is gradually reduced throughout the course until students are planning unseen questions on the spot and writing solely from their memory. Good essay writing skills are established in year 12 through detailed whole-class essay planning which students keep with them during assessments for reference. Students are also provided with useful prompts during their assessments e.g. for starting paragraphs, writing conclusions, signposting analysis and evaluation to the examiner etc. The amount of teacher led instruction and planning is slowly withdrawn, encouraging students to have confidence in their ability to succeed and tackle exam papers. Ultimately students will produce essays of a much higher standard when they don't know the question set, aren't following a pre-written plan and have to recall and select relevant sociological knowledge from their memory but they do need to develop good essay writing routines first. They benefit very much from having established a go-to set of principles, tips strategies for good essay writing.

All assessed work is marked to A-level standard using AQA general mark schemes, which are shared with students. Detailed written feedback is given.

## Quarterly assessments

At fixed points throughout the year students sit exams in a formal setting.

Twice per academic year (December Q2, June Q4) students will sit assessments that take the form of formal exams and examine cumulative skills and content acquisition. These milestones are opportunities for students, staff, parents & carers to take stock of progress and performance at this point. We then have the information and feedback needed to take the next steps in their learning.

Quarterly assessments consist of A-level exam papers and will be as full as possible, reflecting curriculum content covered so far in the course.

Year 12 Quarterly assessments	
Q1 (October)	Part paper – 30 minutes Paper 2: Work, Poverty and Welfare section

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Q2 (December)	Part paper – 60 minutes Paper 2: Work, Poverty and welfare section
Q3 (March)	Part Paper – 45 minutes Paper 1: Education with Methods in Context
Q4 (June)	Full mock exam – 2 hours Paper 2: Topics in Sociology (Work, Poverty and Welfare & Global Development)
<b>Year 13 Quarterly assessments</b>	
Q1 (October)	Part paper – 45 minutes Paper 3: Theory and Methods
Q2 (December)	Full mock exams – 2 X 2 hour papers: Paper 2: Work, Poverty and Welfare & Global Development Paper 1: Education with Methods in Context
Q3 (March)	Full mock exam: Paper 3: Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods (this forms part of their first round of mocks in the Spring Term)

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## Feedback routines.

Students are given feedback throughout the school year so they can improve.

In lessons students will regularly use their mini whiteboards to show their answers and give teachers the opportunity to correct misconceptions. Teachers use a variety of questioning techniques such as no hands up questions, the use of thinking time (e.g. Pose-Pause-Pounce-Bounce), pair talk (e.g. Think-Pair-Share), No opt-out (e.g. reframing the question to the same pupil) and follow up questions (e.g. asking pupil to elaborate, or avoiding paraphrasing pupils- instead pushing for the 'best version' answer). This allows teachers to adapt teaching as necessary.

Formal assessments and Quarterly assessments will be followed by feedback and opportunities to re-check understanding. This will include time for the student to respond to their feedback, time for the teacher to immediately address any significant misconceptions/errors in student understanding, a follow up task or prep that allows students to build on the feedback given and time for students to update their progress tracker at the front of their books.

All sociology assessments are used formatively to embed students understanding of the sociology, uncover misconceptions in their learning and, ultimately, to improve their exam skills.

Students receive detailed personal feedback for all sociology assessments – this is maintained for smaller in-class assessments and essays as well as the quarterly whole-school assessments – with time given for self-evaluation and feedback learning. Time is taken to prepare and deliver thorough and impactful feedback lessons noticing what students have achieved and what areas need further instruction and support. Live marking is also frequently used, especially in year 13 when most lessons include some low-stakes testing, to enable immediate feedback and correction.

Several scripts are called back from the exam board each year to ensure ongoing scrutiny of the external assessment processes in order to better prepare students for future exams. Answers and essays are then selected from successful scripts for use in teaching and as model answers.

## External examinations

KS5 exam board: AQA