



Overarching aims of the Key Stage:

The OCR A Level Sociology (H580) course offers students a dynamic and thought-provoking exploration of the social world. Designed to foster critical thinking and a deep understanding of contemporary society, this qualification encourages learners to engage with key sociological theories, concepts, and research methods. Through the study of topics such as socialisation, culture and identity, social inequalities, and debates in contemporary society, students develop the analytical skills necessary to interpret complex social phenomena and evaluate diverse perspectives.

This curriculum not only equips students with academic knowledge but also cultivates transferable skills such as critical reasoning, independent research, and effective communication—skills that are highly valued in higher education and a wide range of careers. The course structure supports progression from GCSE Sociology or related humanities subjects, while also being accessible to those new to the discipline.

By the end of the course, students will have gained a nuanced understanding of how individuals interact with social structures and institutions, and how these relationships shape experiences and outcomes in society. The OCR A Level Sociology course is ideal for learners who are curious about the world around them and eager to challenge assumptions through evidence-based inquiry.

What are the Key Concepts that pupils need to grasp by the end of the Key Stage?

Paper 1: Socialisation, Culture and Identity (H580/01)

This paper explores how individuals become members of society and how identity is shaped.

Key Concepts:

Culture and Subculture: Norms, values, roles, cultural diversity, high/low/popular/global culture.

Socialisation: Primary and secondary socialisation, agents of socialisation (family, education, media, peers, religion).

Identity and Social Differentiation: Social class, gender, ethnicity, age, nationality, sexuality, disability.

Theoretical Approaches: Functionalism, Marxism, Feminism, Interactionism, Postmodernism.

Youth Subcultures / Families and Relationships (optional topics): Deviance, resistance, peer pressure, family ideology, changing family structures.

Paper 2: Researching and Understanding Social Inequalities (H580/02)

This paper combines research methods with the study of social inequalities.

Key Concepts: Research Methods: Quantitative and qualitative methods, sampling, validity, reliability, ethics, positivism vs interpretivism.

Social Inequalities: Patterns and explanations of inequality in relation to:

Social Class

Gender

Ethnicity

Age

Theoretical Perspectives: Functionalist, Marxist, Feminist, Weberian, Postmodernist views on inequality.

Paper 3: Debates in Contemporary Society (H580/03)

This synoptic paper explores contemporary sociological debates through optional topics.

Key Concepts (vary by option):

- 1) Globalisation and the Digital World: Digital communication, global culture, surveillance, identity, inequalities in access.
- 2) Crime and Deviance (Option) Definitions of crime, social order, social control, patterns and trends, media representation, green crime, state crime.

How will these be assessed?

End of unit tests that are assessed and summative assessment. Mock Exams for Year 12 in January and June and for Year 13 , a November Mock exam.

What are the Cultural Capital opportunities?

The OCR A Level Sociology course offers rich opportunities to develop cultural capital, which refers to the knowledge, skills, education, and cultural experiences that enable individuals to navigate society more effectively and succeed academically and socially. Here's how the course supports this:

1. Exposure to Diverse Cultures and Perspectives

Students explore global cultures, subcultures, and cultural diversity, helping them appreciate different ways of life and challenge ethnocentric views.

Topics like identity, ethnicity, gender, and social class broaden students' understanding of how culture shapes experience.

2. Critical Engagement with Contemporary Issues

Learners examine current social debates such as inequality, digital media, crime, and globalisation.

This fosters informed citizenship and the ability to critically assess media, policy, and public discourse.

3. Theoretical and Conceptual Knowledge

Students gain familiarity with key sociological thinkers (e.g., Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Foucault) and theories (e.g., Functionalism, Feminism, Postmodernism).

This builds academic literacy and prepares students for higher education.

4. Research and Analytical Skills

Through studying research methods, students learn how knowledge is constructed, how to evaluate evidence, and how to conduct ethical research—skills valuable in many fields.

5. Enrichment Opportunities

Visits to Beamish

Documentary screenings and debate clubs.

Year 12	Module 1	Module 2	Module 3
Taught Curriculum			
<p>Key Concepts – These are taught per teacher rather than per unit.</p> <p>PAPER ONE PAPER TWO PAPER THREE</p>	<p>Introduction to Sociological Theory.</p> <p>Introducing socialisation, culture and identity.</p> <p>Youth Subcultures.</p>	<p>Research Methods and Researching Social Inequalities</p>	<p>Globalisation and the digital social world.</p>
<p>Crucial Learning – See bullet points for each unit.</p> <p>PAPER ONE PAPER TWO PAPER THREE</p>	<p>1. Culture Definition: The shared norms, values, beliefs, and practices of a group or society. High culture vs. popular culture Subcultures (e.g., youth subcultures) Global culture and cultural hybridity Cultural diversity: Differences between cultures (intercultural) and within a culture (intracultural).</p> <p>2. Socialisation Definition: The process by which individuals learn the culture of their society. Primary socialisation: Early childhood, mainly through family. Secondary socialisation: Later in life, through education, peers, media, religion, and work.</p>	<p>1. Types of Research Quantitative methods: Surveys, structured interviews, official statistics. Qualitative methods: Unstructured interviews, participant observation, ethnography.</p> <p>2. Research Process Formulating hypotheses Operationalising concepts Sampling techniques: Random, stratified, snowball, etc. Data collection Analysis and interpretation</p> <p>3. Key Concepts Validity: Does it measure what it claims to? Reliability: Can it be repeated with the same results?</p>	<p><u>Globalisation</u></p> <p>1. Definition The process by which societies, cultures, and economies become increasingly interconnected.</p> <p>2. Key Features Increased communication and information flow Growth of transnational corporations Cultural exchange and hybridity Migration and diaspora communities Global inequalities</p> <p>3. Impact on Identity Hybrid identities (e.g., British Asian)</p>

	<p>Agencies of socialisation: Institutions that influence our norms and values (e.g., family, education, media).</p> <p>3. Identity Definition: How individuals see themselves and how they are perceived by others. Personal identity: Individual traits and characteristics. Social identity: Group memberships (e.g., gender, ethnicity, class). Multiple identities: People can hold several identities at once. Formation of identity: Influenced by socialisation, culture, and interaction with others.</p> <p>4. Theoretical Perspectives Functionalism: Socialisation maintains social order and stability. Marxism: Socialisation reinforces class inequality. Feminism: Socialisation perpetuates gender roles and patriarchy. Interactionism: Focuses on how identity is constructed through social interaction. Postmodernism: Emphasises choice, diversity, and fluidity in identity.</p>	<p>Representativeness: Does the sample reflect the wider population? Ethics: Informed consent, confidentiality, avoiding harm.</p> <p>4. Practical, Ethical, and Theoretical (PET) Issues Practical: Time, cost, access. Ethical: Consent, deception, protection from harm. Theoretical: Positivism vs. Interpretivism.</p> <p><u>Researching Social Inequalities</u></p> <p>1. Areas of Inequality Social class Gender Ethnicity Age</p> <p>2. Applying Methods to Inequality How different methods are used to study inequality in: Education Work Income Health Crime</p> <p>3. Strengths and Limitations of Methods For example: Surveys may be good for studying class-based patterns but may lack depth. Interviews may reveal lived experiences of inequality but are time-consuming.</p> <p>4. Critical Evaluation How bias, researcher effect, and access to groups (e.g., elites or marginalised communities) affect research on inequality.</p>	<p>Global vs. local cultures (glocalisation)</p> <p>Resistance to globalisation (e.g., cultural preservation)</p> <p>The Digital Social World</p> <p>1. Digital Communication Social media platforms, messaging apps, blogs, forums Virtual communities and online identities</p> <p>2. Changing Social Relationships Networked individualism Online vs. offline interactions Digital divide: Inequality in access to technology</p> <p>3. Impact on Socialisation New agents of socialisation (e.g., influencers, online communities) Shaping norms, values, and behaviours</p> <p>Theoretical Perspectives</p> <p>1. Marxism Digital media as a tool for capitalist control Surveillance and exploitation</p> <p>2. Feminism Online spaces as both empowering and sites of misogyny</p>
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			<p>Gendered experiences of digital life</p> <p>3. Postmodernism</p> <p>Fluid identities, choice, and fragmentation</p> <p>Hyperreality and simulation (Baudrillard)</p>
<p>Key Vocabulary / Wider Reading</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Culture – Shared norms, values, beliefs, and practices of a group. ● Norms – Social rules that define acceptable behavior. ● Values – Beliefs about what is right and wrong. ● Socialisation – The process of learning culture. ● Identity – How individuals see themselves and are seen by others. ● Status – A person’s social position. ● Role – Expected behavior associated with a status. ● Social control – Mechanisms to ensure conformity (formal/informal). ● Deviance – Behavior that breaks social norms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Culture – Shared norms, values, beliefs, and practices of a group. ● Norms – Social rules that define acceptable behavior. ● Values – Beliefs about what is right and wrong. ● Socialisation – The process of learning culture. ● Identity – How individuals see themselves and are seen by others. ● Status – A person’s social position. ● Role – Expected behavior associated with a status. ● Social control – Mechanisms to ensure conformity (formal/informal). ● Deviance – Behavior that breaks social norms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Culture – Shared norms, values, beliefs, and practices of a group. ● Norms – Social rules that define acceptable behavior. ● Values – Beliefs about what is right and wrong. ● Socialisation – The process of learning culture. ● Identity – How individuals see themselves and are seen by others. ● Status – A person’s social position. ● Role – Expected behavior associated with a status. ● Social control – Mechanisms to ensure conformity (formal/informal). ● Deviance – Behavior that breaks social norms.
<p>Knowledge Organiser</p>	<p>Knowledge Organisers</p>	<p>Knowledge Organisers</p>	<p>Knowledge Organisers</p>

Securing Learning			
Assessment	End of module assessments. Use of file checks to secure knowledge.	Practice questions, Use of research in the evaluations.	Practice questions, Use of research in the evaluations. Mock Exams in June
MiS Focus	Consistently going over the sociological theories, key studies and research methods	Consistently going over the sociological theories, key studies and research methods	Consistently going over the sociological theories, key studies and research methods
Performance Strand	"Discuss how culture and identity are shaped by socialisation." "Evaluate the role of the media in the socialisation process."	Outline and explain two practical issues a sociologist might face when researching social class inequalities. Outline and explain two ethical issues when researching ethnic inequalities. Outline and explain two reasons why official statistics may be useful when researching gender inequality. Evaluate the strengths and limitations of using interviews to research social inequalities in education. Evaluate the usefulness of participant observation for researching inequalities in the workplace. Evaluate the strengths and limitations of using secondary sources to investigate ethnic inequalities in health.	10-Mark Questions (Knowledge & Application) Outline and explain two ways globalisation has influenced youth identity. Outline and explain two effects of globalisation on cultural diversity. Outline and explain two ways digital communication has changed social relationships. 20-Mark Questions (Application & Evaluation) Evaluate the view that globalisation has led to cultural homogenisation. Evaluate the impact of globalisation on gender identities. Evaluate the usefulness of postmodernist theories in understanding the effects of globalisation.

Year 13	Module 1	Module 2
Taught Curriculum		
Key Concepts	<p><u>Understanding social inequalities</u></p> <p>Key Concepts in Social Inequality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Social Stratification <p>The structured ranking of individuals and groups in a hierarchy based on factors like wealth, power, and status.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Life Chances <p>The opportunities individuals have to access resources such as education, healthcare, and employment, often shaped by their social background.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Social Mobility <p>The movement of individuals or groups within the social hierarchy, either upward or downward.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Meritocracy <p>A system where individuals succeed based on talent, effort, and achievement rather than social background.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Discrimination <p>Unfair treatment of individuals based on characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, age, or disability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Institutional Discrimination 	<p><u>Key Concepts in Crime and Deviance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Crime <p>An act that breaks the law and is punishable by the legal system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Deviance <p>Behavior that goes against social norms or expectations, but is not necessarily illegal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Social Control <p>Mechanisms used to encourage conformity and discourage deviance:</p> <p>Formal: Laws, police, courts. Informal: Family, peers, media.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Anomie <p>A state of normlessness where individuals feel disconnected from the collective conscience (Durkheim).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Labelling <p>The process by which individuals are defined or stereotyped by others, often leading to a self-fulfilling prophecy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Moral Panic <p>A wave of public concern or fear over a perceived threat to societal norms, often amplified by the media (Cohen).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Subculture <p>A group with norms and values that differ from the mainstream, sometimes linked to deviant or criminal behavior.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Relative Deprivation

	<p>Discrimination that is embedded in the policies and practices of social institutions (e.g., education, criminal justice).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Power <p>The ability to influence or control others, often linked to social class, gender, or race.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Status <p>A person's social position, which can be:</p> <p>Ascribed (given at birth, e.g., gender, ethnicity)</p> <p>Achieved (earned through actions, e.g., occupation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Privilege <p>Unearned advantages held by certain groups, often invisible to those who benefit from them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Capital (Bourdieu) <p>Economic capital: Wealth and income</p> <p>Cultural capital: Knowledge, education, and cultural tastes</p> <p>Social capital: Networks and social connections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Intersectionality <p>The idea that different forms of inequality (e.g., race, gender, class) intersect and compound each other in people's lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Underclass <p>A controversial term used to describe a group at the bottom of the social hierarchy, often associated with long-term poverty and exclusion.</p>	<p>The perception of being deprived compared to others, which can lead to frustration and deviance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ White-Collar Crime <p>Non-violent crime committed by individuals in higher social classes, often in the course of their occupation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Corporate Crime <p>Crimes committed by businesses or corporations, such as fraud or environmental violations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ State Crime <p>Crimes committed by or on behalf of the government, such as war crimes or corruption.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Zero Tolerance Policing <p>A strict approach to law enforcement that targets all types of crime, including minor offences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Surveillance <p>Monitoring of behavior, often by the state or institutions, to prevent or control crime (e.g., CCTV, digital tracking).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Recidivism <p>The tendency of a convicted criminal to reoffend.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Victimology <p>The study of victims of crime and the patterns of victimisation.</p>
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	<p>♦ Relative and Absolute Poverty</p> <p>Absolute poverty: Lacking basic necessities for survival.</p> <p>Relative poverty: Being poor in comparison to the wider society.</p>	
<p>Crucial Learning (See Bullet Points)</p>	<p>1) Understanding the Nature of Inequality Recognise how inequality is structured by class, gender, ethnicity, and age. Understand how these inequalities affect life chances, status, and power.</p> <p>2) Theoretical Explanations Be able to explain and evaluate different sociological perspectives: Marxism: Class conflict and capitalist exploitation. Feminism: Patriarchy and gender inequality. Functionalism: Inequality as functional and necessary. Weberianism: Class, status, and party. New Right: Individual responsibility and underclass theory. Postmodernism: Fragmentation and identity-based inequalities.</p> <p>3) Patterns and Trends Identify and explain patterns of inequality in: Income and wealth Education Health Employment Crime and justice</p> <p>4) Researching Inequality Understand how sociologists study inequality using different research methods. Evaluate the strengths and limitations of methods in researching different social groups.</p>	<p>1) Understanding Crime and Deviance Know the difference between crime (law-breaking) and deviance (norm-breaking). Understand how definitions of crime and deviance are socially constructed and vary across cultures and time.</p> <p>2) Theoretical Perspectives Functionalism (e.g., Durkheim): Crime has functions like boundary maintenance and adaptation. Marxism: Crime reflects class inequality and capitalist exploitation. Feminism: Gendered patterns of crime and the role of patriarchy. Interactionism: Labelling theory, moral panics, and self-fulfilling prophecy. Left Realism: Focus on relative deprivation and marginalisation. Right Realism: Emphasis on control, deterrence, and rational choice.</p> <p>3) Patterns and Trends Understand statistical patterns in crime by: Social class Gender Ethnicity Age Be able to critically evaluate official statistics and alternative sources like victim surveys and self-report studies.</p> <p>4) Types of Crime</p>

	<p>Apply practical, ethical, and theoretical (PET) considerations to research design.</p>	<p>White-collar and corporate crime State crime Green crime Cybercrime Youth subcultures and deviance 5) Social Control and Surveillance Role of the criminal justice system, police, and prisons. Theories of surveillance (e.g., Foucault). Zero tolerance and broken windows theory. 6) Media and Crime How the media represents crime and criminals. The role of media in creating moral panics and folk devils. 7) Globalisation and Crime The rise of transnational crime, human trafficking, drug trade, and global criminal networks.</p>
<p>Key Vocabulary / Wider Reading</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Stratification The structured ranking of individuals or groups in a hierarchy based on factors like class, status, and power. ◆ Social Class A group of people with similar economic and social positions, often based on occupation, income, and education. ◆ Life Chances The opportunities individuals have to access resources and improve their quality of life. ◆ Social Mobility The movement of individuals or groups up or down the social hierarchy. ◆ Meritocracy A system where rewards and status are based on individual talent and effort. ◆ Inequality Unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Crime An act that breaks the law and is punishable by the legal system. ◆ Deviance Behaviour that goes against social norms or expectations, but is not necessarily illegal. ◆ Social Control Mechanisms that regulate behaviour and maintain social order: Formal: Police, courts, laws. Informal: Family, peers, media. ◆ Anomie A state of normlessness where individuals feel disconnected from society's shared values (Durkheim). ◆ Labelling The process of defining someone as deviant or criminal, which can lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy. ◆ Moral Panic

	<p>privileges across different social groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Discrimination <p>Unfair treatment of individuals based on characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, age, or disability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Institutional Discrimination <p>Discrimination that is embedded in the policies and practices of institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Power <p>The ability to influence or control others, often linked to wealth, status, or institutional authority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Status <p>A person's social position, which can be:</p> <p>Ascribed (given at birth)</p> <p>Achieved (earned through actions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Privilege <p>Unearned advantages held by certain groups, often invisible to those who benefit from them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Intersectionality <p>The idea that different forms of inequality (e.g., race, gender, class) intersect and compound each other.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Capital (Bourdieu) <p>Economic capital: Wealth and income</p> <p>Cultural capital: Knowledge, education, and cultural tastes</p> <p>Social capital: Networks and social connections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Underclass <p>A group at the bottom of the social hierarchy, often associated with long-term poverty and exclusion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Relative and Absolute Poverty <p>Absolute poverty: Lacking basic necessities for survival.</p> <p>Relative poverty: Being poor in comparison to the wider society.</p>	<p>A wave of public concern or fear over a perceived threat to social order, often exaggerated by the media (Cohen).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Folk Devils <p>Individuals or groups portrayed as a threat to societal values during a moral panic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Subculture <p>A group with norms and values that differ from the mainstream, sometimes linked to deviant or criminal behaviour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Relative Deprivation <p>Feeling deprived compared to others, which can lead to frustration and deviance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ White-Collar Crime <p>Non-violent crime committed by individuals in high-status positions, often involving fraud or embezzlement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Corporate Crime <p>Crimes committed by businesses or corporations, such as environmental violations or financial fraud.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ State Crime <p>Crimes committed by or on behalf of the government, such as war crimes or corruption.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Zero Tolerance <p>A policing strategy that involves strict enforcement of all laws, including minor offences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Surveillance <p>Monitoring of individuals or groups to prevent or control crime (e.g., CCTV, digital tracking).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Recidivism <p>The tendency of a convicted criminal to reoffend.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Victimology <p>The study of victims of crime and patterns of victimisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Dark Figure of Crime <p>The amount of unreported or undiscovered crime that does not appear in official statistics.</p>
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Knowledge Organiser		
Securing Learning – See SOW.		
Assessment	November Mock Exams End of Unit Tests	November Mock Exams End of Unit Tests
MiS Focus	Revision of Culture and Identity	Revision of Youth Subcultures
Performance Strand	Past Papers (full)	Past Papers (full)