

Welcome to A level sociology

Overview of the course:

This is a two-year course which ends with three two-hour papers each carrying an equal weighting towards your final A-level grade (A*-E).

Topics we will cover will include:

- Families & Households
- Education
- Beliefs in Society
- Crime and Deviance
- Research Methods
- Theories of Sociology

For more specific information about what you will be studying, take a look at the specification for more detail about these topics:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/sociology/as-and-a-level/sociology-7191-7192/specification-at-a-glance>

Assessment outcomes (AOs): You will be expected to:

- know and understand the information about the topics **(AO1)**
- be able to apply that knowledge and understanding to different sociological issues **(AO2)**
- and to be able to analyse and evaluate that knowledge and understanding **(AO3)**

The **Reading and Watching List** will help you to gain wider knowledge and a broader framework in which to apply your knowledge.

To get you started on your sociological journey, please complete the following tasks:

Task 1 - Introducing Key Concepts

Norms

Norms are social rules which 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; laughing during funerals; walking through the streets naked or never saying hello to friends are

likely to be seen as rude, annoying or odd 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. Sometimes they are enforced by 'formal sanctions' issued by the police or the courts.



Task: 1.1 - What are the expected 'norms' when you are at:

- a) School
- b) Home
- c) A friend's house

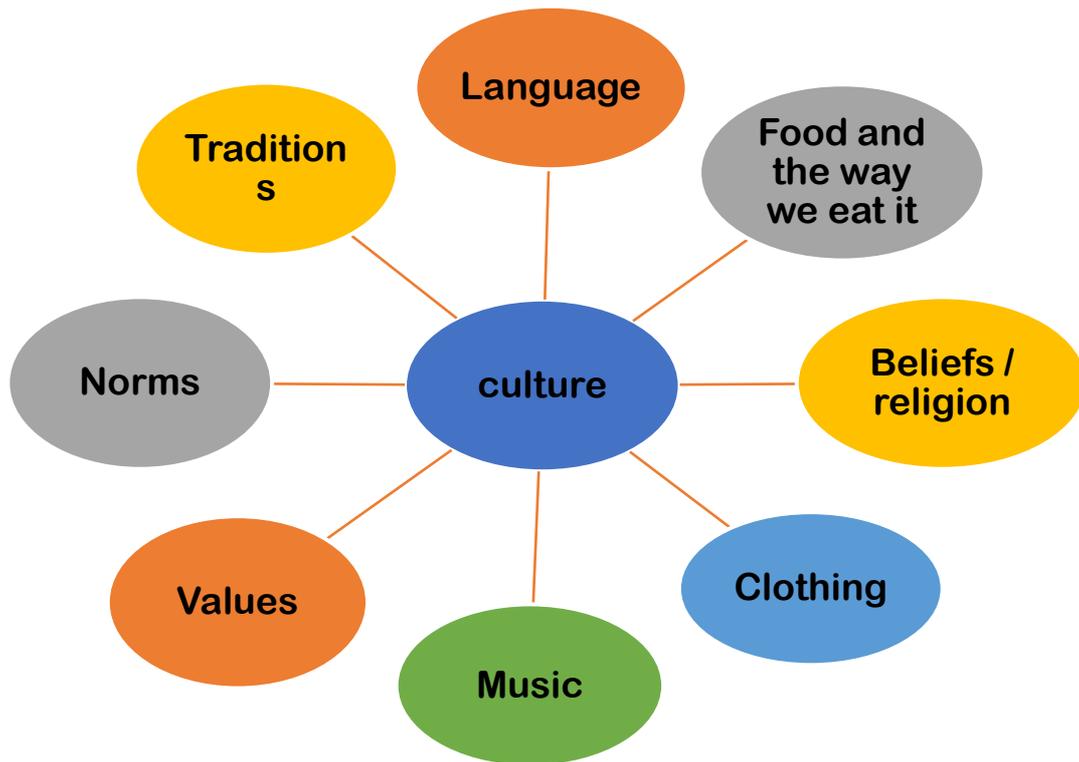
Task 1.2 - Researching British Norms

- a) Look at the following link and answer the questions:
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/10899837/Quiz-How-British-are-you.html>
- b) Now have a look at this link and summarise the main British norms:
<https://www.studying-in-uk.org/british-culture-and-social-norms/>
- c) What do these sources tell you about norms?

Culture

The norms and values you have researched, make up part of our culture as well as our individual identity. These things form our way of life. Culture therefore is '***a way of life shared by a group of people.***

This includes:



We learn our culture from our parents, friends, schools, and the media. We often share many similar behaviours with each other because of the culture we are raised in and the way we have been taught how to behave in our society. However, we will also learn later in the course, how the way we are raised can have a huge impact on our own individual lives.

Task 1.4

- Create a poster that illustrates the many elements of British culture - including the items on the list above and any other aspects that you can think of.
- Make a list of at least 6 ways British culture is different to other cultures.

Socialisation

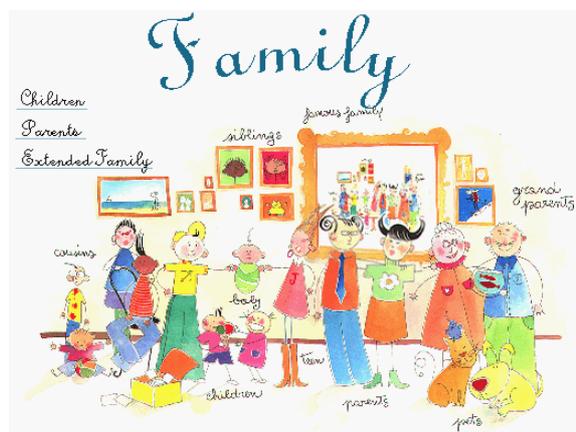
Human behaviour is largely learned through a process called **socialisation**.

Socialisation is the term that sociologists use to describe the

process of learning the culture of any society. Culture is socially transmitted from one generation to the next through the process of socialisation. There are two types of socialisation: **primary** and **secondary**. These two forms of socialisation are defined partly in terms of the particular groups or 'agencies' in which they occur:

Primary socialisation

The family is the main agency of socialisation where an individual learns many of the basic lessons for life such as language, walking and appropriate physical behaviour, gender roles (how to 'behave' like a boy or a girl) etc.



Secondary socialisation

Associated with the later stages of identity formation, from later childhood and continuing through adulthood. The school is an important example of an agency of secondary socialisation, but all formal organisations, including religion, media, peer groups and work all teach us how to behave appropriately in different situations.

Task 1.5

- What have been the most important influences in shaping who you are?
- List 2 ways (each) that your family, school, media and peer groups teach each you something.

Task 2 - Socialisation Research

Nature or nurture?

Some argue that our behaviour is biologically determined and that our genetics (Inherited characteristics from parents) affect our behaviour.

Some also say that natural and biological differences also account for differences in behaviour, for example, men are more aggressive than women because they are 'born that way'.

Task 2.1

- Make a list of behaviours that animals do instinctively. Is human behaviour instinctive?

However, sociologists believe it is the way we are 'nurtured' that influences our behaviour the most. If we are biologically all the same, then why are there cultural and historical differences in our behaviour?

Evidence to support this:

- Historical evidence = people's behaviour changes over time.
- Anthropological evidence = behaviour varies from culture to culture.
- Children who have not been nurtured or 'socialised' correctly behave differently from most humans – see examples here: <https://listverse.com/2008/03/07/10-modern-cases-of-feral-children/>

Task 2.2

- What would happen if a child did not become socialised into human culture?
- What if a child was left to grow up in the wild?

Task 2.3

- Choose one of the case studies from the link above, and using the internet for further information, summarise their story. Include your sources in your work.
- Explain how they were socialised (or not) and how this impacted their behaviour.

Task 2.4

Explain how your case study illustrates the following:

- Importance of the family.
- How we are taught the basics in life.

Task 3 - Sociology Key Terms

Using the following links, find the definitions (and examples if possible) for the following key sociological terms:

<https://www.memrise.com/course/928320/aqa-sociology-key-terms/2/>

<http://resources.hwb.wales.gov.uk/VTC/2009-10/sociology/a2-cynnal/termiadur/termiadurSaesneg.htm>

Key term	Definition + example
Society	
Culture	
Norms	
Values	
Sanctions	
Social control	
Socialisation	
Primary Socialisation	
Secondary Socialisation	
Status	
Role	
Social class	
Ethnicity	
gender	