



# Welcome to Sociology

The purpose of this pack is to prepare you for your studies in September by getting you more familiar with the subject of sociology, which should help you in making the transition from GCSE to A Level study.






This document aims to provide you with:

- basic information about the course
- guidance on how you can prepare for a successful start to your A Level course

We follow the AQA A Level Specification which you can view [here](#).

## The course at a glance

As you can see from the diagram below, there are three exam papers (2 hours long) that are all taken in the summer of Year 13. There is no coursework or modular exams in this course. Don't worry if you are not a massive fan of exams, as we spend a huge amount of time on improving our exam technique, so you'll be an exams expert by the end of the two years.

Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3
Education Theory and Methods	Culture and Identity Beliefs in society	Crime and Deviance Theory and Methods
 		 
2 hour exam	2 hour exam	2 hour exam
80 marks-33.3% of A level	80 marks- 33.3% of A level	80 marks- 33.3% of A level
<u>Education</u> 4 marks 6 marks 10 marks 30 marks  <u>Methods in context</u> 20 marks  <u>Theory and Methods</u> 10 marks	<u>Culture and Identity</u> 10 marks 10 marks 20 marks  <u>Beliefs</u> 10 marks 10 marks 20 marks	<u>Crime and Deviance</u> 4 marks 6 marks 10 marks 30 marks  <u>Theory and Methods</u> 20 marks 10 marks

## **What will I be studying in Year 12?**

With sociology being an unfamiliar subject for most students (we don't teach it as a GCSE at KES), we spend a couple of weeks at the beginning of the course looking at the origins of social thought and the key themes and concepts that run throughout the subject. Sociology is the study of contemporary society, so we spend a lot of our time in exploring the issues that currently affect us in British society. Sociologists are inquisitive (that is a nice way of saying 'nosey') about what is going on and why people are behaving in the way that they are.

Match up the examples of social issues below with the three topics that we study in Y12 (Research Methods, Education and Culture and Identity – the first one has been filled in for you)

- Why do girls perform better at GCSE than boys? Education
- Does your gender shape your identity? \_\_\_\_\_
- Can sociology solve society's problems? \_\_\_\_\_
- What impact does having a disability have on your view of yourself? \_\_\_\_\_
- Should we get rid of examinations? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is the best way to study domestic violence? \_\_\_\_\_
- What impact does the media have on our identity? \_\_\_\_\_
- Do teachers have their 'favourite' students? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is it like to be a member of a gang? \_\_\_\_\_

## **What will I be studying in Year 13?**




We aim to complete the Education, Research Methods and Culture and Identity units by the summer term so that we can begin the year 13 content. The Year 13 course covers Crime and Deviance, Theory and Methods and Beliefs. We will be looking at how the criminal justice system works, elements of criminology and the role of the media in shaping crime. Within the beliefs units we study whether religion is a force for stability or change and investigating a range of new religious beliefs and the impact they have for individuals and wider society. We aim to finish the course content by Easter at the latest, to give us plenty of time to prepare and revise for the final examinations.

## **Background reading and viewing**

With sociology being about social groups and behaviour, anything that you can read or watch relating to society will help you prepare for the course. It goes without saying that we would prefer you to improve your reading skills, as sociology is very much a reading and writing subject, but this is also a legitimate opportunity for you to watch as many films and documentaries as possible.



We live in a particular type of society, so it's interesting to look at alternative societies. To get you thinking, place the words that are connected to British society in the list provided into the box below:

<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">  <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b><u>BRITISH SOCIETY</u></b></p> </div>  </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;">  </div>	<div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b><u>WORD LIST</u></b></p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tribal</li> <li>Advanced</li> <li>Industrial</li> <li>Agricultural</li> <li>Republic</li> <li>Monarchy</li> <li>Democracy</li> <li>Dictatorship</li> <li>Capitalist</li> <li>Communist</li> <li>Multi-cultural</li> <li>Mono-cultural</li> <li>Utopian</li> </ul>
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If you want to read before the course, then '1984' by George Orwell (who also wrote the amazing 'Animal Farm') is very interesting. Even though it was published all the way back in 1949, it is still one of the best descriptions of a possible future society. Spoiler alert! We now know that Orwell's prophecies did not actually occur by 1984 but his work has influenced recent 'dystopian' writers such as Margaret Atwood ('The Handmaid's Tale'). It is from '1984' that we get the idea of 'Big Brother', 'Room 101' and 'The Thought Police' from. Even though the book is older than your grandparents, it is a captivating story, not too long and easy to read.



[Free online book](#)

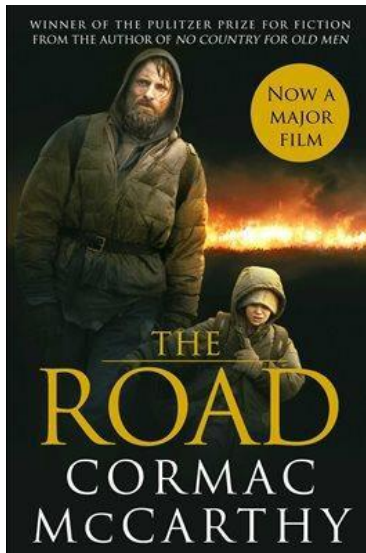
Some clips to watch:

[Why '1984' still matters – BBC](#)

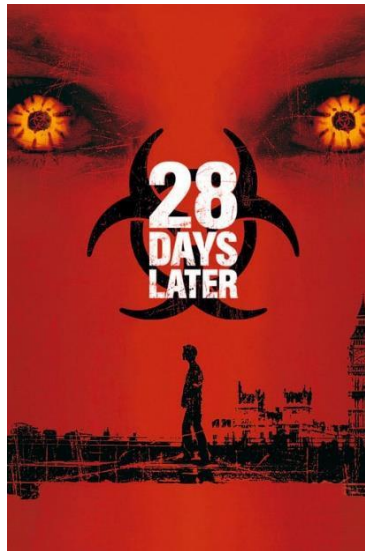
[Film trailer – interestingly from 1984](#)

Note down the key ideas from '1984':

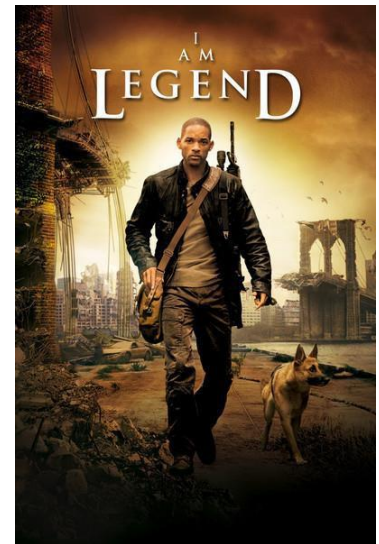
One way of understanding how our large and complex society functions (even during a crisis) is to look at what happens when society breaks down, so we would encourage you to explore the growing genre of apocalyptic literature. A very dark but gripping read is Cormac McCarthy's 'The Road', which was also turned into a feature film. We can also highly recommend '28 Days Later' (with a very young Cillian Murphy from 'Peaky Blinders') and 'I Am Legend'.



[trailer](#)



[trailer](#)



[trailer](#)

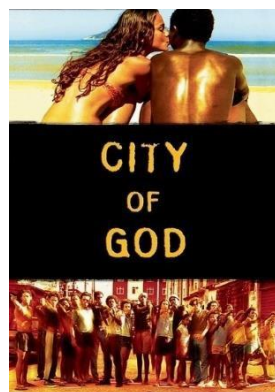
What do films, like those above, suggest will happen to society in a post-apocalyptic world?

Here is a selection of films, some old and some new, that have strong sociological themes:



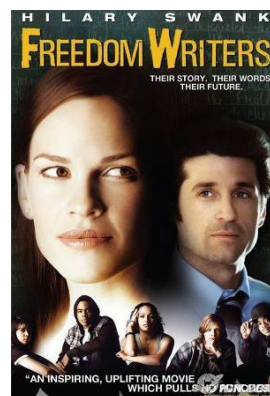
Useful for: mental health,  
power of institutions

[trailer](#)



Useful for: crime, ethnicity,  
Social class, inequality

[trailer](#)



Useful for: education, ethnicity,  
social class, labelling, methods

[trailer](#)



Useful for: gender, equality,  
power, identity, feminism

[trailer](#)



The following films will provide you with a better understanding of some of the historical eras that we examine in the course:



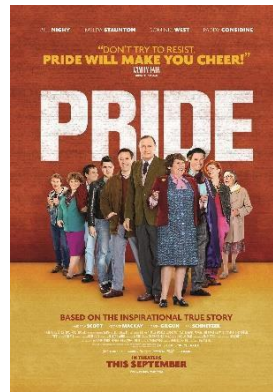
Useful for: youth culture, 1960s, mass media

[trailer](#)



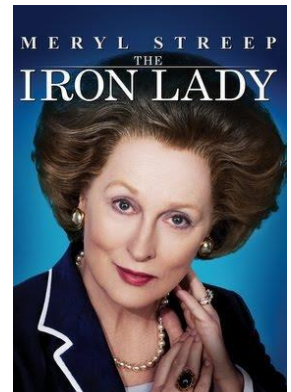
Useful for: feminism 1960s, gender inequality

[trailer](#)



Useful for: sexuality, 1980s, identity, Marxism

[trailer](#)

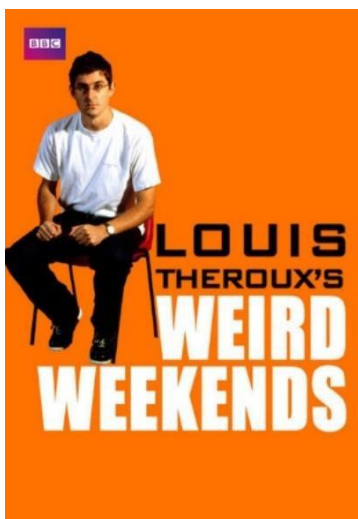


Useful for: Thatcherism, 1980s, politics

[trailer](#)

There is also an abundance of really good documentaries and films on Netflix, Amazon Prime, etc. connected to crime and deviance, so anything that you watch on serial killers and true crime stories will be useful for Year 13.

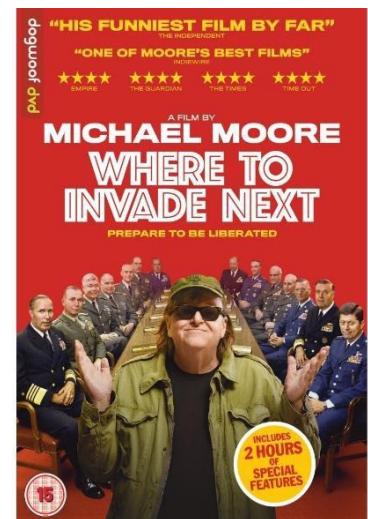
A great deal of sociological research involves spending time with people in order to understand their way of life and how they view the world; a technique used in the following documentaries:



[trailer](#)



[trailer](#)



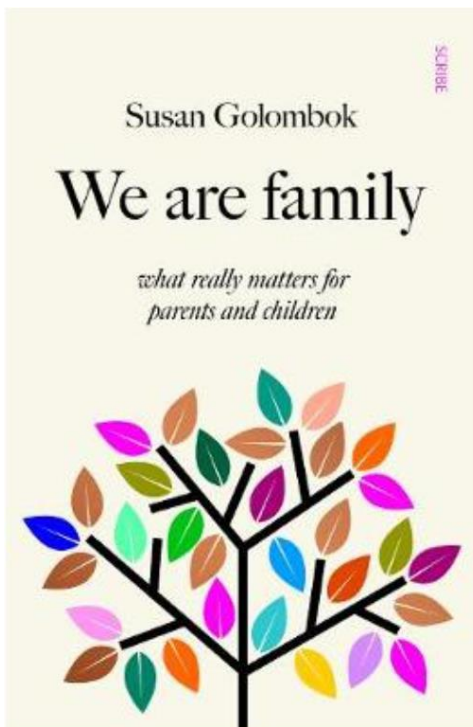
[trailer](#)

Note down any books, films or documentaries that you have read or watched that would be good for sociology (we always like to hear new recommendations from students):

## **Carrying out sociological research**

Even though there is a lot of theorising and debating within sociology, it is actually a very practical subject, with sociologists carrying out research into all sorts of weird and wonderful aspects of human life. Sociologists tend to be based in universities, dividing their time between giving lectures to students and conducting research, which they will either publish in a journal or a book.

Here are a couple of examples of recent pieces of published research:

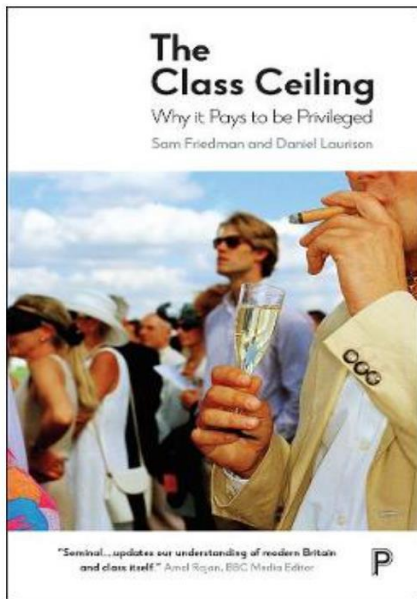


**Our understanding of what makes a family has undergone a revolution in the last few decades, from same-sex parenthood to surrogacy, donor conception, and IVF. But what has the impact been on children?**

In *We Are Family*, Professor Susan Golombok visits lesbian mothers, gay fathers, single parents, donor conception parents, co-parents, trans parents, surrogates, and donors, and, more importantly, their children, to find out if they are as well-adjusted, happy, and emotionally stable as children from traditional nuclear families. And she discovers that the answer is yes - and sometimes even more so.

Susan's work at the Centre for Family Research at Cambridge University proves that any family set-up can provide a loving, secure home for a child - although, the children from these families will often face prejudiced attitudes from others. Since the 1970s, when she was first drawn to this area of research after reading about lesbian mothers whose children were being removed from their care, Susan has worked tirelessly to challenge outdated attitudes and prevent families being split up for no good reason. This book tells the stories of those families - their struggles and their triumphs - while celebrating love and family in all its wonderful variations.

*Publisher: Scribe Publications (2020)*



Politicians continually tell us that anyone can get ahead. But is that really true? This important, best-selling book takes readers behind the closed doors of elite employers to reveal how class affects who gets to the top. Sam Friedman (Associate Professor of Sociology at The London School of Economics) and Daniel Laurison (Assistant Professor of Sociology at Swarthmore College USA) show that a powerful 'class pay gap' exists in Britain's elite occupations. Even when those from working-class backgrounds make it into prestigious jobs, they earn, on average, 16% less than colleagues from privileged backgrounds. But why is this the case? Drawing on 175 interviews across four case studies - television, accountancy, architecture, and acting - they explore the complex barriers facing the upwardly mobile. This is a rich, ambitious book that demands we take seriously not just the glass but also the class ceiling.

*Publisher: Policy Press (2020)*

### **Education task**

It would be useful to develop your understanding of the education module that you will be studying next year, whilst also starting to think more critically when being presented with information. A sociologist must question the information they are given and start to analyse and evaluate the views that they are being presented. When reading a news article think about who wrote it. For what purpose? Is there a hidden agenda? When thinking about a new Government policy consider who would benefit from this change in society? Who has the power in this situation? What is driving the changes being proposed? **Thinking critically** about the world around us will not only benefit your work in Sociology but your other subjects too.

Can you **find two articles on the topic of education**. This can be concerning educational policy, students, teachers, curriculum etc. Then **produce a 500 word (total) review of what you have found**. **A review should summarise what the article has told you but you must also comment on what the impact you believe this may have.**



For example:

## Families take ministers to court over special needs education

Ministers accused of acting unlawfully amid funding crisis that risks 'blighting children's lives forever'



▲ Special educational needs funding campaigners outside the Royal Courts of Justice, London. Photograph: Sian Harrison/PA

### Review

This article is focussed on the problems that schools currently face around funding for children with SEND. This is....

### Analysis

This policy on school funding is having a disastrous effect on the quality of provision for these students.....

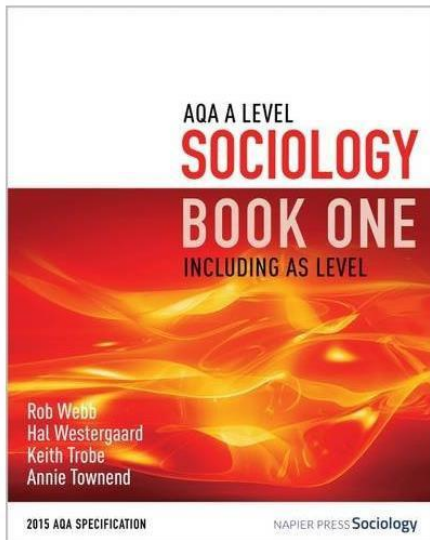
### First Article

### Second Article

## What books will I need?

We will provide you with all the resources that you need and use these regularly in class as well as producing handouts and worksheets. It is important that you conduct wider reading between lessons to ensure that you are confident with the theories and concepts we have been discussing in class. At the end of each short unit we will give you an opportunity to create some revision resources which you will be required to learn in preparation for an assessment which will be carried out in exam conditions.

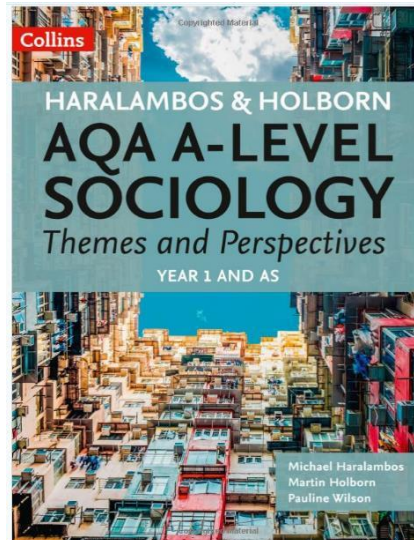
The following textbooks are probably some of the best if you are looking to do some background reading for Year 12:



AQA A Level Sociology Book One  
Including AS Level

by Rob Webb, Hal Westergaard,  
Keith Trobe , Annie Townend

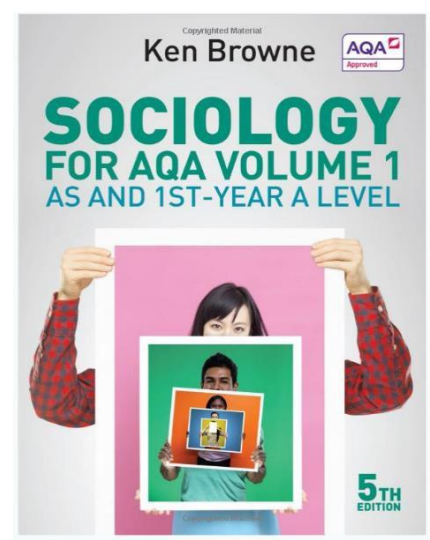
Published by Napier Press



AQA A Level Sociology Themes and Perspectives: Year 1 and AS

by Michael Haralambos, Martin  
Holborn , et al.

Published by Collins



Sociology for AQA, Vol. 1: AS and  
1st-Year A Level Paperback

by Ken Browne

Published by Polity Press

## Who will be teaching me?

The course will be split between Mrs Boss and Mrs Higginson, we teach each unit in tandem therefore there is plenty of opportunity to consolidate your understanding of each unit before we move on. Between us we have over 30 years of teaching experience and therefore you will be well supported in your studies.


### What are the lessons like?

Your sociology lessons tend to be a combination of reading, taking notes, watching clips, exploring research and discussion. You will be encouraged to develop your organisational skills, your independent learning and also your confidence in speaking and presenting in front of your peers. As mentioned previously, there is a strong emphasis on exam technique, but we also like to foster a wider interest in the subject, rather than relentlessly focusing on the specification and examination.





It would be useful to become familiar with some of the terminology that we use throughout the course, so your final task is to write down a definition for the following key words and draw a 'symbol' that could be associated with it.

Term	Definition	Symbol
Society	A grouping of individuals who are connected by a network of social relations, traditions, culture and institutions.	
Culture		
Socialisation		
Social Control		
Social Construction		
Theory		

If you would like any additional information about the course, then please e-mail

[annabel-rose.boss@delisle.leics.sch.uk](mailto:annabel-rose.boss@delisle.leics.sch.uk)

We look forward to meeting you in September.