

## Sociology Revision Guide

### Paper 1 – 1 ½ hour exam

#### **1. Core 1 - Culture , Socialisation and Research Methods – 60 marks – approx 50 minutes**

In this section be aware of how many points are on offer. This is a guide to how much to write and how long to take i.e. 1 minute for 1 mark. Remember – ANSWER THE QUESTION

#### **2. 'Family' - Essay Style Questions — 40 marks - approx 40 minutes**

For B, A and A\* you need to be aware of the three views below and be able to express how **at least one of these type of sociologists** would view a situation.

Remember in the essay style questions DO NOT ask for your opinion - so say something like, 'Some sociologists would say.....' Then put your comment in the in neutral way e.g. 'This is a very interesting point because .....

In this way you develop an argument without getting too personal

#### **You need to know the Main Views about Society – for the essay style questions**

1. **Marxist** – Believe society is split into two groups. The ruling class and the working class. Society is run by the ruling class so everything in society is purposefully organised to benefit the ruling class who are allowed to increase in capital (money and possessions) and disadvantage the working class. For example: The police force and the media. Karl Marx believed one day the working class will overthrow the ruling class and create an equal society. This is what he and Marxists wanted – equality!
2. **Feminist** – Society is split into two groups. Men and women. Society is run by men (Patriarchy), so everything in society is organised to benefit men and disadvantage women. Feminists believe society should have positive discrimination for women to bring equality.
3. **Functionalists** – Society and its structures (e.g. education, police, media etc) is ordered to be functional, to bring about order for as many as possible. They would not agree with the Marxist or Feminist. For e.g. They would say women taking a place in the home was not about men dominating but about women following a maternal instinct and this enabled society to function well and for everyone to do their part.

## **Core 1 – Culture and Socialization**

**Culture** – The things that are shared by a members of a society. E.g. style of eating

**Cultural Universals** (Things that all cultures share in common) – Use of Language, Religion – Belief in God or gods, Property – right to own, No Incest – Sleeping with family members.

**Cultural Relativity** – How cultures are different in different places

**Socialisation** – The process of learning a culture.

- **Primary Socialisation** – within the family or home by children watching their parents
- **Secondary Socialisation** – Media, School, Work Peers, Religion

**Agencies of Socialisation** - Family, School, Media, Peers, Religion etc

**Norms** – The unspoken and unwritten rules. E.g. not swearing

**Mores** – As above but essential for society to work. E.g. Doing your job ‘well’

**Values** – The beliefs behind norms. E.g. Norm= say ‘good morning to cleaners’ Belief, all people are equal.

**Identity** – who you are or **choose** to show yourself to be. Influenced by sex and gender, age, class, job, hobbies, interests, role in family, dress, appearance

**Status** – The position someone has in society

**Gender** – The social role that goes with a person’s sex

### **Gender Socialisation**

- Children encouraged by parents, peers, media to play with certain toys
- Children encouraged to do different activities e.g. boys – building

**Social Control** – How society controls and shapes the ways we think and behave

- It imposes various **sanctions (consequences)** upon behaviour that is not the ‘norm’. For example:

- Tutting, Disapproving look, exclusion from friends, Ridicule, Not picked for a team, detention, ignored, made to feel guilty
- Who imposes these **sanctions**?
  - Families, Schools, Peers, Religion, Media

### **Nature vs Nurture**

- Theories by **socio-biologists** say our genes decide how we behave. They call it **genetic determinism**. This is the argument from **NATURE** e.g. Criminals cannot help commit crime. Women are less strong than men so they are inferior
- Most sociologists say that these ideas encourage inequality, particularly **sexism**.
- Most sociologists believe in **NATURE** i.e. that humans behave as they do because of how they have been socialised.

### **Nature vs Nurture - Anthropology**

A famous study by Anthropologist, Margaret Mead highlights the Nature vs Nurture debate. It shows that **NATURE** is the key factor. She found:

- In some tribes women had been socialised / nurtured to be the leader
- Some men had been socialised to be 'passive' and not aggressive

### **Nature vs Nurture – Ferrell Children**

The discovery of feral children (Children that have never been socialised) show that nurture / socialisation is the key. These children behave like the animals they have been with. They **do not NATURALLY** behave like we expect humans to behave. Humans need socialising!

## Core 1 – Research Methods

Sociologists try to make their research as much like Science as possible. Sociology is classed as a 'Social Science!' Market Research and opinion polls are often used. Examples of methods used (Methodology):

- Questionnaires
- Interviews (Informal / Formal)
- Observation
- Secondary Data (Using other people's findings)

The first three above, if the researcher gathers the information themselves – is called Primary Data.

**Qualitative Data** - Information from interviews and observations. Descriptions! **Can't** be put in graphs etc but high in Validity.

**Quantitative Data** – Statistics in form of graphs and tables. Usually comes from closed question questionnaires. High in Reliability.

**Validity** – Does the method get to the heart of an issue? Does it get to the truth? If it does the results are highly **valid**. Usually observations and interviews do so. Although they are usually low in Reliability because they are hard to repeat.

**Reliability** – Can the research method be reliably repeated? If it can then it is **reliable**. Usually questionnaires can be, so they are high in Reliability but they are low in validity because they usually can't really get to the heart of an issue.

### Questionnaires – 2 types

**Closed Questions** – usually a tick box – leads to data and graphs

Problems: 1. Must get right sample 2. Questions often don't allow for what a person truly thinks

**Open Questions** – leads to descriptive writing

Problems: 1. Influence of Interviewer 2. Getting right Sample

**Sample** – A group of people you do research on

A good sample will give good **Representation** (Represent the right people needed) and cause the research to 'valid' (Trustworthy)

A poor sample will be **Unrepresentative** (Not represent the right people) and mean will mean the research will be less valid (Trustworthy)

Researchers will use different types of sample to get good '**representation**'

- Random Sample – It is random. Everyone has a chance to be picked
- Stratified Sample – Certain people/ groups are picked to make sure the research is hitting the right people. E.g. 'Boys views on sport' - It would be silly doing a random sample that included girls.
- Snowball Sample – One person gives you another name.

### Interviews

**Structured Interviews** – From a questionnaire type form.

**Unstructured Interviews** – Have a general theme, e.g. pupils attitude to school then just go with the flow.

**Focus Group Interviews** – With a group. Usually fairly unstructured. Researcher taking basic notes.

### Observation

**Observation (Overt)** – Observing from inside the group and the group are aware. E.g. Ross Kemp

**Observation (Covert)** – Observing from within a group and they are not aware. E.g. Donal Macintyre or Matthew Alwright in Rogue Traders

**Non- Participant Observation (Covert)** – e.g. CCTV Big Brother (Can be both overt or covert)

**The Hawthorne Effect** - If people know they are being watched / observed / surveyed they behave differently.

**Ethics in Research** - Is it therefore 'right' to NOT tell people they are being observed? Some say 'Yes' to get good results. Some say 'No' because it infringes on human rights.

**Secondary Data – Researchers** use data already available. For example:

- School league tables and other tables
- letters / diaries / autobiographies
- Government Docs

Pros:

- Others have done the main leg work
- There could be a wealth of information on a subject that a researcher hasn't naturally thought about. Cons:

Is the source of the secondary data reliable?

- Some stats can be manipulated – e.g. Government allowed 1 million people to receive sickness benefits then didn't count these people as unemployed thus making unemployment seem lower than it was.
- The letters / diaries could still fall under the Hawthorn effect
- Stats cannot tell you, 'Why?'

### Other Terms

**Pilot Study** – Usually with a small sample to test things like 'the questionnaire'

**Longitudal Study** – A study over a number of years. E.g. Documentary '49up' where researchers visted a group of 10 people every 7 years.

**Comparative Study** – e.g. Compare 2 schools

**Case Study** – If you are researching how gangs operate, a case study would be research done in just one gang. It gives limited findings but it could be a start to a wider study.

**Triangulation** – Using more than one method to back up results e.g. questionnaires and covert participant observation. Using different methods is usually the way of doing a good research project. E.g. In deciding if a school is good.



## Family Unit – Essay Questions

**Family:** people related by blood marriage or adoption.

**Family ideology:** ideas of what a family should be like.

**Socialisation:** learning the norms and values of society.

The family is **an agency of socialisation** because it socialises children and adults. Adults are expected to behave in certain ways and have special roles so they are being socialised. Children may affect parents' behaviour, e.g. parents not smoking in the same room to protect their children's health.

**Kinship:** a sense of duty and feelings for family members, e.g. a duty to look after each other.

**Cultural universals** are social behaviours found in all cultures, e.g. some form of family is found in all cultures.

**What cultural variations exist in the family?**

**Monogamy:** marriage to only one person at a time.

**Polygamy;** marriage to more than one partner at a time (illegal in Britain - called bigamy).

**Polygyny:** a husband with more than one wife. Example: In some African cultures men have many wives.

Men took a second wife to increase the number of children he could have and help the first wife. It also ensured all women were cared for, e.g. in American Plains Indians following the death of a husband whilst hunting or at war.

**Polyandry:** A wife with more than one husband. Tends to happen where resources are scarce/ Example: in the Himalayas in the past a woman often married a man and his brothers to prevent fragmentation of family farms by limiting the number of children born.

**Attitudes towards family life**

In **collectivist cultures**, communities and kinship are more important than individuals so family needs are put before your own and **arranged marriage** is sometimes practised, e.g. many British Asian families believe in **izzat**; a form of honour and reputation that must be protected.

In **individualist cultures**, e.g. Britain, individual needs are important, so people usually choose who they marry and which family members they keep in contact with.

**Attitudes to divorce differ;** some cultures see it as normal, whereas others insist on marriage for life.

**Family members who make the important decisions** can vary. In lots of cultures men control the family (patriarchy), in others, mothers are in control (matriarchy).

**The roles of men and women**

In many cultures men dominate women in the home. Looking after the home and children is seen as a female task, e.g. traditionally in Korean culture men went in the kitchen. In Western cultures, men and women are usually expected to have more equal roles in the home.

**The nuclear family** - a man, a woman and their children.

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In the 1950s **Talcott Parsons, a functionalist**, said that the nuclear family is essential for the proper socialisation of children and of parents. Modern **Conservative politicians** agree but also state that fathers should financially support their children and mothers should look after the children, old people and those who are ill. They see family breakdown as a problem for society.

**Feminists** state that the lone parent family is best as it does not exploit women, e.g. by expecting them to work and take most of the responsibility for housework and childcare. They say that other types of family are good if everyone is supported.

**Extended families**

In some parts of Britain this family type is common. It includes wider family, e.g. grandparents or aunts and uncles, who have close or daily contact with the nuclear family and share family life.

## **How has the family changed?**

### **1950s families**

In 1950s Britain most households (groups of people sharing a house) were nuclear or extended families. Poor people usually started married life living with their parents. Women married earlier, had children at a younger age, had more children and had low-paid jobs outside the home. Divorce, sex or children outside of marriage were shocking. Contraception was not easily available to women.

### **1970s families**

1970s - ideas about the family changed rapidly. Divorce, sex and children outside marriage were not generally acceptable but were more common. More women worked outside the home and began delaying having children or worked when the children were grown up. Men and women experimented with new ways of living in families.

### **Modern families**

There is no typical family; people are free to live as they wish, e.g. fewer marry, many live together without marriage, remain single, or have same sex partners. It is acceptable to have children without a partner and childbirth outside marriage is acceptable unless the parents are very young. The fewer children are born due to contraception. People can choose not to stay in unhappy relationships. Divorce is common and many children are brought up in single-parent families. However, many people still live in nuclear or reconstituted families.

## **What are the functions of the family?**

### **Family and household structures in modern Britain**

**Cohabitation** - People choose to live together before or instead of marriage. Some have children outside marriage. Why? Due to changing social norms and because weddings are expensive.

**Singlehood** - More people live alone by choice or after relationship breakdown / divorce or the death of a partner, e.g. the elderly.

**Couples and the childfree** - People may live in empty nest families; children have grown up and left home. Increasingly, couples choose not to have children living freer, wealthier lives.

**Gay families** - Homosexual couples of both genders may choose to bring up children. This is happening because laws have legalised homosexuality, gay adoption, civil partnerships and gay marriage.

**Reconstituted families** - are common and include children from more than one relationship e.g. from a previous marriage.

**Lone (or single) parenthood** - can be the result of divorce, separation, choice or the death of a partner.

**Apart/together** - Some parents may be in a relationship, or have had children without being in a relationship but they remain in friendly contact. They may live in different homes allowing the children to move between them.

**Multiple parenting** – where a child has a birth parent, and social parents who bring up the child. This can be as a result of adoption, or IVF involving sperm and egg donation or surrogacy.

## **Is single parenthood a problem for society?**

Most of the 2 million single parents in the UK are women in their late 30s whose relationship has broken down. Fewer than 2% of lone parents are under the age of 20. Approximately 6% of births are registered in the mother's name alone. A further 10% are registered to parents who do not share an address.

### **Single parents and poverty**

Children in single-parent households are more likely to be poor; about a quarter are in low income families. Why? The lone parent does not work, works part-time or in low paid work. Many get little (average is £40 a week) or no money from former partners. Single parents often rely on benefits and so cost taxpayers a lot of money.

### **Why some people think lone parenthood is a problem**

Government reports and other studies state that the children of lone parents are more likely to have behavioural problems, do less well in school, be ill, use drugs or become criminals.

### **What is the debate?**

Are problems faced by lone parents are caused by:

1. Family background. Children need a nuclear family.
2. Children being poor, or by parental conflict.

### **Changing attitudes to divorce**

Divorce is increasing:

1970 - 25% of marriages ended in divorce. 1994 - 33% ended in divorce. Now - 42% of marriages end in divorce. Some people argue that people are less happy now than in the past. However, they could not divorce easily until recently and so may have had to stay together in empty shell (loveless) marriages.

### **How are the roles of children in the family changing?**

Childhood - a period when you are dependent on parents.

#### **Childhood in the 1950s**

Childhood was shorter. Children left school at 15, were expected to work and help support the family. Families had 2.4 children; mothers were younger, had more children and did not work outside the home unless cleaning or cooking. Homes were more crowded, less well heated, few had televisions and there were no computers. Children had few toys and spent more time outside playing with their friends. Family discipline was harsh.

#### **Childhood now**

Writer, Sue Palmer claims that modern childhood is toxic because of higher risk of mental illness and obesity, limited freedom and opportunities to play. Parents are child-centred focusing on the safety and care of their children. This results in excessive control of them due to fears of paedophiles and stranger danger, even though child abduction and murder are rare. Children stay in and play computer games rather than going to parks and playing outside. Parents lack time to cook so they eat more processed foods. Families are smaller; 1.7 children. Children do not talk to adults as much as they should. They are aware of fashion, style and even sex well before they are mature enough due to media pressure to buy things. Further pressure comes from the exam system; parents & schools push children to do well rather than relax and enjoy learning for learning's sake.

### **What is the role of men in the family?**

In the 1950s men and women had **segregated conjugal roles** - different roles.

**Men** were traditionally family **breadwinners** earning and controlling the money. They would **discipline the children**. Men did not do house work; it was shameful for them.

**Women** looked after the men, **cooking and cleaning**.

#### **Why have men's roles in the family changed?**

1. Women now work and so men help in the home. Women may earn more than men.
2. There are fewer traditional male jobs so some men stay at home.
3. Changing norms and values so it is normal for men to be caring and involved in bringing up children.
4. Men work fewer hours and so have time for their children.

**The new man** – a man who helps in the home and takes on traditional female roles.

**House husbands** - men who stay at home and look after the family whilst women work outside the home.

**Non-resident fathers** – fathers who do not live with the mother but still expect or wish to provide money, care and emotional support for their children.

#### **Gay fathers.**

Gay fathers who share children often divide domestic work, and can be effective parents.

### **What is the role of women in the family?**

#### **1950s women**

In the 1950s women would have low paid jobs in factories or as cleaners to help support the family. Their main role was cooking, shopping and cleaning for the family.

### **Modern women**

Women have a choice of not having a family, being part of the family structure of their choice, or bringing up children on their own. As most work they do not have to rely on men to live.

### **Is the family under threat?**

Some people argue that the family is under threat as divorce rates are higher, there is a movement away from traditional family forms; people have fewer children, there is more singlehood and a greater variety of family structures.

### **Arguments used to say that families are dying out**

Some Conservative politicians say that high divorce rates and lower marriage rates are evidence that family life is not as good as in the past. They claim that people lack family values and are selfish. They also state that children brought up in single-parent families have worse lives and develop social problems. Church leaders such as the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke out against gay marriage in 2012.

### **Arguments used to say that families are just changing**

Anthony Giddens, a British sociologist, stated that in the past people married and were stuck with each other. He now claims that whilst divorce and family relationship breakdown rates are high most people form new relationships. Now, people are in families of choice, e.g. gay people can openly have relationships and children. Feminist sociologists say that traditional marriages are not good for women or children who are often controlled by men.

### **How lives of older people in the family have changed.**

**Life expectancy** - people are healthier and live longer. Many single person households are elderly people who have lost a partner, or who have chosen not to remarry following divorce.

### **Positive effects of older people in families**

Free childcare for children of working parents particularly from grandparents in their 60s and 70s. When families break down grandchildren often become the responsibility of grandparents. Adult children in their 20s and 30s often return to the family home due to financial problems or relationship breakdown. This situation is described as a boomerang family.

Grandparents are often a source of family history as they have more time than working parents. They often offer financial support for families providing money for education of grandchildren or buy luxuries.

### **Negative effects of old people in families**

Approximately one in three people over 80 needs support, e.g. for health reasons, such as dementia, or physical illness. Family members, typically a daughter who is in her 50s or 60s, usually provide support. These women are called the sandwich generation if they also care for children or grandchildren. Increasing numbers of older people are demanding divorce when they retire and find out that they have little in common with their partners.

## Examples of Essay Style Questions and Example answers

### Family

(a) Describe **two** different types of family. [10]

(b) Explain why many people choose to cohabit. [10]

(c) Using sociological knowledge, discuss social reasons why there have been changes in divorce rates in Britain. [20]

(a) Describe traditional gender roles in the UK. [10]

(b) Explain why increasing numbers of people live alone. [10]

(c) Using sociological knowledge, discuss reasons why women have fewer children now than in the past. [20]

(a) Describe **two** changes to childhood in the family since 1945. [10]

(b) Explain reasons why there are many single parent families in modern Britain. [10]

(c) Using sociological knowledge, discuss how the roles of men in families have changed since 1945. [20]

## Sample GCSE Essays Analysed

### Example 1

**(C) Using sociological knowledge, discuss whether the working class experience poor life chances. (20 marks)**

**Answer 1** 4 Marks out of 20 G Grade

The working class may experience poor life chances and they do not normally get that **good an education** and therefore their life choices are **limited**. People from a working class background are more likely to live in poor, rough places where crime is very high therefore working class people **may not then want to carry** on pushing for a good life but just accept the fact that they are always going to be working class people. Working class people do not have a real family **role model** and are brought up thinking that working in a factory is just the normal job as most people they know work in one.

**Answer 2** 6 Marks out of 20 F Grade

**Comment [g1]:** Band 1 – top end

Very short answer, though some ideas are present

**Comment [g2]:** Unders link between education and life chances

**Comment [g3]:** Explain why this is so

**Comment [g4]:** What evidence is there?

**Comment [g5]:** Sociological language

**Comment [g6]:** Band 2, bottom end.

Some sociological language and ideas, but still short.

Once you are in a working or a lower class, it can be hard to get out of or to work your way up. This is because people may not have time to study anything or gain qualifications as they can't afford it or are too busy working. As a result of this, people may experience poor life chances. They are just expected to work and they have a family so that pattern can be hard to exit. They may have poor circumstances and have to continue to work to support other people. They will therefore not be able to gain qualifications to get a better job. As a child of working class status in a school, they may have had many distractions or not a good enough education to gain good GCSE results. This could affect their whole life and give them poor life chances.

**Comment [g7]:** Gives a reason

**Comment [g8]:** Understands what life chances are but doesn't make it plain enough.

**Comment [g9]:** Link between education and life chances

## Example 2

**(C) Using sociological knowledge, discuss the functions of the family in our society. (20 marks)**

**Answer 1** 8 Marks out of 20 E Grade

The main function of a family is to love and care for one another. A family is people you can go to for affection and support. You should be able to go to your family with any problem and not worry about the outcome. A family is there to teach the children the things that they need to know to survive in our society.

**Comment [g10]:** Band 2 – middle range

Short, but some ideas present even though they are not developed.

**Comment [g11]:** Understands the meaning of the term.

**Comment [g12]:** Socialisation – but the word should have been used.

A family is there to bring up the children in a happy, healthy way so members of a family should have clothes to wear and shelter. Also, they should have food to eat so they will need to go to work for each other as well. The norms of one family may be different from another family but they all care for each other.

**Comment [g13]:** Understands about supporting the family and the economic role.

**Comment [g14]:** Uses sociological language well.

**Answer 2** 12 Marks out of 20 C Grade

The family is there to socialise the children. They teach the way of life of a culture and explain to children how they should behave and what they should do. They teach the children the way of life and are there to care for children.

**Comment [g15]:** Band 3 – bottom end  
Very short but specific sociological knowledge present

**Comment [g16]:** Uses sociological terms

**Comment [g17]:** Sociological term

Functionalists suggest that a family's function is to teach children what is right and what is wrong so that they are able to function in society. Feminists believe that the function of a nuclear family is to exploit the women by making them stay at home and look after the men. This is the Dark Side of the family. The family is there to teach children the gender roles and teach their role in life.

**Comment [g18]:** Theory mentioned

**Comment [g19]:** Theory explained

**Comment [g20]:** Knowledge of family structure.

The typical function of a family is where the parents provide the **money** in order to give themselves and the children the things that they need to survive as it is the function of the family to provide support for one another.

**Comment [g21]:** Economic function identified

**(c) Discuss social reasons why there have been changes in divorce rates in Britain. (20 marks)**

Notice how the answer: ALWAYS answers the question in every paragraph, expands each point fully and uses lots of sociological words

**19 marks out of 20 - THIS IS AN A\* answer**

**(c)** Firstly, the introduction of contraception in the 1960s has enabled women to decide whether or not they want children. This has meant that they do not have to commit to a relationship to increase the chance of success or emotional stability of a child. **Having less restrictions such as these makes a divorce more swift for the female and much more likely.**

**However** there have been other factors that have increased divorce rates. **Many economic crises** have made employment hard to come by since the 1990s. This has meant that the 'breadwinner' husband has not been able to provide for his family and this has been disastrous for marriage and divorce as some men have felt worthless and this has **caused conflict in families and ultimately divorce.**

**In answering the question** we can look even deeper and further back in history. Since 1939 – during the war women were employed in making ammunition for the war. This created friendship between women and a sense that they were as able as men. This meant that women began to feel entitled to earning their own money. **This led to women wanting more independence. Females now had the opportunity to apply for a divorce without financial dependency** on their husband. Because the courts often sided with women they also kept the children.

However the New Right approach meant that a new equality between men and women was introduced, where men began to get equal access to children. This produced a greater equality amongst couples, allowing independency for both partners. **But it also helped to slow down divorce rates as it encouraged partners not to leave a marriage.**

Divorce rates have also changed due to a change in government rules. Acts of Parliament being passed in the 1980s and 90s have meant more equality for women. Quite often before this women had little claim to property. **The law gave women a right to 50% of property. This obviously meant that they became freer to leave and still have access to possessions and a life. This encouraged divorce.**

Also in the last 20 years different types of family have become more socially acceptable, whereas 60 years ago a divorced woman would be severely frowned upon, even shunned by certain cultures. Now many men or women can live in a single parent situation without being ostracised from society. **This new socialisation encouraged the wealthy and hard working to divorce rather than endure unhappy**

**marriages. There is now an introduction of new norms and values. This has obviously increase divorce rates.**