



Cardinal Newman
Catholic School



*Preparing for
A level*



Sociology

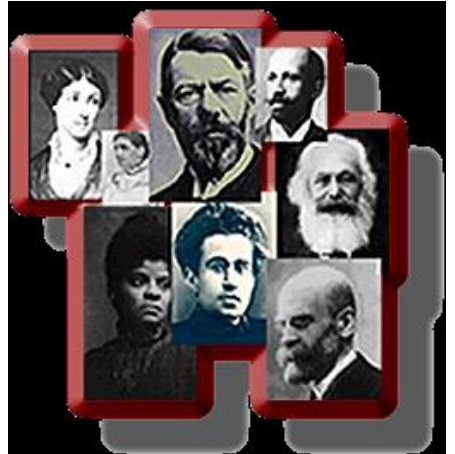
Bridging Task

Mrs Nardiello



Section 1: An Introduction to AS Sociology

Sociology is the **study of human social life**. There are many different aspects of Sociology to address, so you must be curious and attentive to looking at the world in a different way!



Look at this photograph the other way;
not everything is as it seems...

There is usually another way of looking at things and that is what we do as sociologists. We take normal, taken-for-granted life and turn it upside down, looking for meanings and very often we end up seeing things very differently.

Sociology is an **evidence-based** subject. This means it is not just about looking at the sociologist's theories, but also about being able to back up these theories with our opinions and facts. Sociologists therefore collect **evidence** by carrying out research to establish whether their theories are correct. **A good theory is one that explains the available evidence well.**

Culture, Socialisation and identity are core themes in sociology. You will need to be able to apply these to many different topics in your sociology course.



Bob saw himself as a sensitive poet. Unfortunately, society just saw him as a fireman.

Sociological Imagination

We are all sociologists at heart; we can all identify changes between people, cultures, and social institutions. Much of it is common sense or pub man philosophising. But with studying Sociology you can put theory and research to your opinions, supporting your viewpoint.

What is useful to start with is to employ what **C. Wright Mills** (1959) labelled the **sociological imagination**.

Mills suggests the sociological imagination could help individuals cope with the social world by helping them to **step outside** of their personal worldview and thus allow them to see the events and social structure that influence their behaviour, attitudes, and culture.

Task 1:

Look at the following pictures. Write down what you see and what you don't see and make a list of possible scenarios for the image - what could be going on? What is it about? Who are they?



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Social Change:

The social world is changing. Some argue it is growing; others say it is shrinking. The important point to grasp is: society does not remain static over time; it constantly changes - through decades, centuries, and across countries and societies.

Task 2:

Think of **3** different ways society has changed over the last 100yrs.

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Name **3 ways** in which British society is different to another (America, Italy, etc)



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Sociology as a subject first developed in response to major changes that began to take place in western society from the 18th Century onwards. These changes had an enormous impact on all areas of social life and to understand them, many sociologists make a distinction between two types of society:



Traditional society and modern society.



Why has society **changed**? Why are societies **different**?

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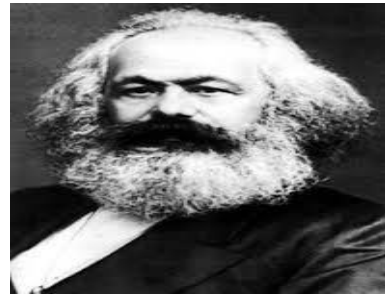
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The 3 'founding fathers' of sociology:

Karl Marx (1818-1883)

Marx believed that **capitalism** oppresses the **working class**, and that there needs to be a **revolution** to make all people **equal**.



Emile Durkheim (1858-1917)

Durkheim was a **functionalist**. He believed that society is made up of different **institutions**, each with its own function - these institutions work in harmony to create a **stable society**.

Max Weber 1864-1920)

Weber believed that sociologists should study both **structures and actions** to understand society. He thought that an individual's behaviour is shaped by **structural factors** (such as the law) and **subjective factors** (such as emotion).



Task 3:

Research and answer the following questions
(You also need to include the source you have got your information from and write in your own words):



- 1) What is **capitalism**?
- 2) What is Marx's theory on class conflict? **Give 2 points.**
- 3) What is **functionalism**?
- 4) How do the following: **Family, education and religion**, determine how society is structured?
- 5) What is **interactionism**?
- 6) How do you think **laws and emotions** can affect someone's behaviour?



Section 2: Families and Households

The family is one of the most important **social groups** in sociology - almost all people live in a family for some of their life. Defining '**family**', however is difficult.

Task 4:

A) Research the definitions for the following key terms and give an example of each (you can use celebrities!):

Keyword	Definition	Example
1) Nuclear family		
2) Traditional extended family		
3) Attenuated extended family		
4) Lone-parent families		
5) Reconstituted families		

B) Write down who was responsible for each of the following tasks in your family when you were young:

A - Always Mother, B - Mainly Mother, C - Shared equally by both parents, D - Mainly Father, E- Always Father, F - Other person (state who)

1. Doing the laundry
2. Making small repairs in the house
3. Caring for sick family members
4. Shopping for groceries
5. Doing the household cleaning



6. Preparing the meals
7. Taking you to the park
8. Reading to you at bedtime
9. Supervising your baths
10. Taking you to and picking you up from school

The nature and role of family in society:

Families and households are not necessarily the same thing.

A household is a group of people who live together who may or may not have family or kinship ties. In 2010, there were 25.3 million households recorded in Great Britain. Families make up the majority of households, but there are other types, e.g. students or friends sharing a house or flat, or people living alone

Functionalists emphasise the positive role of the family:

Functionalists see every institution in society as essential to the smooth running of society. A key functionalist study by **George Murdock** (1949) concluded that the family is so useful to society that it is inevitable and universal - in other words, you can't avoid having family units in a society and societies everywhere have family units.

Murdock (1949) looked at 250 societies in different cultures

Murdock argued that some form of the nuclear family existed in all of the 250 societies he looked at. He argued the family performed four basic functions:

1. **Sexual** - provides a stable sexual relationship for adults and controls the sexual relationships of its members.
2. **Reproductive** - provides new babies - **new members of society**.
3. **Economic** - the family pools resources and provides for all its members; adults and children.
4. **Educational** - the family teaches children the **norms and values** of society, which keeps the values of society going.

In the 1950's, American sociologist **Talcott Parsons** argued that the family always has two basic and irreducible (vital) functions. These are the primary and **socialisation of children** and the **stabilisation of adult personalities**.

1. **Primary socialisation** - the process by which children learn and accept the values and norms of society. Parsons described families as 'factories' where the next citizens are produced.
2. For adults, the family **stabilises personalities** through the emotional relationship between the parents. The emotional relationship gives the support and security needed to cope in the wider society. It's a sanctuary from the stress of everyday life.

Task 5:

A key skill in sociology is reading text and analysing the content. Have a go at answering the following exam questions using the above information:

- 1) What do sociologists **define** as a **household**? (1 mark)
- 2) What are the **key functions** of the family according to **Parsons**? (4 marks)
- 3) What **functions** might **nuclear families** perform? Give 3 detailed examples. (6 marks)
- 4) What is your **opinion** on the **functional approach** to the family? Include the potential **negative** aspects of family life that have not been included in your argument. (4 marks)