

Subject: Sociology	Awarding Body: AQA
Head of Dept: Dr Edwards	Teacher: Dr Edwards

Preferred entry requirements:

GCSE Maths at Grade 4 or above. GCSE English Literature and Language at Grade 5 or above.

Students of Sociology should have an interest in social issues, a readiness to think critically about topics and a willingness to appreciate a range of arguments in any given debate.

Specification Content

A level			
Year 1	Education with Methods in Context	Year 2	Beliefs in Society
	Research Methods		Crime and Deviance
	Families and Households		Theory and Methods

Structure of the course:

The course starts with the sociology of education, research methods and sociological theory. This involves an exploration of changing educational policies, teacher/pupil relationships and reasons for the different attainment patterns of children (looking at social class, gender and ethnicity particularly). The methods topic demands an understanding of the way sociologists conduct research (particularly in schools) and so we explore issues around the use of interviews, questionnaires and observations. Early on, students can also expect to learn and apply the major theories of society, for example, Functionalism, Marxism and Feminism. In the spring term of the first year, the sociology of families and households is our focus and we explore a wide range of social issues such as the status and quality of children's lives today; levels of equality between men and women; the variety of family and household types in Britain today and changing patterns of marriage, cohabitation and divorce. By the summer of the first year, students will be studying the sociology of beliefs. This section of the course focuses largely upon religion but also considers people's engagement in non-religious belief systems, for example, science. We debate the apparent decline of religion, consider global trends, examine a variety of religious organisations (from churches to cults to New Age Movements) and the question of whether religion causes conflict or encourages unity between people. Finally, the crime, deviance, theory and method section of the course will discuss topics such as: the factors which cause some people to commit crime; the reasons behind crimes such as cyber-crime, corporate crime and green crime; the role of the criminal justice system and current patterns and trends in crime. The theory element of the unit draws together arguments explored throughout the two years and students will deepen their understanding of sociological theories and methods.

Method:

To answer sociological questions, students need to apply and evaluate sociological arguments and evidence. To this end, students will build their sociological knowledge by reading about sociological theories, research and keep up to date with current events via the media. This reading and research will inform the lessons which then provide opportunities for lots of discussion and debate. Written work will involve note making, structured questions and essay writing.

Strengths/Skills developed through studying this subject:

Sociology is a subject which encourages students to reflect upon their personal identity, roles and responsibilities within society. Students acquire a knowledge and critical understanding of contemporary issues along with a respect for social diversity. Through their study of the subject, sociology students learn how to structure and communicate balanced and logical arguments. Sociology also encourages good organisation along with the invaluable skills of analysis and critical thinking.

What students do with this qualification:

Sociology A level encourages students to look at the world in a critical manner: to see the questions behind the questions. This critical thinking, along with invaluable research skills, means that Sociology provides an excellent foundation for a variety of university courses. A degree in Sociology would be useful for a wide range of careers such as those found in health and social work, personnel and recruitment, social research, policing, journalism and teaching in primary, secondary and further education.