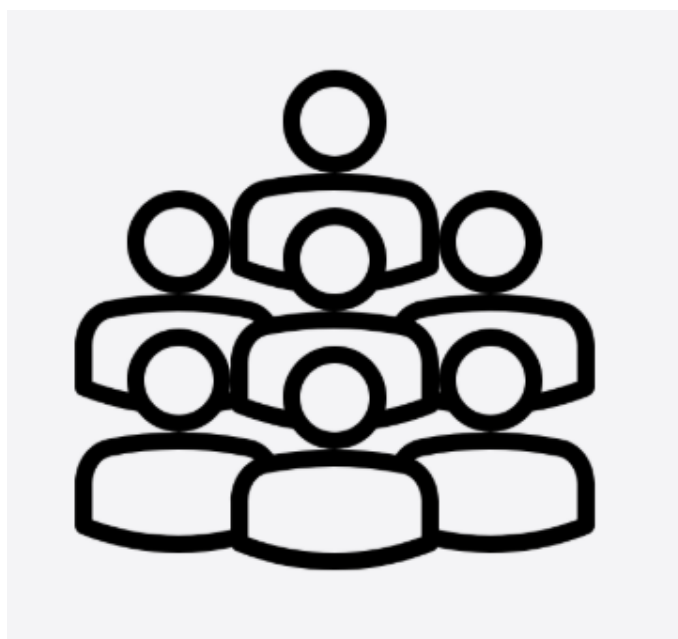




The Department of Social Sciences

AQA AS/A Level Sociology Year 12 Summer Transition and Induction Pack



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SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT: SOCIOLOGY: AS INDUCTION AND TRANSITION PACK

Structure of the Course

This is an **examined subject** so there will be **no coursework!**

Year 1 – AS

Topics Covered

During Year 1 we look at the following topics in detail:

- Education with Methods in Context (Paper 1)
- Families and Households and Research Methods (Paper 2)



The **AS** exams that will take place next summer from May 2021 will cover the above material. Please note however, that the AS exams are a stand-alone qualification. The good news is that the content covered during the first year will cross over into year 2.

Year 1 External Assessment (AS)

So, at the end of year 1 you will sit **two exams** for the AS exams, Paper 1 and Paper 2. The overall AS grades will be recorded on a scale A - E.

Assessments

Paper 1: Education with Methods in Context

What's assessed

Compulsory content 3.1.1, 3.1.2

Assessed

- 1 hour 30 minutes written exam
- 60 marks
- 50% of AS level

Questions

Education: short answer and extended writing, 40 marks

Methods in Context: extended writing, 20 marks

+

Paper 2: Research Methods and Topics in Sociology

What's assessed

Section A: compulsory content 3.2.1

Section B: one from 3.2.2 Topics in Sociology

Assessed

- 1 hour 30 minutes written exam
- 60 marks
- 50% of AS level

Questions

Section A: short answer and extended writing, 20 marks

Section B: short answer and extended writing, 40 marks

SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT: SOCIOLOGY: AS INDUCTION AND TRANSITION PACK

Year 2 – A – Level

Topics Covered

In year 2 we will delve deeper into conceptual knowledge and sociological theories. The topics we cover during year 2 follow:

- Beliefs in Society (Paper 2)
- Crime and Deviance (Paper 3)
- Sociological theories and Methods (Paper 1 and Paper 3)



Year 2 External Assessment (Full A Level)

During the summer of year 2, you will sit **three exams** which will cover the material taught over the two years of the course. The overall grades will be recorded on a scale A*- E.

Assessments

| Paper 1: Education with Theory and Methods | + | Paper 2: Topics in Sociology | + | Paper 3: Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| <p>What's assessed</p> <p>Compulsory content 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3</p> | | <p>What's assessed</p> <p>Section A: one from option 1: 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.3 or 4.2.4</p> <p>Section B: one from option 2: 4.2.5, 4.2.6, 4.2.7 or 4.2.8</p> | | <p>What's assessed</p> <p>Compulsory content 4.3.1, 4.3.2</p> |
| <p>Assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 hour written exam • 80 marks • 33.3% of A-level | | <p>Assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 hour written exam • 80 marks • 33.3% of A-level | | <p>Assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 hour written exam • 80 marks • 33.3% of A-level |
| <p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education: short answer and extended writing, 50 marks • Methods in Context: extended writing, 20 marks • Theory and Methods: extended writing, 10 marks | | <p>Questions</p> <p>Section A: extended writing, 40 marks</p> <p>Section B: extended writing, 40 marks</p> | | <p>Questions</p> <p>Crime and Deviance: short answer and extended writing, 50 marks</p> <p>Theory and Methods: extended writing, 30 marks</p> |

Specification

AQA is the awarding body for this course and I would encourage you to look at the specification for more detail about the course and topics. You can find this at:

<https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/sociology/specifications/AQA-7191-7192-SP-2015.PDF>

SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT: SOCIOLOGY: AS INDUCTION AND TRANSITION PACK

Skills required

This is a demanding course and requires a large amount of independent learning, researching skills, examination skills and techniques. You will be required to use your study time effectively so be pro-active!

The three assessment objectives used to assess your knowledge and understanding of the course material are:

- **A01:** Knowledge and Understanding
- **A02:** Interpretation and Application
- **A03:** Analysis and Evaluation

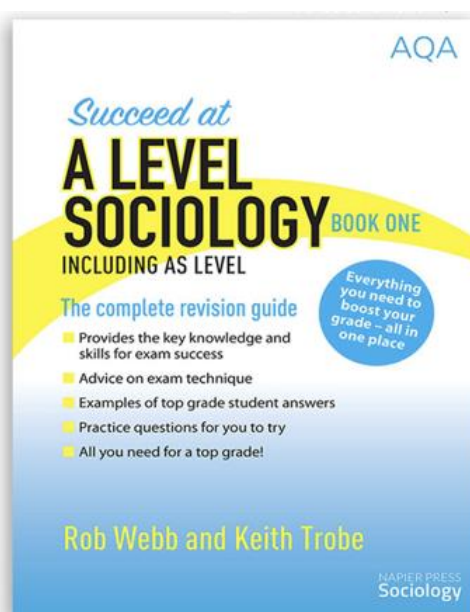
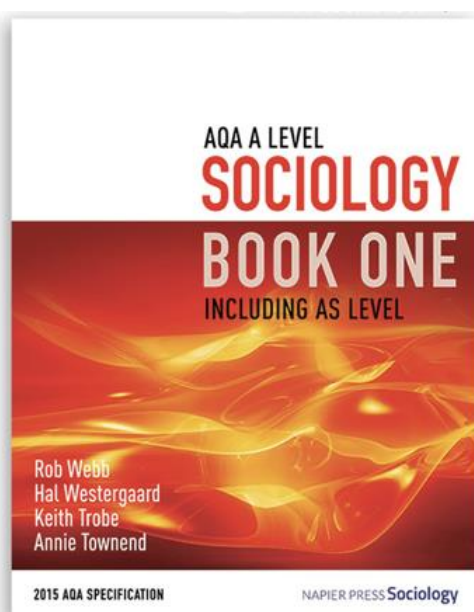


Don't worry too much about these skills at the moment as we will provide a range of activities and guidance for each skill during the course.

Textbooks

You will require the following textbooks over the two years, and I have suggested the accompanying revision guide that may be useful but it's not compulsory unless you would find it useful. You will only need Book One for the first year. There is of course no such thing as a perfect book so we will reference a variety of different sources from a range of books but if you would like to purchase another book in addition to the one suggested, that will also be fine but please ensure that it is catered for this course! Funding support can be available if required and can be discussed with the Sixth form team.

Year 12 Textbooks

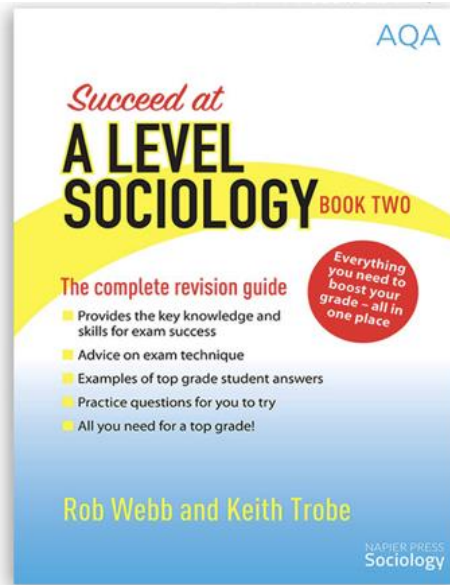
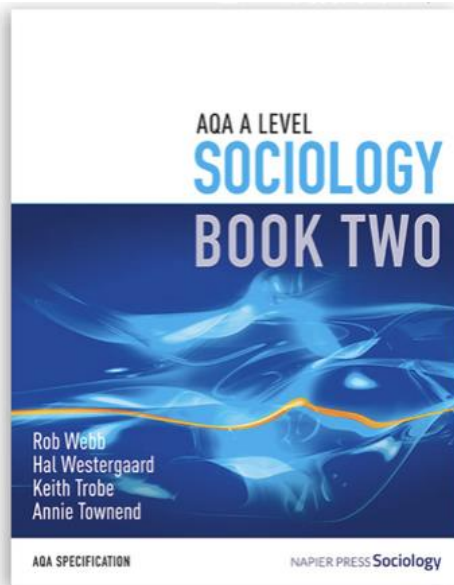


**AQA A Level:
Sociology Book One**
Rob Webb, Hal
Westergaard, Keith
Trobe and Annie
Townend
Napier Press
ISBN: 9780954007911

**Succeed at A Level
Sociology Book One
Including AS Level:
The Complete
Revision Guide**
Rob Webb and Keith
Trobe
Napier Press
ISBN: 9780954007997

For first year A level and AS students

SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT: SOCIOLOGY: AS INDUCTION AND TRANSITION PACK
Year 2 Textbooks



AQA A Level:
Sociology Book Two
Rob Webb, Hal Westergaard, Keith Trobe and Annie Townend
Napier Press
ISBN: 9780954007928

Succeed at A Level Sociology Book Two: The Complete Revision Guide
Rob Webb and Keith Trobe
Napier Press
ISBN: 9780954007942

For second year A level students

Materials

You will be provided with exercise books throughout the year for classwork and home learning activities. However, you will require the following:

- Lined paper, revision cards and Post-it Notes.
- Stationery including coloured highlighters and pens.

Induction Tasks and Summer Project

Over the next few pages there will be some tasks for you to complete over the summer period. Both the induction and summer project tasks set in this booklet are designed with the Head Start Test in mind. By completing all the tasks set you will be illustrating your readiness to begin the course and ultimately be **preparing for your Head Start Test**.



Sixth form study is hard work and there are no short cuts. Commitment to your studies is essential. Good Luck and Stay Safe!

SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT: SOCIOLOGY: AS INDUCTION AND TRANSITION PACK

Induction Tasks

The following tasks need to be completed in this booklet and on paper. Make sure each task is correctly titled and numbered. Once you have completed all your tasks please attach them to this pack ready to hand them in during your first Sociology lesson. The following induction tasks will give you an insight into some of the material that is covered within the topic area of Education and Families and Households. (Paper 1 and Paper 2).

Sociology is real and is everywhere!



Sociology is everywhere, so you'll be able to see aspects of it in **all** forms of media. Try searching for the following titles and make notes on any videos you watch over the summer, try to keep it relevant to the topics taught in Sociology (refer to the topics outlined previously). I am looking forward to hearing what you have watched and the way it links to Sociology. Here are some suggestions for you.

- School Swap documentary
- Stacey Dooley documentaries (BBC iPlayer / Youtube)
- Louis Theroux documentaries
- Dispatches documentaries (4OD)
- Panorama documentaries (BBC iPlayer)

Induction Task 1

A lot of sociology involves evaluating sociological research and sources. You will need to reference such studies within your work and in addition you will also need to support your points using knowledge and understanding from other sources. Read through both articles and answer the questions that follow. Both articles address issues that we will be investigating further during year 1 of the course. You will need to reference the article and use further research from the internet about the issues that arise from the articles.



SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT: SOCIOLOGY: AS INDUCTION AND TRANSITION PACK
Induction Task 1a. Article 1 – Families and Households

Marriage between heterosexual couples is at the lowest level on record.

28 February 2018

New research has revealed that marriage between heterosexual couples is at the lowest level on record.

The new study by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) revealed that 239,020 between heterosexual couples took place in England and Wales in 2015, a 3.4 decrease on the year before.

Between 1972 and 2009, a gradual long-term decline in the number of marriages was gradually noticed, before the trend was eventually bucked between 2010 and 2012. But in 2015, The number of marriages was 0.8% lower than the record low of 2013, representing the lowest number of marriages in a calendar year since 2009. The data also shows a steep decline in tradition, with only 0.7 percent of same sex marriages being performed at a religious ceremony. Despite the overall decline, it also appears that heterosexual couples are getting married later in life, with the average age for men marrying in 2015 being 37.5 years, while for women it was 35.1 years.

It reflects an increase compared with 2014 (37.0 years for men and 34.6 years for women) and continues the overall rise which has been recorded since the 1970s. For the first time ever, the date also reflected same sex marriages – with 6,493 being performed in 2015. Of these, 44% (2,860) were between male couples and 56% (3,633) were between female couples. Statistician Nicola Haines said: 'Marriage rates for opposite-sex couples are now at their lowest level on record following a gradual long-term decline since the early 1970s. The number of marriages between opposite-sex couples decreased by 3.4% in 2015, compared with 2014.

'Despite this overall decline, marriages at older ages rose; the number of weddings increased for men aged 50 and over and women aged 35 to 39 years and 45 and over. 'This is the first full year for which marriages were available for same-sex couples and they accounted for 2.6% of all marriages.'



Referring to this article and research from elsewhere, suggest why marriages are declining in British society. Attach your answer to this pack.

SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT: SOCIOLOGY: AS INDUCTION AND TRANSITION PACK
Induction Task 1b. Article 2 - Education

As few as 1 in 20 born in poorest areas go to university.

14 August 2017



Only one in 20 pupils in some of the country's poorest postcodes progress to higher education, according to new analysis by Teach First. The charity has called for the government to improve entry rates by writing off student debt to get better teachers into challenging schools. It has also called on universities to start offering university access programmes at primary level.

According to Teach First's research, on average only one in five young people born in the country's poorest postcodes progress to university, while half of those born in the wealthiest postcodes do so. However, the gap is even more stark between some areas.

For example, in some parts of Derbyshire, as few as one in twenty students go to university, while in parts of Buckinghamshire it is more than 80 per cent. This means that those born in some of the richest areas are up to 18 times more likely to attend university than those in some of the poorest areas. Teach First also found big differences between the choices made by disadvantaged young people when it came to university compared to their more privileged peers.

A ComRes poll of 18-25 year olds found that 41 per cent of the most advantaged students said they chose their university because it was the best for what they wanted to study, compared to only 31 per cent of the least advantaged. Similarly, the reputation of a university was important to 53 per cent of the most advantaged students, but it only was for 46 per cent of the most disadvantaged. Disadvantaged students are also more likely to choose an institution close to where they live, with 29 per cent saying they chose their university on this basis, compared to 24 per cent of the most advantaged. Of the most disadvantaged pupils who did not go to university, only 12 per cent said this was because their grades weren't good enough.

To ensure students were able to make more informed choices when it came to university, Teach First said there should be a trained careers middle leader in every school to develop and lead a careers strategy. It suggested this could be paid for out of money councils and academies are required to set aside for the apprenticeship levy.

SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT: SOCIOLOGY: AS INDUCTION AND TRANSITION PACK

Teach First says the government should offer student loan forgiveness to attract the best possible graduates into teaching, where they can help young people from deprived communities achieve their potential.

It suggests 20 per cent of student debt could be cleared for those working for two years, increasing to 50 per cent for those who remain in certain geographic or subject areas for five years. The charity also says that universities' access work is coming too late, with programmes frequently aimed at pupils aged 16-18 "by which point much of the effects of disadvantage have already played out". Instead, it argues that access work should start at primary school to give pupils "the best possible opportunity to make informed and supported decisions about their futures at an earlier age".

Brett Wigdortz, Teach First's chief executive and founder, said "there are still far too few disadvantaged pupils getting to university". "They're simply not given the same chance to reach their full potential, with less access to brilliant teaching and less guidance on how they can turn their aspirations into reality. " He added: "More must be done by the government, universities and society as a whole to break down the barriers to social mobility that are preventing too many of our young people reaching as far as their potential allows".

Referring to this article and research from elsewhere, highlight the barriers that are preventing certain individual's to 'reach their full potential' in the education system? Attach your full response to this pack.

Questions to consider:

What is meritocracy?

Does this article suggest we live in a meritocracy?

Why is it important that 'poor' students go to university?

Summer Project

SP Task 1 – What is a family?

Define the concepts below and give an example for each:

- Family
- Household
- Nuclear family



**WE
ARE
FAMILY**

SP Task 2 – Why do we need families?

In **your** opinion, what's the purpose of a family?

Things to consider:

What role(s) does a family fulfil?

What would happen if people did not belong to a family?

Is it possible to live without a family?

Are there any alternatives to living within a traditional family? Can you give an example of these alternatives?



SP Task 3 – Official Statistics

Sociologists use a range of research methods to gather data for their research. Sociologists use data as evidence for their perspective on trends, patterns and changes in society e.g. the nuclear family is no longer the most common type of family in the UK. Official statistics are a useful method of gathering data because it is a quick, cheap and easy way to gather data. You will see this yourself when you complete the tasks below!



For this task I want you to focus on official statistics as this is one of the methods that positivist sociologists use when gathering data. Official statistics is a secondary source of gathering data. Define the terms below:

- Define the term secondary data and give an example.
- Define the term positivism. Give an example.
- Referring to the Office for National Statistics (we use this website a lot within the social sciences department) answer the following question below. You will need to justify your answer using the statistics on the website. You will need to navigate on the tabs to find evidence for your perspective. I expect **at least one full page** for your response to this question.

Office for National Statistics:

[Families and households in the UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/families-and-households-in-the-uk)

Question:

The nuclear family is no longer the common type of household in the UK?

Things to consider in your response:

*Does the evidence suggest this is the case?
Consider the changes to the family structure in the UK.*

How are families changing?

Are people still choosing to get married?

What has the impact of divorce had on the structure of the family?

Are people living alone?



- I now want you to reflect on the method of official statistics as a way of gathering data. At the end of your response for the question above, I would like you to evaluate some of the problems of using official statistics in research. You will need to identify and explain at least **three problems/disadvantages** of using official statistics. If you can think of more, that's even better!

SP Task 4 – Functionalist Perspective of the Family

There are numerous sociologists from different theoretical backgrounds who argue that the family provides several important functions for society. However, not all sociologists agree on whether these functions are positive or negative for society and its individuals. The following tasks will get you to learn and reflect on **three theories of the family**. This material will be developed further in your first term in September.



A-Level studies requires a lot of note-taking and independent learning. The next few activities require you to read through information and to condense the information into smaller chunks, this will enable you to recap and revise at a later date.

If you need some guidance on taking notes, you can use the Cornell method of note-taking. You can use this method of note-taking for any of your subjects, but I find it is particularly useful for sociology as it allows you to highlight concepts clearly. Here is a link to one of many videos to help you develop the Cornell technique of note-taking.

https://youtu.be/nX-xshA_0m8?si=6ljfa15rA8HFp0yq

Please note that this is only one method of note-taking and there are plenty of others, some of which we will refer to during the course.

- a) Read through the information about the functionalist perspective of the family. You will need to make effective notes on key areas addressed by functionalist theorists. You can use other material and I have included some useful links below.
- b) Highlight the criticisms (evaluation) of the functionalist approach.
- c) Complete definitions of any functionalist key concept that you have read about so far; I have given you three examples to get you started.
- d) Using your notes, create a revision summary on the functionalist perspective of the family. This must be no longer than **one A4 sheet** of paper.

Useful links

Here are some useful websites that you can use in addition to the photocopies attached.

- <https://revisesociology.com/2014/02/09/functionalist-perspective-family/>
- <https://sociologytwynham.com/2008/06/10/functions-of-the-family/>
- <https://www.earlhamssociologypages.co.uk/functfamsum.html>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vrJlhL6N3pl>

SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT: SOCIOLOGY: AS INDUCTION AND TRANSITION PACK
SP Task 4c. Functionalist Perspective of the Family Key Concepts

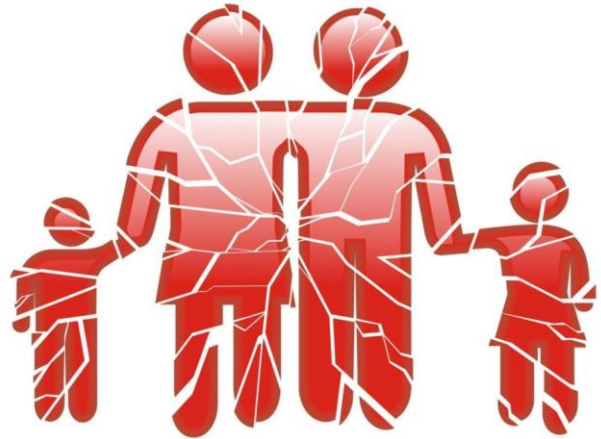
Complete the definitions of any functionalist key concepts that you have read about so far; I have given you three terms to get you started.



| <u>Key Concepts</u> | <u>Definition</u> |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Primary Socialisation | |
| Warm bath theory | |
| Stabilisation of adult personalities | |
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SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT: SOCIOLOGY: AS INDUCTION AND TRANSITION PACK
SP Task 5 – New Right Perspectives of the Family

You will now be referring to your second perspective of the family. This theory leans more towards a political and conservative view of the family than a sociological one, nevertheless it is an important theory to look at.



Your research will highlight that this theory shares some similarities to the functionalist perspective such as the view that families are the 'cornerstone of society' and that the nuclear family enables society to function efficiently. However, New Right views tend to focus on how the family is losing its traditional nuclear structure and you will quickly learn that in their view families that move away from traditional ways of living in fact weaken society in several ways. The New Right view is seen as a contentious perspective and you will quickly learn that sociology provides lots of differing explanations and debates about society! I am looking forward to hearing your views about each explanation.

Using the Cornell method or your own method for note-taking complete the following activities.

- a) Read through the information about the New Right perspective of the family. You will need to make effective notes on key areas addressed by New Right thinkers. You can use the material provided and I have included some useful links below.
- b) Highlight the criticisms (evaluation) of the New Right approach.
- c) Complete definitions of New Right key concepts that you have read about so far; I have given you three examples to get you started.
- d) Using your notes, create a revision summary on the New Right perspective of the family. This must be no longer than one A4 sheet of paper.

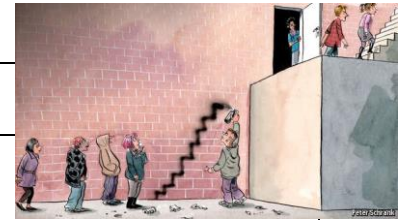
Useful links

Here are some useful websites that you can use in addition to the photocopies attached.

- <https://revisesociology.com/2014/02/10/new-right-family/>
- <https://sociologytwynham.com/2018/05/14/new-right-views-of-the-family-revision-notes/>
- https://www.earlhamsociologypages.co.uk/newrightfamily.html#The_

SP Task 5c. New Right Perspective of the Family Key Concepts

Complete definitions of any New Right key concepts that you have read about so far; I have given you three terms to get you started.



| <u>Key Concepts</u> | <u>Definition</u> |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| Nuclear family | |
| Welfare dependency | |
| Underclass | |
| | |
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SP Task 6 – Feminist Perspectives of the Family

You will now be referring to the final perspective of the family (well actually **perspectives** as there is more than one feminist perspective!). Feminists criticise both functionalist and New Right perspectives on the account that both perspectives assume women's role in the family is tied to their biological traits and this role mainly consists of caring for their children and husband, nurturing their children and housework chores. As you can imagine, feminists have a lot to say about this and you will look at this in more detail for this task.

Using the Cornell method or your own method for note-taking complete the following activities.



- Read through the information about feminist perspectives of the family. You will need to make effective notes on the key areas addressed by different types of feminists. You can use the material provided and I have included some useful links below.
- Highlight the criticisms (evaluation) of the feminist approach.
- Complete definitions of any feminist key concepts that you have read about so far, I have given you three examples to get you started.
- Using your notes, create a revision summary on the Feminist perspective of the family. This must be no longer than one A4 sheet of paper.

Useful links

Here some useful websites that you can use in addition to the photocopies attached.

- <https://revisesociology.com/2014/02/10/feminist-perspectives-family/>
- <https://sociologytwynham.com/2013/06/13/feminist-views-of-the-family-2/>
- <https://www.earlhamsociologypages.co.uk/Feminism%20and%20the%20Family.htm>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QsSL5dMS00A>

SP Task 6c. Feminist Perspectives of the Family Key Concepts

Complete definitions of any feminist key concepts that you have read about so far; I have given you three terms to get you started.



| <u>Key Concepts</u> | <u>Definition</u> |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Patriarchy | |
| Biological determinism | |
| Difference Feminism | |
| | |
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| | |

Attachments

2.2

Theoretical views and social policies on the family
 Functionalist and New Right views on the family

Families and households

Learning objectives:

- Understand functionalist and New Right views on the family.
- Evaluate criticisms of functionalist and New Right views on the family.

Key terms

Consensus: agreement or harmony.

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



Fig. 2.4 Functionalists favour the male and female parental role models in the nuclear family

💡 A theory is simply an idea about how something works. The two theories on the family examined in this chapter, functionalism and New Right, look at the nuclear family in a positive way but are more critical of other family types. Although these two perspectives do overlap in places, functionalism is an academically well-established and very detailed sociological theory, whereas the New Right is more of a political and journalistic viewpoint, and academically less well regarded.

■ **Functionalist views on the family**

Functionalists always ask about the purpose or function of an institution. What good does it do for society? How does it help to maintain order and **consensus**? They are interested in the positive functions of the family. How does it contribute to a healthy society? Two key functionalist writers on the family are the American sociologists George Peter Murdock and Talcott Parsons.

George Peter Murdock (1949) looked at a sample of 250 societies, from small hunting and gathering societies to modern industrial countries like the US. In all of these societies families were the most important institution. By looking at these societies he was able to define the family:

The family is a social group characterised by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually cohabiting adults.

Murdock argued that all families fulfil four vital functions. These are:

- 1 Sexual – married adults enjoy a healthy sex life which prevents them having affairs and ensures children are raised by their natural parents.
- 2 Reproductive – making the next generation.
- 3 Economic – by this Murdock means providing food and shelter. Ideally the man will go out to work and the woman will look after the house and children.
- 4 Educational – by this Murdock means **socialisation**.

Talcott Parsons (1959) focuses on the American family. He argues that the family has two key functions:

- 1 Primary socialisation.
- 2 Stabilisation of the adult personality. The family is a warm, friendly place where the adults can relax. This is sometimes called the 'warm bath' theory of the family, as the family is seen like a warm bath where all the cares and stresses of everyday life are soaked away.

Functionalists favour the nuclear family. Children are provided with a male and female role model and socialisation from two parents. Functionalists do not like single-parent families or gay families.

Textbook: AQA Sociology Nelson Thornes

■ Topic 2 Families and households

■ Key terms

Instrumental role: the economic or breadwinner role.

Expressive role: the nurturing or caring role.

Underclass: a group of people who exist outside the main culture and at the bottom of the class system, often associated with welfare dependency, criminal activities and lone parents.

Functionalists argue that ideally the man will take the **instrumental role** and the woman the **expressive role**. Functionalists prefer marriage to cohabitation as it is seen as more stable; they do not like divorce.

■ Criticisms of the functionalist view of the family

- Murdock's definition of the family is criticised for being too narrow, it excludes single-parent and gay families.
- The idea of different gender roles in the family has been criticised by feminists. Feminists point out that the family benefits men more than women.
- The theory is seen as too positive and optimistic. It ignores negative aspects of some families such as domestic violence.
- Functionalists focus too much on the positive aspects of the nuclear family and criticise other family types like the single-parent family. There are many very successful single-parent families.

■ New Right views on the family

These are usually conservative commentators. They were perhaps most influential in the UK in the 1980s when Margaret Thatcher was prime minister. They have very similar views on family as the functionalists. They are critical of the single-parent family for two reasons. First, they believe that children need a male and female role model for adequate socialisation. Secondly, they argue that single-parent families cost too much in welfare benefits. They argue that men should be the bread winners and women the home makers. They are against cohabitation and divorce, and in favour of marriage.

One key New Right sociologist is the American sociologist Charles Murray (1989). He wrote about the emergence of the **underclass** in America and said that it is increasing in the UK. He identified two groups: the New Rabble, which includes the long-term unemployed, welfare dependents and single mothers relying on benefits – this group is dangerous for society because children are not socialised properly; and the New Victorians, who are the respectable middle class who marry, socialise their children properly, work and pay taxes.

■ Summary questions

- 1 What is meant by the term 'consensus'?
- 2 What is meant by the 'expressive role'?
- 3 What are Parsons' two functions of the family?
- 4 Give two New Right views on the family.

■ Criticisms of New Right views on the family

- The New Right tend to group all single-parent families together and criticise them, without acknowledging many nuclear families that fail to socialise their children properly.
- Feminists argue that the New Right hold sexist views on women, and that women increasingly go out to work as the family can no longer survive on a single male wage.
- If welfare benefits were cut for single parents, it is the children who would unfairly suffer.

Textbook: AQA Sociology Nelson Thornes

Critical views of the family – feminism

Learning objectives:

- Understand the different feminist views on the family.
- Evaluate criticisms of feminist views on the family.

Feminism is a movement that argues that women suffer injustices in society because of their gender. Feminists believe that women need to fight for their rights and free themselves from patriarchy. When looking at the family most feminists take a critical view, and see the family as an institution that benefits men more than women and children. There are many different types of feminism, and this chapter will examine four of the most important ones.

■ Liberal feminism

Liberal feminists tend to have an optimistic view on the family. They focus on the increased equality that exists between men and women, and the fact that many couples see their relationship as an equal partnership. They look at the emergence of the 'new man', a man who will take an active role in housework and childcare and is in touch with his 'feminine side'.

■ Radical feminism

Radical feminists tend to look at the family in a more critical and negative way than liberal feminists. They argue that men benefit more from family life than women. They have conducted much research into housework and childcare, and argue that men do very little compared to women. They often see marriage as a type of prison for women, and argue that men may use violence against women if they do not get their own way. Radical feminists support family diversity, especially single-parent and gay families, and disagree with functionalists and the New Right that the nuclear family is always the best family type. They are also supportive of divorce because they argue that it allows women to escape marriage. A more extreme version of radical feminism is called 'radical separatism', and these feminists tend to see men as 'the enemy' and argue that men and women should live apart.

■ Marxist feminism

Marxist feminists also look at the family in a negative and critical way. They argue though that the main cause of women's oppression is not patriarchy but capitalism – the economic system that exists in most countries in the world. Under capitalism those who own the factories, businesses and offices – the capitalists or upper class – exploit those who have to work for them – the proletariat or working class. Women serve capitalism in the following ways:

- Women look after the men who work for the bosses. They satisfy their physical, emotional and sexual needs, and 'service' the men like a car going to a garage. Margaret Benston (1972) argued that women are 'the slaves of wage slaves' (men are the wage slaves).



Fig. 2.5 Feminists believe women need to fight for equal rights and that the family benefits men more than women

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■ Topic 2 Families and households

- When men have a bad day at work they take out their anger, frustration and aggression on their wives and children. Fran Ansley (1972) argued that in this way women are 'takers of shit'.
- Women give birth to the next generation of workers.
- Women are used in the job market as a 'reserve army of labour' – useful when there are plenty of jobs to fill, but when there is not they are 'sent back' to be housewives.

■ Black feminism

Black feminists are often critical of other feminists. They argue that most white feminists tend to group all women together and ignore the ethnic differences that exist between women. African-Caribbean women, for example, are more likely to be single parents than white or Asian women. Asian women may experience more patriarchy in their families than white women, and may have to do more housework and childcare. They may have more religious and cultural responsibilities than other groups too, and arranged marriage could be an issue. Black feminists argue that for many women their ethnicity is at least as important as their gender.

■ Criticisms of feminism

- There is not just one variety of feminism, and they tend to criticise and challenge each other, which may weaken their overall message.
- Feminist views can be seen as dated, as women now have equality in terms of job opportunities and equal pay. Some commentators argue that the battles have been fought and the gender war is over. Marxist feminism in particular can be seen as dated as most women now work, and the idea that they spend their time 'servicing' their husbands would be treated with scorn by most modern women.
- For most women men are not the enemy to be avoided. Most women want to spend time with men and even marry them and have children together!
- The New Right would argue that equality is not always a good thing, as most women are now working full-time and children are suffering as they are being neglected. Women themselves are suffering as they are doing too much, and would actually have an easier life as 'just a housewife'!

■ Summary questions

- 5 What is meant by the term 'patriarchy'?
- 6 What do radical separatists believe?
- 7 What do black feminists argue?
- 8 Give two criticisms of feminism.

Completion of Tasks Checklist

Before you hand in your work during your first Sociology lesson you will need to ensure that you have **completed everything on the checklist below**. Remember the tasks set have been designed for the Head Start Test you will be sitting during your first week in 6th form.



| Induction Tasks Checklist | |
|--|------------------|
| Induction Task 1 | Completed |
| Induction Task 1a. Article 1 – Families and Households | |
| Induction Task 1b. Article 2 – Education | |

| Summer Project Task Checklist | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Summer Project Tasks 1-2 | Completed |
| SP Task 1 – What is a family? | |
| SP Task 2 – Why do we need families? | |

| Summer Project Task 3: Official statistics | Completed |
|---|------------------|
| SP Task 3a – Definition | |
| SP Task 3b – Definition | |
| SP Task 3c – Question | |
| SP Task 3d – 3 Disadvantages | |

| Summer Project Task 4: Functionalist Views | Completed |
|---|------------------|
| SP Task 4a – Reading and notes | |
| SP Task 4b – Criticisms | |
| SP Task 4c – Key Concepts | |
| SP Task 4d – Revision Summary | |

| Summer Project Task 5: New Right Views | Completed |
|---|------------------|
| SP Task 5a – Reading and notes | |
| SP Task 5b – Criticisms | |
| SP Task 5c – Key Concepts | |
| SP Task 5d – Revision Summary | |

| Summer Project Task 6: Feminist Views | Completed |
|--|------------------|
| SP Task 6a – Reading and notes | |
| SP Task 6b – Criticisms | |
| SP Task 6c – Key Concepts | |
| SP Task 6d – Revision Summary | |

We are looking forward to seeing you in September – have a good summer!

Useful Websites

- <https://revisesociology.com/tag/criminology/>
- <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/sociology/as-and-a-level/sociology-7191-7192>
- http://www.s-cool.co.uk/topic_index.asp?subject_id=64
- <http://www.sociology.org.uk/>
- <http://www.statistics.gov.uk>
- <https://www.thesociologicalreview.com>
- <https://sociologytwynham.com>
- <https://www.earlhamsociologypages.co.uk/websitelinks.htm>
- www.bbc.co.uk
- www.telegraph.co.uk www.open.gov.uk
- www.guardian.co.uk
- www.mori.com www.sosig.ac.uk/sociology
- www.sunday-times.co.uk
- www.thetimes.co.uk

Wider Reading List and Useful Things to Watch – Sociology

- A wide range of newspapers including The Guardian and Independent
- Sociology Review – available at a reduced rate subscription through the school
- New Internationalist
- The New Statesmen
- The Economist
- The McDonaldisation of Society - George Ritzer
- Chavs - Owen Jones
- Folk Devils and Moral Panics – Stanley Cohen
- A Glasgow Gang Observed – Patrick James
- Gang Leader for A Day – Sudhir Venkatesh
- Any documentaries, including Panorama, Louis Theroux, Stacey Dooley
- Ted Talks/Education
- School Swap documentary
- Stacey Dooley documentaries (BBC iPlayer / Youtube)
- Louis Theroux documentaries
- Dispatches documentaries (4OD)

If you have any questions, you can contact the department, and they will be happy to answer your questions and provide some guidance.

Contact: Mrs Savage – Head of Social Sciences

