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Cambridge IGCSE®

Sociology

Coursebook



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Contents

Introduction	iv
Unit 1 Theory and Methods	6
Unit 2 Culture, Identity and Socialisation	46
Unit 3 Social Inequality	84
Unit 4 The Family	122
Unit 5 Education	158
Unit 6 Crime, Deviance and Social Control	190
Unit 7 The Media	222
Unit 8 Examination Skills	263
Bibliography	277
Index	283
Acknowledgements	288

Introduction

This book has been specifically written for the new Cambridge International Examinations IGCSE® Sociology syllabus which will first be examined in 2015. Its global and international scope also makes it ideal for introducing Sociology to young people studying similar courses.

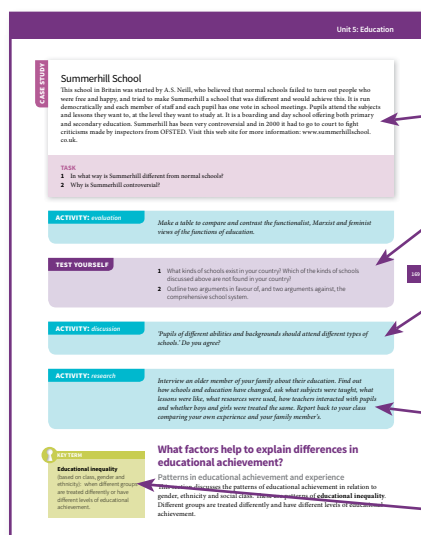
The book is written in language carefully designed to be clear and accessible to 14 to 16 year olds. Sociology involves the use of many specialist terms and these are explained where they occur first in the book.

The Cambridge International Examinations IGCSE syllabus is examined by two examination papers. The first three chapters of the book, on Theory and Methods, Culture, Identity and Socialisation and Social Inequality are fundamental to the study of sociology. All students should study these three chapters, which are examined by the first paper. Together, these three chapters provide students with the basic sociological skills and knowledge needed for studying topic areas. The four topic areas on the syllabus are covered in the next four chapters of the book and are examined by the second paper. In the examination, students are only required to answer questions on two of these.

The final chapter focuses on the skills needed to prepare for and to sit the examinations.

The book shares with the syllabus the aim of making this exciting subject accessible to young people around the world. It brings together the knowledge gained from classic studies in the development of the subject and more recent research findings. It uses examples and case studies from around the world. It reflects contemporary developments such as globalisation and the growth of new media. Students are encouraged to reflect on their learning and to apply their sociological understanding to their own nation and social situation.

To help students through the book, we have used a number of features:



- Case studies with questions.
- Other questions to check knowledge and develop understanding at the end of each section within each chapter.
- Suggestions for discussion and debate, to help students develop confidence verbally in using sociological language, apply ideas to issues relevant to them and appreciate the opinion and arguments of others.
- Suggestions for research, allowing students to develop their understanding through carrying out their own research.
- Key terms help students identify and understand important concepts. These terms are those listed in the syllabus and each is explained in a separate box when it is first used in the book.

Unit 2: Culture, Identity and Socialisation

1 Tip
 Generation and birth cohort are often used as they mean the same thing. It is useful, though, to make the distinction, because the word generation is also attention to the common features of age, being a teenager, while the term cohort draws attention to the particular experiences that come from being born at a particular time.

as rebellious and disrespectful. This kind of difference is called a generation gap. For example, today different generations have very different experiences of computers and other new technology. Children and teenagers have grown up with these technologies and find them easy to use while older people may struggle to understand them. The young are digital natives, older people are not.

Members of an age group who share a common experience of growing up are known as a **cohort**. Belonging to a particular cohort can have important consequences. Each generation experiences different events and social changes. For example, the baby boom generation born after World War Two in Europe and North America experienced dramatic social changes in the 1960s. These included growing affluence in these countries, the Cold War and its end, more effective birth control, the arrival of computers and other new technologies and growing concern about the environment. Their members meant that computers made many products easier to use for the generation. As the generation grows older, their members are leading to an ageing population and increasing costs in health care and social services.

ACTIVITY: data interpretation

	USA	UK	Japan	China	Mauritius
Driving a car	Varies between states, the lowest is 14 years 3 months in South Dakota	17	18	18	18
Drinking alcohol	21	18	20	18	18
Leaving school (ending compulsory secondary education)	16	16	15	15	16
Marriage	Usually 18 but varies between states	18 (16 with parental consent)	20 (18 for boys and 16 for girls with parental consent)	22 for men, 20 for women	18, sometimes younger, with parental consent
Voting	18	18	20	18	18

Table 2.3 Comparison of legal ages for various activities in different countries

- In which of the selected countries in Table 2.3 (a) is the voting age the highest; (b) is the minimum age for driving the lowest?
- Adulthood is usually considered in the same way as 'childhood'. Use the information from Table 2.3 to explain what this statement means.
- If you live in a country other than those listed here, find out the equivalent information for your country.

1 KEY TERM
Adulthood – the period of growing up between childhood and adulthood

Adulthood is seen as a difficult period because it involves status anxiety. Modern industrial societies emphasise achieved, not ascribed status and young people feel pressure to achieve status. One response is to rely on your peer group, who are often all the people who are going through the same problems and anxieties as you. Young people therefore tend to share norms and values, even to form a

■ Hints and tips.

■ Practice in interpreting data in a variety of formats, such as tables, charts and graphs; this is an essential skill in sociology.

Unit 1: Theory and Methods

Revision checklist

Make sure that you know all the key terms listed in this unit and that you understand the following:

- Structuralist approaches focus on social structure and institutions and how these influence how people behave. Interpretivist approaches focus more on how individuals make sense of society.
- Functionalism is a consensus theory.
- Marxism and feminism are conflict theories.
- Positivists and interpretivists have different approaches to carrying out research.
- Each stage of the research process involves choices and decisions involving a range of practical, ethical and theoretical issues.
- Sociologists use different types of research methods, including surveys, interviews and participant observation and experiments.
- Other types of research include case studies, longitudinal studies and triangulation.
- Sociological methods and their findings can be evaluated in terms of their validity, reliability and representativeness.
- Research can produce quantitative or qualitative data.
- Sociologists also use both primary data and a range of secondary data including official and unofficial statistics, documents such as diaries and letters, media and published sources.

Exam practice questions

Source A: Eleven young women aged between 23 and 29 who had become pregnant when they were teenagers were interviewed. They had all grown up in socially disadvantaged families in a town called Kobby (not its real name). The purpose of the research was to examine how poverty and social exclusion early in their lives had affected them later as mothers. The women in the sample had found it difficult to find paid work and they relied on their relatives to help them with childcare. (Haines et al., 2020, *From 'Resilience: Social Exclusion and Young Adults'*)

- Why did the researchers decide not to use the real name of the town? [2]
- Identify two types of interviews that sociologists use. [2]
- Using information from the source, give two reasons why sociologists might question generalisations made from this research. [4]
- Describe two strengths of using group interviews for sociological research. [4]
- Describe two strengths and two limitations of using questionnaires for sociological research. [8]
- Explain why interpretivists prefer using methods that produce mainly qualitative data. [10]
- To what extent do ethical issues influence the way sociological research is carried out? [15]

Total available marks 45

■ Checklist of key points at the end of each chapter.

■ Examination style questions at the end of each chapter.