Sociology Year One Checklist and revision tips

Use this sociology checklist to go through your folder of year one work and identify what you are up to date and confident with, what is missing, what you have revision materials on, what you have exam practice on and what needs some further work from you. You need to complete this by the end of this term and then use the summer holidays to get caught up with gaps in your subject knowledge, notes and revision materials.

You will need to show a completed folder of work in September. Identify gaps in your understanding (and make a note of this to work on and ask your teachers about in the Autumn term. You need to look back of your work as well as make use of the revision materials we will be using in the last 4 weeks of term as well as the links to external sources of information such as youtube clips etc that we will be identifying and signposting you towards. There will be opportunities at the start of year two to come to some booster sessions for areas you still feel less confident about.

The first section asks about your 'soft' study skills – self-reflect on how you have done this year – we have all experienced the challenges of the pandemic – but what specific skills and challenges do you need to address in order to be successful in year two? Being honest about these now will help us to help you to address these in September. In the meantime here are some useful tips.

Revision Tips

Revision needs to be active to be effective – taking or reading notes and highlighting are passive activities – what activities can YOU do to make your revision active? There are some ideas here, I think this guy is fabulous – he was a medical student at Cambridge university – but his tips are totally relevant to any form of learning – here is his first lesson on how to study for exams and evidence-based revision tips. I listed some of these and others here as well.

1. Make notes with your textbook closed, these could be spider diagrams, pictures, different colours, boxes – anything that gives you cues to recall this information. Create a series of flashcards to challenge yourself to remember content – there are some excellent online systems that you can access on your phone or laptop if that works for you – or make your own – see below linked to spaced repetition.
2. Look at the notes you have taken – add some questions to these – how might an exam question be asked about this topic? How does this topic link to other topic areas – this is active work and recall and requires cognitive effort – see Cornell note taking here for more ideas on note taking.
3. If you had to take your A'Level sociology exam tomorrow, what topics (that you have covered already) would you be most worried about coming up – that is an excellent starting point to begin your revision.
4. Spaced repetition, here is a good explanation. But essentially it means learning a topic, then reviewing it then next day, then a day later, than 3 days later, a week, than a month later – increasing the spaces between when you have to recall topics makes you work harder at doing this - meaning your knowledge becomes more deeply imbedded in your long-term memory interrupting the 'forgetting curve' - by doing this it takes you longer to forget something each time you 'interrupt' forgetting it. There are loads of these apps around, (if technology works for you) - some free, some allow you to share with others – let me know if you find a really good one! Some examples here brainscape, anki (phone version v expensive but has excellent reviews – free on computer), smart flashcards. Otherwise create a study timetable and/or spreadsheet in which you leave increasing gaps between coming back to each topic to actively recall the information.
5. Answer exam questions – you have all been given essay planning booklets (these are also still available of google classroom)– pick a topic, spend some time revising the area – then put your books away and answer the question in timed conditions. Most importantly, review how well you did – use the mark scheme, swap answers with a friend and mark each other's work, highlight where you see evidence of knowledge (sociologists, research evidence or key concepts), application (related directly to the question or bringing in contemporary examples from the news or other sources, analysis (have you said WHY the knowledge you have presented is important for answering this exam question?), evaluation (this can be what's good about this point or how it can be criticised - is this relevant to the exam question? can you provide a further counterpoint?) Now write part or all of this essay again based on your self-evaluation – what have you learned to improve next time?
6. Active recall - Teach a topic to another member of your sociology group or to a family member – could you debate this? Can you see flaws in your or different theorist arguments? Could you argue the reverse point?
7. Active recall Pick up a newspaper or do a google search on current issues within the topic you are looking at – can sociology explain what is happening here? Can you see some problems with arguments put forward – applying your knowledge allows you to imbed it in your mind in a deeper way.
8. Interleaved learning – quick intro here mix up your topics as you are revising, this requires more effort for your brain and is harder to do – but this builds stronger pathways in your brain and you will learn things more deeply. We will be doing some of this in year two as we go back and revise year one content whilst still covering year two content.

VESPA skills – these are soft skills that will help you to apply the knowledge you are gaining of sociology.	Yes, this is me most of the time	I am on the way to being like this	I need some help with this area
I have clear goals in terms of my reasons for taking A'Levels and future aspirations. I use this to help motivate me to work.	☐	☐	☐
I know what independent study means and how to achieve this. I am proactive in setting work for myself to develop my knowledge and understanding in sociology topic areas.	☐	☐	☐
I have systems in place to organise my time efficiently I know when I work best and how to take notes effectively. I've set myself a study timetable to organise my workload and plan ahead to meet deadlines.	☐	☐	☐
I know the range of skills that I will have to demonstrate in the sociology exam and challenge myself to practice the ones I find most difficult to do.	☐	☐	☐
I know that A'Levels are hard work and the pandemic has made things challenging – however I am generally feeling positive and resilient as we move to year two.	☐	☐	☐

Education checklist Subject Content	Full set of notes completed	Full set of revision materials completed	Many/some exam question attempted	Some note incomplete for this topic	Still need to fully complete revision materials	Need to do more exam answers to be confident	Confident of my knowledge of this topic	Bit more work needed to fully understand this topic	Help, I am worried about this topic
The role and functions of the education system, including its relationship to the economy and to class structure (with the main but not all sociologists you should know)									
Functionalist and New Right explanations of the role and functions of the education system: • Social solidarity • Value consensus • Specialist division of labour • Skills teaching • Secondary socialisation • Meritocracy • Particularistic standards and universalistic standards • Selection and role allocation. • Social stratification • Achieved status and ascribed status • Education as a bridge between the family and school • Social rules • Durkheim (pg. 21-22) • Parsons (pg. 22-24) • Davis & Moore (pg. 25) • Chubb & Moe (see notes and ppt)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Marxist explanations of the role and functions of the education system: • Ideology • Alienation • Ideological state apparatuses • False class consciousness • Correspondence principle • Long shadow of work • Reproduction of social class inequality • Legitimation of social class inequality • Hidden curriculum • Myth of meritocracy • Althusser (pg. 26) • Bowles and Gintis (pg. 27-29) • Willis (pg. 29-32)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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New Right explanations of the role and functions of the education system • Marketisation of education • Privatisation • Cola-isation • Chubb and Moe (pg. 39-43 and see notes and ppt)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Differential educational achievement (DEA) of social groups by social class, ethnicity and gender in contemporary society, including both external and internal factors. (with the main but not all sociologists you should know)									
Patterns and trends in differential educational achievement by social class, ethnicity and gender, eg in relation to GCSE results. • Official statistics on patterns	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Different sociological explanations of social class differences in educational achievement in relation to external factors (outside the education system): • Cultural deprivation • Material deprivation • Cultural capital • Sugarman (pg. 73) • J.W.B. Douglas (pg. 74) • Bernstein (pg. 75-76) • Bourdieu (pg. 81)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Different sociological explanations of social class differences in educational achievement in relation to internal factors and processes within schools, e.g. • Teacher labelling • The self-fulfilling prophecy • Setting and streaming • Educational triage (the A-C economy) • Pupil subcultures • Pupils' class identities • Becker (see notes and ppt) • Rist (pg. 89) • Cicourel and Kitsuse (pg. 89) • Rosenthal and Jacobson (pg. 90) • Fuller (pg. 90) • Gilborn and Youdell (pg. 93 and see notes and ppt) • Lacey (see notes and ppt) • Ball (see notes and ppt) • Bourdieu (pg. 81-82 and 86)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Different sociological explanations of ethnic differences in educational achievement in relation to external factors: • cultural deprivation, • material deprivation and • racism in wider society. • Bereiter & Engelmann, • Evans • Lupton	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Different sociological explanations of ethnic differences in educational achievement in relation to internal factors, • racist labelling, • the self-fulfilling prophecy, • pupil subcultural responses, • ethnic identities, • institutional racism and • the ethnocentric curriculum.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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• Gilborn & Youdell, • Coard, • Moore & Davenport									
Different sociological explanations of gender differences in educational achievement in relation to external factors: • changes in the family and labour market affecting women and men • The influence of feminist ideas. • Sharpe, • McRobbie, • Francis	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Different sociological explanations of gender differences in educational achievement in relation to internal factors, eg • the curriculum, • selection and marketisation, • feminisation of education, • pupil subcultures and • gender identities. • Kelly, • Gorard, • Weiner	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Patterns and trends in subject choice by gender. Different sociological explanations of gender differences in subject choice: • subject image, • teaching and learning styles and • primary socialisation. • Official statistics on patterns	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Avoid skipping meals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The significance of educational policies, including policies of selection, marketisation and privatisation, and polices to achieve greater equality of opportunity or outcome, for an understanding of the structure, role, impact and experience of and access to education; the impact of globalisation on educational policy. (with the main but not all sociologists you should know)									
The impact of educational policies of selection, marketisation and privatisation, such as: • The tripartite system and the post-1988 education system, in relation to educational standards and class differences of outcome; • The globalisation of educational policy. • Ball, • Whitty, • David	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The impact of educational policies aimed at achieving greater equality of opportunity or outcome: • Comprehensive system, • Compensatory education policies, • Education action zones and • Tuition fees. • Douglas, • Keddie,	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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• Ball									
Education policies in relation to gender and ethnic differences and their impact: • GIST, • WISE and • Multicultural education. • Francis, • Sewell, • Mirza	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Different sociological explanations of the impact of educational policies: • Parentocracy and differences in economic and cultural capital. • Gewirtz, • Gillborn & Youdell, • Bartlett	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Methods in Context The application of the range of primary and secondary methods and sources of data (as covered below in AS level Research Methods and in A-level Theory and Methods) to the particular topics studied in education, with specific reference to the strengths and limitations of the different methods and sources of data in different educational contexts.									
Making sure you examples of exam questions for each of the research methods areas – and understand what you need to move from B3 to B5	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Families and Households checklist Subject Content	Full set of notes completed	Full set of revision materials completed	Many/some exam question attempted	Some note incomplete for this topic	Still need to fully complete revision materials	Need to do more exam answers to be confident	Confident of my knowledge of this topic	Bit more work needed to fully understand this topic	Help, I am worried about this topic
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Research Methods checklist Subject Content	Full set of notes completed	Full set of revision materials completed	Many/some exam question attempted	Some note incomplete for this topic	Still need to fully complete revision materials	Need to do more exam answers to be confident	Confident of my knowledge of this topic	Bit more work needed to fully understand this topic	Help, I am worried about this topic
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