

## Compulsory Core

The compulsory core is concerned with developing the sociological imagination in candidates. It aims to encourage an interest in the social world and to develop the critical faculties necessary for informed understanding of the social world. It encourages candidates to understand the significance of society and the social context in which individuals operate.

Stimulus materials for questions will be drawn from debates on families, education, mass media and sport and leisure among other topics.

<b>Specification structure</b>	<b>This focuses on:</b>
Understanding the interrelationships between individuals, groups, institutions and society.	Key concepts and processes of social analysis which could include norms, values, socialisation, agency, culture and behaviour, nature versus nurture debate, agencies of socialisation, stereotyping and deviance.
Sociological debates and theories with reference to people and society.	<p>Social and biological explanations of human behaviour.</p> <p>The nature of culture and cultural variation between different social groups; the nature nurture debate, anthropological accounts of human behaviour.</p> <p>Forms and processes of socialisation into different social roles within cultures with reference to unsocialised/feral children, gender patterns and cultural relativity.</p> <p>The various agencies and processes of socialisation and their impact on individuals, social identity and cultures including family, peer group, education, media, region and nation.</p> <p>The social construction of identity with reference to roles, status, labelling, stereotyping as applied to gender, ethnicity and age.</p> <p>The nature and significance of social control including written and unwritten social rules of behaviour, notions of norms, values, morals and how they exercise power over the individual with reference to deviance, sanctions and stigma.</p>

<b>Specification structure</b>	<b>This focuses on:</b>
Understanding the study of society.	<p>Identify and apply sources, methods, processes and techniques employed by sociologists to acquire information.</p> <p>Using a range of techniques such as questionnaires, interviews and observation to research social phenomena</p> <p>The evaluation of research methods in terms of reliability, validity, representativeness and ethics.</p> <p>The interpretation and evaluation of information gathered from a variety of sources, including primary and secondary research.</p> <p>The use of information, data and evidence to construct and evaluate arguments and conclusions.</p>

## Option 1 - Families

In addition to the option specific content, the thematic content of the compulsory core for Understanding Social Processes will be explored and applied through the study of this topic .

The family is the key agency of primary socialisation. Families set norms and values and are central to our understanding of how culture is transmitted between the generations and inequalities are perpetuated.

<b>Specification structure</b>	<b>This focuses on:</b>
Key concepts of family analysis.	Key concepts and processes of family analysis which could include: nuclear families, extended families, singlehood, households, cohabitation, beanpole families, lone-parent families, reconstituted families, cultural diversity, family diversity and new family forms as they emerge.
Understanding the Family.	<p>Social structures and the family, including notions of kinship and the variety of family forms within and across cultures.</p> <p>Social processes within families such as the changing roles of men, women and children and the changing nature of families and family forms within our culture.</p> <p>Social issues such as inequality within families, with reference to power and power relationships including gender divisions, divorce and family reconstruction, singlehood, the role of children and older people.</p> <p>The relationship between individuals, groups, institutions and society with reference to factors that influence families and family structure including: changing gender patterns, changing technology, legal changes, religious change, economic factors and medical technology, feminism.</p>
Using evidence to support understanding.	Candidates will be able to refer to a variety of sources of information, relevant theories and data in order to examine issues, construct and evaluate arguments and to develop conclusions.

## Option 2 - Education

In addition to the option specific content, the thematic content of the compulsory core for Understanding Social Processes will be explored and applied through the study of this topic.

Education is a key agency of secondary socialisation. Education sets norms and values and is central to our understanding of how culture is transmitted between the generations and inequalities are perpetuated.

<b>Specification structure</b>	<b>This focuses on:</b>
Key concepts of education analysis.	Key concepts and processes of education which could include: inequality, deprivation, hidden curriculum, labelling, self-fulfilling prophecy, setting, streaming, banding, meritocracy, opportunities, types of schools.
Understanding education.	<p>Social structures and education, including notions of formal and informal education, curriculum, compulsory and further education, private education and recent educational changes.</p> <p>Social processes within schools such as changing gender patterns, self-fulfilling prophecy, labelling, streaming and banding, subcultures and the hidden curriculum.</p> <p>Social issues such as inequality of attainment and exclusion rates in education with reference to gender, ethnicity, and social class.</p> <p>The relationship between individuals, groups, institutions and society with reference to factors that influence educational attainment such as material deprivation, cultural differences, cultural deprivation, school organisation, discrimination, labelling and expectation.</p>
Using evidence to support understanding.	Candidates will be able to refer to a variety of sources of information, relevant theories and data in order to examine issues, construct and evaluate arguments and to develop conclusions

### Option 3 – Mass Media

In addition to the option specific content, the thematic content of the compulsory core for Understanding Social Processes will be explored and applied through the study of this topic.

The mass media is a key agency of secondary socialisation. The mass media sets norms and values and is central to our understanding of how culture is transmitted and inequalities are perpetuated.

<b>Specification structure</b>	<b>This focuses on:</b>
Key concepts of mass media analysis.	Key concepts and processes of mass media analysis which could include: stereotypes, prejudice, representation, moral panics, mass culture, high culture, gatekeeping, news values and semiology.
Understanding the mass media.	<p>Social structures and the media, including notions of ownership and control, the ubiquity of the media, and public ownership of the media.</p> <p>Social processes and the mass media such as the social construction of the news, stereotyping, deviancy amplification, prejudice and the representation of social groups by age, gender, ethnicity and social class.</p> <p>Social issues such as, moral panics, gatekeeping, agenda setting, body image and representation, content of the media productions, the potential influence of the media.</p> <p>The relationship between individuals, groups, institutions and society with reference to access to and influence of the media, changing technology, the impact of media on audiences, the Internet, social networking and the future of the media.</p>
Using evidence to support understanding.	Candidates will be able to refer to a variety of sources of information, relevant theories and data in order to examine issues, construct and evaluate arguments and to develop conclusions

### Option 4 – Sport and Leisure

In addition to the option specific content, the thematic content of the compulsory core for Understanding Social Processes will be explored and applied through the study of this topic.

Sport and leisure are important elements in the creation of a social identity for people in our society. Sporting affiliations form part of a group identity and as such set norms and values and perpetuate inequalities.

<b>Specification structure</b>	<b>This focuses on:</b>
Key concepts of sport and leisure.	Key concepts and processes of sport and leisure analysis which could include: loyalty groups and fans, participation and observation of sport, moral panics, identity, ownership and control, stereotyping, professional and non-professional sport.
Understanding sport and leisure.	<p>Social structures of sport and leisure, including notions of formal and informal participation, ownership, clubs and commercialisation.</p> <p>Social processes that affect participation and interest in sport and leisure such as gender, ethnicity, age, class and access to facilities and technology, media interest and representation.</p> <p>Social issues such as inequality with relationship to access to sport and leisure opportunities on the basis of gender and ethnicity, moral panics, representation of fan bases, labelling, deviance, hooliganism and fan behaviour.</p> <p>The relationship between individuals, groups, institutions and society with reference to the range of factors that influence sport and leisure participation and interest including: gender, class, ethnicity and age patterns, media representation and changing technology.</p>
Using evidence to support understanding.	Candidates will be able to refer to a variety of sources of information, relevant theories and data in order to examine issues, construct and evaluate arguments and to develop conclusions

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Stimulus materials for questions will be drawn from debates on work, power and participation, crime and deviance and global citizenship among other topics

<b>Specification structure</b>	<b>This focuses on:</b>
Understanding the interrelationships between individuals, groups, institutions and society.	Key concepts and processes of social analysis which could include social exclusion, stereotype, prejudice, discrimination, poverty, income, wealth, prestige and status, deprivation, underclass, inequality, the source, distribution and exercise of power and authority.
Sociological debates and theories with reference to social issues.	<p>Social and biological explanations of human behaviour and power relationships between individuals and social groups with reference to meritocracy and exploitation debates.</p> <p>Sources, distribution and exercise of power and authority with relation to acquired and achieved status, privilege, income and wealth, life chances, life style, privilege, elite theories</p> <p>The nature and extent of social inequality including notions of status, power, authority, prestige, wealth, income, poverty, inclusion and exclusion; labelling, stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination, folk devils, scapegoating.</p> <p>The causes of inequality: cultures of poverty, structural explanations with specific reference to class, gender, ethnicity, age and disability.</p> <p>The consequences of inequality with reference to unequal distribution of access to employment, health, quality of life, life chances, lifestyle and wealth.</p> <p>Poverty, the New Right, Marxism and the underclass debate.</p>

<b>Specification structure</b>	<b>This focuses on:</b>
Understanding the study of society.	<p>Methods and techniques (including sampling) employed by sociologists to acquire information using a range of sources and methods and an evaluation of these methods in terms of reliability, validity, representativeness and ethical issues.</p> <p>The interpretation and evaluation of information gathered from a variety of sources, including primary and secondary research.</p> <p>The use of information, data and evidence to construct and evaluate arguments and conclusions.</p>

## Option 1 - Work

In addition to the option specific content, the thematic content of the compulsory core for Understanding Social Structure will be explored and applied through the study of this topic.

Work is a major source of identity within our culture. It impacts on our life chances and life choices and perpetuates inequalities. Occupation will influence income, wealth and status.

<b>Specification structure</b>	<b>This focuses on:</b>
Key concepts of work.	Key concepts and processes of the analysis of the sociology of work could include: income, opportunity, class, use of time, employment, non-work, leisure, alienation, unemployment, technology.
Understanding work.	<p>Social structures and work, including primary, secondary and service sectors of the economy, manual and non-manual work, gendered work, piece work and minimum wage.</p> <p>Social processes within work such as the changing nature of work, roles, alienation, unionisation, deskilling, automation, McDonaldization, globalisation.</p> <p>Social issues such as inequality within work, with reference to power and power relationships including gender and ethnic minority group divisions, opportunity, conditions, discrimination and pay.</p> <p>The relationship between individuals, groups, institutions and society with reference to factors that influence work and work structure including: changing gender patterns, changing technology, globalisation, legal changes, economic factors.</p>
Using evidence to support understanding.	Candidates will be able to refer to a variety of sources of information, relevant theories and data in order to examine issues, construct and evaluate arguments and to develop conclusions

## Option 2 – Power and Participation

In addition to the option specific content, the thematic content of the compulsory core for Understanding Social Structure will be explored and applied through the study of this topic.

Access to sources of power and the ability to participate in our culture is a major differentiator between individuals and social groups, influencing income, wealth and status. Candidates should understand that these differentiators perpetuate inequalities.

Specification structure	This focuses on:
Key concepts of power and participation.	Key concepts and processes of power and participation which could include: democracy, totalitarianism, authority, interest groups, pressure groups, social movement, voting behaviour, party politics and lobbying.
Understanding Power and Participation.	<p>Political structures, including centralisation, the role of Parliament and the EU, political parties, government, devolution.</p> <p>Social processes that affect government and decision making such as influence, power, voting, parties and belief systems, social networks, interest and pressure groups.</p> <p>Social issues such as inequality of access to power, authority and decision-making bodies, with reference to gender, age, ethnicity, social class and disability.</p> <p>The relationship between individuals, groups, institutions and society with reference to factors that influence power and decision-making including: changing gender patterns, single issue politics, dealignment, globalisation, regionalisation, devolution.</p>
Using evidence to support understanding.	Candidates will be able to refer to a variety of sources of information, relevant theories and data in order to examine issues, construct and evaluate arguments and to develop conclusions.

### Option 3 – Crime and Deviance

In addition to the option specific content, the thematic content of the compulsory core for Understanding Social Structure will be explored and applied through the study of this topic.

Class, gender, age and ethnicity are factors linked to patterns of crime and deviance, in terms of both who commits crime and who are victims of crime. Sociologists consider whether treatment by the criminal justice system is another perpetrator of inequality in society.

Specification structure	This focuses on:
Key concepts of crime and deviance.	Key concepts and processes of crime and deviance analysis which could include: crime, deviance, norms, sanctions, laws, formal and informal control, subcultures, labelling, moral panics, deviancy amplification, white-collar crime, street crime.
Understanding crime and deviance.	<p>Social structures and the definition of crime and deviance, including formal and informal control, and the role of the police, courts and the media.</p> <p>Social processes that affect patterns of crime deviance and victimisation; including the social construction of criminal statistics, subcultures, labelling, moral panics and deviancy amplification.</p> <p>Social issues such as inequality in conviction rates, white collar crime, corporate crime, the control of crime, youth crime, police styles and public relations, media representation of crime. The significance of class, gender and ethnicity.</p> <p>The relationship between individuals, groups, institutions and society with reference to factors that influence criminal and deviant behaviour such as subcultures, cultural and material deprivation, educational failure, labelling, power and status.</p>
Using evidence to support understanding.	Candidates will be able to refer to a variety of sources of information, relevant theories and data in order to examine issues, construct and evaluate arguments and to develop conclusions.

### Option 4 – Global Citizenship

In addition to the option specific content, the thematic content of the compulsory core for Understanding Social Structure will be explored and applied through the study of this topic.

The ability to participate in global culture is a major source of inequality throughout the world. There are differences in access to income, wealth and status and also perpetuated inequalities. Candidates will understand that this is a source of political and social division and is of significance to the understanding of poverty and inequality throughout the world.

<b>Specification structure</b>	<b>This focuses on:</b>
Key concepts of global citizenship.	Key concepts and processes of global citizenship analysis which could include: globalisation, inequality, wealth, poverty, countries in different stages of development, dependency and interdependency, migration, consumerism, multi-national corporations, fair-trade.
Understanding global citizenship.	<p>Social structures and global citizenship, including multi-national corporations, world trade, sweat shop economies, fair-trade, imports and exports</p> <p>Social processes affecting international relationships such as McDonaldization, cheap labour, consumer demand, the role of charities and humanitarian organisations, disaster relief.</p> <p>Social issues such as sustainability of the environment, inequality with reference to power and power relationships including gender divisions, child labour, opportunity, conditions of work, discrimination and pay.</p> <p>The relationship between individuals, groups, institutions and societies with reference to factors that influence global citizenship including: changing gender patterns, technology, globalisation, religious and cultural change and economic factors.</p>
Using evidence to support understanding.	Candidates will be able to refer to a variety of sources of information, relevant theories and data in order to examine issues, construct and evaluate arguments and to develop conclusions.

