Sociology

GCSE 2014

Sociology

Specification

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OCR

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Contents

Vertical black lines indicate a significant change to the previous printed version.

① Introduction to GCSE Sociology

1.1 Overview of GCSE Sociology

Unit B671	Written Paper
Sociology Basics	1 hour – 60 marks
	25% of the qualification
	Question Paper:
	2 sections, candidates answer all questions.

+

Unit B672	Written Paper
Socialisation, Culture and Identity	1 hour 30 mins – 120 marks
	50% of the qualification
	Question Paper:
	6 sections, candidates answer any three sections.

+

Unit B673	Written Paper
Applying Sociological Research Techniques	1 hour – 60 marks
	25% of the qualification
	Question Paper:
	Based on pre-released research material. Candidates answer all questions.

1.2   Guided learning hours

GCSE Sociology requires 120–140 guided learning hours in total.

1.3   Aims and learning outcomes

The aims of this specification are to:

- encourage candidates to be inspired, moved and changed by following a broad, coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study

- encourage candidates to reflect on their own experience of the social world to enhance their ability to play informed roles in different social contexts

- prepare candidates to make informed decisions about further learning opportunities and career choices

- help candidates to recognise that their sociological knowledge, understanding and skills will allow them to develop an understanding of the interrelationships between individuals, groups, institutions and societies

- help candidates to analyse critically the nature and sources of information and to base reasoned judgments and arguments on evidence

- encourage candidates to organise and communicate their knowledge and understanding in different and creative ways, and reach substantiated judgments.

1.4   Prior learning

Candidates entering this course should have achieved a general educational level equivalent to National Curriculum Level 3, or an Entry 3 at Entry Level within the National Qualifications Framework.

2 Content of GCSE Sociology

2.1 Unit B671: *Sociology Basics*

This unit aims to give candidates a basic introduction to the key methodologies and concepts used in Sociology. It is a logical starting point for any Sociology course and a useful introduction to the concepts and topics that will be studied in more depth in Unit B672: *Socialisation, Culture and Identity* and Unit B673: *Applying Sociological Research Techniques.*

Section A of this unit encourages candidates to develop a critical understanding of sociological evidence and research processes. This includes knowledge of the main methods and stages of sociological research. In Section B, candidates are introduced to the basic key concepts in Sociology and start to make links between the individual and society, looking particularly at ideas of culture, socialisation and identity.

There are **five** key areas to consider:

1.	Investigating society (Section A)

2.	Collecting and using information and evidence (Section A)

3.	Culture (Section B)

4.	Socialisation (Section B)

5.	Identity (Section B)

2.1.1 Investigating society

This key area is examined in **Section A** of the question paper.

Key content:	
Primary methods:	• questionnaires
	• interviews (structured, semi-structured and unstructured)
	• observations (participant, non-participant, overt and covert)
	• content analysis.

Candidates should have a clear definition of each method and understand its main uses in sociological research. Candidates should be made aware of each method's main advantages and disadvantages and be clear about the type of evidence that can be gathered using each method.

Conducting research:	• the main stages of social research
	• creating an aim and hypotheses
	• practical issues (time, cost and access)
	• sampling (type – stratified, snowball, opportunity, random and systematic)
	• composition (size of sample, social factors such as gender, age and religion)
	• using more than one method
	• social surveys
	• pilot studies
	• case studies
	• longitudinal studies.

Candidates should have a general understanding of the main principles, stages and features of research design.

Ethical issues:	• researchers' responsibilities to themselves and others
	• conduct and competence of researchers
	• consent of participants
	• confidentiality of information and data
	• suitability of topic under investigation.

Candidates should have a basic understanding of the main ethical issues of sociological research and should be able to illustrate this understanding using examples.

2.1.2 Collecting and using information and evidence

This key area is examined in **Section A** of the question paper.

Key content:		
Different types of data:	•	the distinction between secondary and primary data
	•	the distinction between qualitative and quantitative data.

Candidates should have a basic understanding of the different types of data available to sociologists. Candidates should know why different types of data are used and required, and how they can complement each other.

Quantitative evidence:	•	statistics (official and non-official).

Candidates should be clear about what evidence is available and should know which topics may be suitable for research. They should look at the advantages and disadvantages of the evidence and be given examples of quantitative data to interpret and evaluate during their Sociology course.

Qualitative evidence:	•	historical documents and evidence
	•	personal documents and diaries
	•	media material (e.g. newspapers, TV, radio, internet, magazines).

Candidates should be clear about what evidence is available and should know which topics may be suitable for researching. They should look at the advantages and disadvantages of the evidence and be given examples of qualitative evidence to interpret and evaluate during their Sociology course.

Evaluation:	•	basic strengths and weaknesses of information collected by different sociological methods
	•	exaggeration, distortion, selection and bias
	•	fit for purpose
	•	making generalisations
	•	representativeness
	•	reliability of research methods
	•	validity of the data.

Candidates should be able to evaluate the main strengths and weaknesses of information gathered from primary methods and secondary evidence.

2.1.3 Culture

This key area is examined in **Section B** of the question paper.

Key content:

Concepts:	•	norms
	•	values
	•	identity (how we see ourselves and how others see us)
	•	status (ascribed and achieved)
	•	roles (including multiple roles and role conflict)
	•	culture
	•	subculture.

Candidates should have a clear definition and a simple understanding of each concept, using relevant examples. They should understand how these concepts relate to each other, and be aware of how they are affected by factors such as era, culture, society, religion, gender and class.

2.1.4 Socialisation

This key area is examined in **Section B** of the question paper.

Key content:

Process of socialisation:	•	primary socialisation
	•	secondary socialisation
	•	formal social control
	•	informal social control
	•	rewards and sanctions.

Candidates should have a general overview of the process of socialisation and an understanding of how it affects behaviour and identity. They should also consider the importance of social control in the above process.

Agents of socialisation:	•	family
	•	mass media
	•	peers
	•	education
	•	work.

Candidates should have a simple understanding of which agencies are involved in the process of socialisation and the process the agents utilise to socialise individuals and groups, both in the primary and the secondary stage. Concepts such as peer group pressure, media role models, manipulation/canalisation and the hidden curriculum should be covered. Each agent of socialisation should be studied with simple examples to show how it socialises and controls us.

2.1.5 Identity

This key area is examined in **Section B** of the question paper.

Key content:

This area of study introduces candidates to the concept of identity with an in-depth focus on gender. It thus provides basic knowledge that can be used and developed in other sociological topics and units of study.

Gender identities:	•	how gender identity is constructed via the socialisation process
	•	the role of social control in maintaining and reinforcing gender identities
	•	stereotypical assumptions about the nature of men and women
	•	femininity and masculinity.

Candidates should consider, at a basic level, how gender identities are created and maintained by the agents of socialisation and the process of social control. They should also focus on gender stereotyping: where gender stereotypes come from, a simple understanding of how they are used and how they may impact upon a person's gender identity. Relevant examples should be used to aid candidates here. Finally, candidates should consider the differences between male and female identities and any changes that are occurring to these identities in contemporary society. The use of examples and candidates' own experiences are to be drawn on in this section.

2.2   Unit B672: *Socialisation, Culture and Identity*

This unit offers a choice of substantive topics through which the themes of socialisation, culture, identity, power and control are developed. It builds upon the knowledge and skills acquired in Unit B671: *Sociology Basics* and seeks to develop an understanding of the nature of sociological thought in the context of the topics studied.

Links between substantive topics, the nature of sociological thought, and the methods of sociological enquiry are encouraged in order to raise the critical awareness of sociological thought.

Candidates must answer questions from **three** of the following:

1.   Sociology of the family

2.   Sociology of education

3.   Sociology of the mass media

4.   Sociology of the workplace

5.   Sociology of crime and deviance

6.   Sociology of youth

2.2.1   Sociology of the family

In this option, candidates explore issues of culture and socialisation through a detailed study of the family. The family is a central institution of socialisation and one of the main transmitters of culture in the contemporary UK. Studying this option should allow candidates to develop a critical understanding of the family and individual identity. This includes knowledge of family structures and relationships and the creation of identity.

There are **four** key issues to consider:

- family and identity
- traditional definitions of the family
- structural change in the family
- changing family relationships.

Family and identity		
Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
• identity	• development of individual identity and the learning of social roles	• examples of how individuals learn the culture of a society
• norms		• examples of non-socialised children
• roles	• the role of the family in socialisation and identity	
• values		• functions; e.g. economic; socialisation; social control.
• culture	• contemporary functions of the family.	
• socialisation		
• family.		

Traditional definitions of the family

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
• households • marriage • nuclear family • extended family.	• knowledge of the supposed traditional families: nuclear and extended • cross-cultural discussions of nuclear/extended families.	• a knowledge of general statistics/patterns to discuss whether the 'traditional' family still exists • examples of Asian and Afro-Caribbean family experiences.

Structural changes in the family

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
• divorce • serial monogamy • cohabitation • reconstituted families • family • lone parent families • beanpole families • single hood • boomerang families.	• different types of family • patterns of statistics • family diversity in structure due to class and ethnicity • effects of family diversity on individuals and society • alternatives to family.	• e.g. nuclear; extended/ polygamy/monogamy • debate over the death of the 'traditional family' • matrifocal families/patrifocal families • debates such as new right moral panic on lone parent families • effects of divorce on children • debates over civil partnerships and gay fostering • single hood • boomerang families • homosexual families.

Changing family relationships

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
• conjugal roles • symmetrical families • housewives/ househusbands • domestic violence • child abuse • dark side of the family.	• domestic division of labour and decision-making in the home • relationships between husbands/wives/children and extended family (including differences due to class, gender, ethnicity) • dark side of the family • domestic violence and child abuse.	• Wilmott and Young/Oakley debates over who does what in the home • Gershuny 'lagged adaptation' and Edgell 'decision-making' • domestic violence and child abuse, the impact of feminism • debating the positive or negative nature of the 'traditional' family • changes in employment and demography • changes in the law and social policy • changing influence of religion.

2.2.2 Sociology of education

In this option, candidates explore issues of culture and socialisation through a detailed study of education. Candidates are expected to develop a critical understanding of the issues surrounding education. This includes knowledge of the role of education, the main changes in education and their effects on the education system and the patterns of educational achievement.

There are **four** key issues to consider:

- education and identity

- the role of education

- changes and their effects

- patterns and trends in educational achievement.

Education and identity

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
• identity • norms • roles • values • culture • socialisation.	• development of individual identity and the learning of social roles • the role of education in socialisation and identity.	• examples of how individuals learn the culture of a society • consider how the individual is socialised by education.

The role of education

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
• education • socialisation • segregation • social control • formal curriculum • hidden curriculum.	• functions of education: economic, socialisation, gender role socialisation, selection and role allocation, social integration, obedience • socialisation, learning and the curriculum • alternatives to schooling.	• consideration of the purpose of education and or schooling • place of schools in teaching gender roles through segregation and compliance • home schooling; free schools.

Changes and their effects

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
• comprehensive education • setting • streaming • selection • Ofsted • inclusive education • national curriculum • SATs.	• the structure of the current education system, with an overview of its advantages and disadvantages • main changes since 1988 and the impact of those changes • issues in contemporary education.	• primary, secondary, further, higher education • independent, state, faith schools • debate over the advantages and disadvantages of different types of schools • introduction of competition, choice, national curriculum, inclusive education (special needs), Ofsted and public nature of statistics • debate of the relative merits and issues due to the changes.

Patterns and trends in educational achievement

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
• inequality • opportunity • material deprivation • cultural deprivation • labelling • self-fulfilling prophecy • subculture • stereotyping.	• patterns of inequality of educational achievement according to class, gender and ethnicity • explanations for differential academic achievement, looking specifically at social mobility and meritocracy.	• knowledge of general statistical patterns • material/cultural factors • 'inside' and 'outside' school factors • place of agents of socialisation in academic achievement.

2.2.3   Sociology of the mass media

In this option, candidates explore issues of culture and socialisation through a detailed study of the mass media. Candidates are expected to develop a critical understanding of the mass media. This includes knowledge of the relationship between media and its audience, and the creation and presentation of its content.

There are **four** key issues to consider:

• media and identity

• types of mass media

• the content of the mass media

• the relationship between the audience and media.

Media and identity

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
• identity • norms • roles • values • culture • socialisation • media.	• development of individual identity and the learning of social roles • the role of the media in socialisation and identity.	• examples of how individuals learn the culture of a society • consider how the individual is socialised by the media.

Types of mass media

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
• mass media • globalisation • communication • interactivity • convergence.	• definitions and types of media • new developments in mass media and their effects • trends in ownership and control that illustrate globalisation.	• e.g. printed/electronic/broadcast • worldwide web creating online communities, international economies • converging products, e.g. phones on which films can be watched • e.g. transnational organisations.

The content of the mass media

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
• selection	• media content creation: factors affecting the creation and selection of events and images in mass media	• e.g. editorial/political/technical/pactical considerations
• bias		• looking at bias, editing
• stereotyping	• media content presentation in relation to validity	• looking specifically at the way images are created, e.g. distortion, repetition, invisibility
• editor		
• gatekeeper	• media content presentation in relation to the presentation of certain groups, e.g. looking at gender, class, age and ethnicity.	• using examples to discuss stereotypes, e.g. breadwinner male, housewife female.
• censorship		
• agenda-setting		
• news values.		

The relationship between the audience and media

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
• audience	• how the media shapes values, attitudes and behaviour	• the media and socialisation, e.g. the hypodermic syringe model vs uses and gratifications model
• socialisation		
• media effects models	• how the audience uses and controls the media	• e.g. the audience and control over the internet (self-censorship audience report misuse)
• moral panics		
• self-censorship.	• the media's role in creating deviance and moral panics.	• the audience and their need for a share of profitability
		• pressure groups/PR departments/advertising executives/legal controls such as libel and contempt
		• knowledge of the process of the creation of moral panics with contemporary examples to show understanding.

2.2.4 Sociology of the workplace

In this option, candidates explore issues of culture and socialisation through a detailed study of work. Candidates are expected to develop a critical understanding of issues surrounding work and employment. This includes knowledge of people's experiences of work, how work is changing and issues surrounding work and equality.

There are **four** key issues to consider:

- workplace and identity
- types of work
- people's experience of work
- equality in the workplace.

Workplace and identity

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
• identity • norms • roles • values • culture • socialisation • workplace.	• development of individual identity and the learning of social roles • the role of the workplace in socialisation and identity.	• examples of how individuals learn the culture of a society • discuss the long-term unemployed: how are they not socialised in the same way as the employed?

Types of work

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
• work • employment • unemployment • leisure • life chances.	• exploration of different definitions of work and what constitutes work • the meaning of work/employment • how work influences life chances, family life and standard of living • causes of unemployment and the distribution of unemployment according to class, ethnicity, gender and region.	• e.g. white collar/blue collar and whether the distinctions still exist • debate over whether housework is work • what is the difference between the experience of being self-employed or employed? How does paid work influence our non-working lives? • structural and individual reasons for unemployment.

People's experience of work

Key concepts:

- automation
- computerisation
- re-skilling
- de-skilling
- alienation
- flexi-time
- part-time
- full-time
- intrinsic/extrinsic job satisfaction.

Content:

- technological developments
- advantages and disadvantages of changing technology to workers and employers
- changing patterns of work
- enjoyment of work: intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction
- effect on family life.

Guidance:

- examples of changes, e.g. Blackberry (hand-held computer/phone/internet)
- expansion of ICT
- e.g. alienation (call centres) vs. liberation (working from home)
- e.g. working from home/loss of job for life/flexible working patterns/increase in flexi- and part-time/longer working hours
- positive and negative effects
- functions of work: status, money, noting the effects of unemployment.

Equality in the workplace

Key concepts:

- pay and working conditions
- career opportunities
- trade unions
- equal opportunities
- discrimination
- racism
- sexism: double burden
- ageism.

Content:

- what is the influence of gender, ethnicity and age on employment opportunities and life chances?
- how workers gain rights: trade unions/industrial action.

Guidance:

- debate on equality in the workplace
- examination of influences on equality: class, race, gender, age, legislation, discrimination, lack of skills
- types of power that the worker wields: trade unions, direct action, indirect action.

2.2.5 Sociology of crime and deviance

Candidates are expected to develop a critical understanding of crime, deviance and social control. This includes knowledge of definitions of crime and deviance, types of control and patterns of crime.

There are **four** key issues to consider:

- definitions of crime and deviance
- controlling deviance and crime
- patterns of crime
- explanations of crime.

Definitions of crime and deviance

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
• deviance • crime • delinquency • norms • values • beliefs • historical deviance • situational deviance • cross-cultural deviance.	• the social nature/relativity of deviance/standardisation of deviance, normality and conformity • the relationship between crime and deviance.	• how deviance changes historically, cross-culturally and according to social context • the standardisation of deviance through international law, e.g. EU law • e.g. is all crime deviant and vice-versa?

Controlling crime and deviance

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
• informal control • formal control • conformity • agents of social control.	• types of social control (formal/informal) • agencies of social control (family, school, peer-group, mass media, workplace and formal agencies including police and courts) • solutions to crime: the effect of prisons; community service; mental health orders; ASBOs.	• use localised examples, e.g. why do people break the school rules? Refer to the idea of rules and the acceptable range: such as formal and informal rules, from minor to serious crime • understand how agencies actually impose control • understand the suitability of certain solutions to certain crimes, e.g. whether prisons are always the best solution.

Patterns of crime

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
• official statistics • self-report studies • victim surveys.	• measurements of crime • crime and its impact on the community • patterns of crime by class; gender; ethnicity and age.	• knowledge of the different issues of validity connected with the differing measurements of crime • media responses to crime and fear of crime • knowledge of who commits crime and who is the victim.

Explanations of crime

Key concepts:

- socialisation
- peer-group ressure
- lack of opportunity
- structural causes
- labelling
- sociological explanations.

Content:

- knowledge of the different explanations of why people commit crime
- understanding the structural vs cultural nature of causes.

Guidance:

- ability to identify and evaluate the reasons why people commit crime.

2.2.6 Sociology of youth

Candidates are expected to develop a critical understanding of the social construction of youth; the peer-group's role as an agent of social control, the role of subculture for the youth of today and gang membership.

There are **four** key issues to consider:

- defining youth
- control through peer group and gangs
- youth subculture
- gangs.

Defining youth

Key concepts:

- youth
- rites of passage
- adolescence
- childhood
- transition
- social construction of youth
- loss of innocence
- disappearance of childhood
- teenagers.

Content:

- knowledge of the biological vs social construction views of youth
- knowledge of cross-cultural rites of passage/initiation
- knowledge of the debate over whether childhood is being eroded.

Guidance:

- examples of what symbolises childhood in the contemporary UK, e.g. legal rights and age limits such as when one can marry
- debate the difference between biological views and sociological views
- examples of any rites of passage that allow understanding of transition
- debate over whether childhood still exists.

Control through peer group and gangs

Key concepts:
- informal control
- formal control
- conformity
- agents of social control
- peer group pressure.

Content:
- types of social control (formal/informal)
- agencies of social control (family, school, peer group, mass media, workplace and formal agencies including police and courts)
- the role of the peer group in controlling the behaviour of young people.

Guidance:
- consider whether young people are controlled more by their peergroup than other agencies of social control
- understand how peer groups actually do control the behaviour of individuals, e.g. exclusion, peer-group pressure.

Youth subculture

Key concepts:
- youth culture
- youth subcultures
- bedroom subculture
- growth of affluence
- solution to problems
- peer group pressure
- manipulation by the media.

Content:
- defining the different types of youth culture
- relationship between youth subculture and identity
- reasons for the development of youth culture/youth subcultures.

Guidance:
- knowledge of different examples of youth culture/ subcultures
- ability to link subculture to identity/behaviour/music/drugs
- ability to look at issues of strata: class/race/gender, e.g. gender related issues: girl subcultures and invisible girls
- knowledge of the differing reasons for the emergence of different subcultures.

Gangs

Key concepts:
- gangs
- territory
- delinquent subculture
- social network
- scapegoat
- labelling
- sense of belonging
- status frustration
- boredom.

Content:
- defining different types of gangs
- reasons for joining gangs.

Guidance:
- examples of gangs
- being able to debate why young people join gangs.

2.3 Unit B673: *Applying Sociological Research Techniques*

This unit in the GCSE Sociology specification requires that candidates build on the knowledge gained in Unit B671 with reference to sociological research. Candidates will be provided with pre-released material, which will take the form of two investigations, both focusing on the same topic (as specified below). The investigations can be drawn from *any* area of sociological research. Candidates will then be examined on their understanding of the investigations – the process involved in preparing the topic for study, applying different methods and evidence to investigate it and then drawing conclusions from the data. Candidates should be able to analyse and evaluate different research methods and should be aware of the factors that are important when researching topic areas. Candidates should know about the strengths and weaknesses of research techniques, as applied to familiar material. Candidates should be able to identify problems that can arise in research and identify and justify some possible solutions. Comparisons between the two investigations provided may be required. They are expected to understand and use sociological concepts and terminology that are relevant to sociological research.

2.3.1 The topic area

The topic area specified each year is shown below from 2014. The topic areas are included in Units B671 and B672.

Year of Examination	Pre-release Topic Area
2014	Work
2015	Crime and Deviance
2016	Youth
2017	Family

The topic area may be adapted and applied to any aspect of social life, which need not be from the specification. For example:

- the topic of gender could be related to work, sport, crime or any other area of social life that is not necessarily covered in the specification

- the topic of family could be related to different ethnic patterns, socialisation, marriage or any area of social life that is not necessarily mentioned in the specification.

Candidates must be aware of how research methods, secondary sources and results relate to the hypothesis/aims in the pre-released investigations. If research methods, secondary sources and results fail to relate sociologically to the hypothesis/aims of the investigation, candidates need to see this as a research issue. For both investigations in the pre-released material, candidates must be able to explain the importance of the hypothesis. They must be able to relate the hypothesis to the topic area and the wider social structure (including links to society and to other topics/social issues covered in the specification).

Key content and guidance:	
Candidates should have a clear understanding of a hypothesis as a prediction to be tested. They need to understand how to test the hypothesis objectively.	
Hypothesis:	A testable statement or claim about society and not a question.
Aim:	A planned action, the outcome of which is intended to produce data that could help to prove/disprove the hypothesis.
Primary methods:	• questionnaires • observation (participant, non-participant, overt and covert) • interviews (structured, semi-structured and unstructured) • content analysis • case studies.
Candidates should have a clear definition of each method and its main uses in sociological research. They should be clear about the type of evidence that can be gathered using each method. Candidates should be able to justify the choice of the methods used with regards to each of the two investigations and should be able to critically analyse the issues associated with the choice of methods. The main advantages and disadvantages of each method, in relation to the aims and hypothesis of each of the two investigations should be considered.	
Secondary sources:	• official statistics • non-official statistical data • historical documents and personal documents and diaries • broadcast media material (e.g. TV, radio) • published media material (e.g. newspapers, magazines) • internet • published sociological studies.

Candidates should know about the different types of sources available to sociologists. They should know why different types of sources are used and required, and how they complement each other when used in sociological research.

Candidates should be able to justify why certain sources may have been selected with regard to the specific investigation and should be able to critically analyse the issues associated with the choice of source. The main advantages and disadvantages of each source, in relation to the aims and hypothesis of the investigation should be considered.

| Evidence: | • quantitative |
| | • qualitative. |

2.3.3 Planning and applying research techniques

Key content and guidance:

Preparing a topic for research Research plan	• creating aims
	• social surveys
Selection of secondary sources Selection of primary methods	• the main stages of social research
	• practical issues (time, cost and access)
Recognition of possible problems and strategies to resolve these Selection and representation of respondents and/or sources	• longitudinal studies
	• pilot studies
	• sampling frame
	• sampling (type – stratified, snowball, opportunity, random and systematic; composition – social factors such as gender, age, religion and size)
	• using more than one method
	• avoiding researcher bias.

Candidates should be able to understand and apply the main principles, stages and features of research design.

Ethical issues:	• researchers' responsibilities to themselves and others
	• conduct and competence of researcher
	• consent of participants
	• confidentiality of information and data
	• suitability of topic under investigation.

Candidates should have an understanding of the main ethical issues of sociological research and be able to apply these to the investigations.

2.3.4 Collecting and using information and evidence

Key content and guidance:

Primary methods:	Applying the chosen methods of collecting data.
Secondary sources:	How to apply the evidence collected from secondary sources to the hypothesis and aims.

Candidates should be able to explain how the methods and sources were used and why.

Different types of data:	• the distinction between secondary and primary data • the distinction between qualitative and quantitative data.

Candidates should be able to justify why different types of data were used/not used in relation to the aims and hypothesis in the investigations. Candidates should be able to explain how the specific data used can support/complement different types of data.

Quantitative evidence:	Primary • statistical data from the primary methods used. Secondary • official statistics • non-official statistical data.

Candidates should be able to explain the type of data collected in relation to the aims and hypothesis in the investigations.

Qualitative evidence:	Primary • any descriptive data from the primary methods used. Secondary: in-depth data from: • historical documents and evidence • personal documents and diaries • media material, e.g. newspapers, TV, radio, internet, magazines.

2.3.5   Concluding the investigations

Key content and guidance:

Drawing conclusions from the evidence	• findings from the primary methods
Relating the evidence back to the aims	• findings from the secondary sources
	• making generalisations
Proving or disproving the hypothesis	• making conclusions from the data in relation to the aims of the investigations
	• relating the data collected back to the hypothesis to see if the claim is true.

Candidates should be able to recognise whether or not any patterns emerge from the data. They should be able to identify results that support the aims and show the hypothesis to be true, and results that contradict and do not support them.

2.3.6   Evaluating the techniques used and the evidence collected

Key content and guidance:

Critical understanding of the issues of research developed from applying the techniques	• designing the techniques, e.g. questionnaire, observation schedule, sampling method
	• using the methods and sources to collect data
	• strengths and weaknesses of information collected by the primary methods used
	• strengths and weaknesses of information collected from the secondary sources
	• exaggeration, distortion, selection and bias
	• researcher objectivity
	• representation
	• reliability of research methods
	• validity of data obtained
	• ethical issues
	• accepting or amending the hypothesis
	• taking the research further.

Candidates should be able to evaluate all the techniques used and all the evidence collected during the research. The researcher's own skills and background, in relation to those needed to conduct research, should also be considered. Candidates should be able to identify further possible changes to the investigations to overcome problems or weaknesses and/or ways the investigations could be developed further.

3 Assessment of GCSE Sociology

3.1 Overview of the assessment in GCSE Sociology

For GCSE Sociology candidates must take Units B671, B672 and B673.

GCSE Sociology J696

Unit B671: *Sociology Basics*

25% of the total GCSE 1 hour written paper 60 marks	This question paper has **two** sections:
	Section A: Candidates are required to answer a **compulsory** structured question on research methods in Sociology. This will be based on source material presented in the examination.
	Section B: Candidates are required to answer a **compulsory** structured question on key concepts in Sociology. This will be based on source material presented in the examination.
	Candidates answer **all** questions.
	This unit is externally assessed.

Unit B672: *Socialisation, Culture and Identity*

50% of the total GCSE 1 hour 30 mins written paper 120 marks	This questions paper has **six** sections with one four-part structured question in each.
	Candidates are required to answer **three** four-part structured questions, chosen from any section. There will be **one** question on each of the following topics:
	Section A: Family
	Section B: Education
	Section C: Mass media
	Section D: Work
	Section E: Crime and deviance
	Section F: Youth
	Candidates answer any **three** sections.
	This unit is externally assessed.

Unit B673: *Applying Sociological Research Techniques*

25% of the total GCSE 1 hour written paper 60 marks	This question paper is based on pre-released research material.
	The pre-released material will consist of two pieces of research that can be drawn from any area of sociological research. Both investigations will focus on the topic of the year.
	The pre-released material consists of a maximum of 10 sides of A4 and is sent to centres before the examination.
	Candidates answer **all** questions.
	This unit is externally assessed.

3.2 Assessment Objectives (AOs)

Candidates are expected to demonstrate their ability to:

AO1	Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of social structures, processes and issues.
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding in a range of contexts both familiar and unfamiliar.
AO3	Select, interpret, analyse and evaluate information from different sources.

3.2.1 AO weightings – GCSE Sociology

Unit	% of GCSE			Total
	AO1	AO2	AO3	
Unit B671: *Sociology Basics*	11	9	5	25%
Unit B672: *Socialisation, Culture and Identity*	22	15	13	50%
Unit B673: *Applying Sociological Research Techniques*	4	10	11	25%
Total	37%	34%	29%	100%

3.3   Grading and awarding grades

GCSE results are awarded on the scale A* to G. Units are awarded a* to g. Grades are indicated on certificates. However, results for candidates who fail to achieve the minimum grade (G or g) will be recorded as *unclassified* (U or u) and this is **not** certificated.

Most GCSEs are unitised schemes. When working out candidates' overall grades OCR needs to be able to compare performance on the same unit in different series when different grade boundaries may have been set, and between different units. OCR uses a Uniform Mark Scale to enable this to be done.

A candidate's uniform mark for each unit is calculated from the candidate's raw mark on that unit. The raw mark boundary marks are converted to the equivalent uniform mark boundary. Marks between grade boundaries are converted on a pro rata basis.

When unit results are issued, the candidate's unit grade and uniform mark are given. The uniform mark is shown out of the maximum uniform mark for the unit, e.g. 40/60.

The specification is graded on a Uniform Mark Scale. The uniform mark thresholds for each of the assessments are shown below:

(GCSE) Unit Weighting	Maximum Unit Uniform Mark	Unit Grade								
		a*	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	u
50%	120	108	96	84	72	60	48	36	24	0
25%	60	54	48	42	36	30	24	18	12	0

A candidate's uniform marks for each unit are aggregated and grades for the specification are generated on the following scale:

Qualification	Max Uniform Mark	Qualification Grade								
		A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
GCSE	240	216	192	168	144	120	96	72	48	0

The written papers will have a total weighting of 100%.

The candidate's grade will be determined by the total uniform mark.

3.4 Grade descriptions

Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The descriptions must be interpreted in relation to the content in the specification; they are not designed to define that content. The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of the assessment may be balanced by better performance in others.

The grade descriptors have been produced by the regulatory authorities in collaboration with the awarding bodies.

3.4.1 Grade F

Candidates recall, select and communicate basic knowledge and understanding of some aspects of social structures, processes, and issues.

They identify and explain in a simple, limited and uncritical way the use of methods, sources, information and data to address a question or issue.

They identify evidence and relate it in a simple way to arguments. They present simple conclusions that are sometimes supported by evidence.

3.4.2 Grade C

Candidates recall, select and communicate sound knowledge and understanding of different social structures, processes and issues.

They apply appropriate concepts, terms and theories in a range of contexts. They analyse, in a limited way, the structures, processes and issues mentioned in the specification. They recognise and describe relevant issues, making reference to appropriate arguments and evidence. They make straightforward links between structures, processes and issues.

They identify and explain, in a limited way, the use of methods, sources, information and data to address a question or issue. They deploy a range of information and data as evidence for conclusions.

3.4.3 Grade A

Candidates recall, select and communicate detailed knowledge and thorough understanding of relevant social structures, processes and issues.

They apply relevant concepts, terms and theories effectively in a range of contexts. They recognise issues and debates and deploy relevant evidence to reach valid conclusions. They analyse links between structures, processes and issues to produce grounded analyses.

They identify, explain and evaluate the use of a range of appropriate methods, sources, information and data to address a question or issue. They interpret information and data presented in a variety of forms, critically evaluate its relevance in relation to the arguments, and reach substantiated conclusions. They use concepts, terminology and conventions accurately and appropriately.

3.5 Quality of written communication

Quality of written communication is assessed in all units and is integrated in the marking criteria.

Candidates are expected to:

- ensure that text is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate so that meaning is clear
- present information in a form that suits its purpose
- use an appropriate style of writing and, where applicable, specialist terminology.

4.1 Free resources available from the OCR website

The following materials will be available on the OCR website:

- GCSE Sociology Specification
- specimen assessment materials for each unit
- teachers' handbook
- sample schemes of work and lesson plans

4.2 Other resources

OCR offers centres a wealth of high quality published support with a choice of 'Official Publisher Partner' and 'Approved Publication' resources, all endorsed by OCR for use with OCR specifications.

4.2.1 Publisher partners

OCR works in close collaboration with publisher partners to ensure you have access to:

- published support materials available when you need them, tailored to OCR specifications
- high quality resources produced in consultation with OCR subject teams, which are linked to OCR's teacher support materials.

Heinemann is the publisher partner for OCR GCSE Sociology.

Heinemann produces the following resources for OCR GCSE Sociology:

- *OCR GCSE Sociology* - Jannine Jacobs-Roth, Lynn Taylor, Karen Waterworth, Bruce Viveash.

4.2.2 Endorsed publications

OCR endorses a range of publisher materials to provide quality support for centres delivering its qualifications. You can be confident that materials branded with OCR's 'Official Publishing Partner' or 'Approved publication' logos have undergone a thorough quality assurance process to achieve endorsement. All responsibility for the content of the publisher's materials rests with the publisher.

These endorsements do not mean that the materials are the only suitable resources available or necessary to achieve an OCR qualification.

4.3   Training

OCR will offer a range of support activities for all practitioners throughout the lifetime of the qualification to ensure they have the relevant knowledge and skills to deliver the qualification.

Please see Event Booker for further information.

4.4   OCR Support Services

4.4.1   Active Results

Active Results is available to all centres offering OCR's GCSE Sociology specifications.

activeresults

Active Results is a free results analysis service to help teachers review the performance of individual candidates or whole schools.

Data can be analysed using filters on several categories such as gender and other demographic information, as well as providing breakdowns of results by question and topic.

Active Results allows you to look in greater detail at your results:

- richer and more granular data will be made available to centres including question level data available from e-marking
- you can identify the strengths and weaknesses of individual candidates and your centre's cohort as a whole
- our systems have been developed in close consultation with teachers so that the technology delivers what you need.

Further information on Active Results can be found on the OCR website.

4.4.2   OCR Interchange

OCR Interchange has been developed to help you carry out day-to-day administration functions online, quickly and easily. The site allows you to register and enter candidates online. In addition, you can gain immediate and free access to candidate information at your convenience. Sign up on the OCR website.

5.1 Equality Act information relating to GCSE Sociology

GCSEs often require assessment of a broad range of competences. This is because they are general qualifications and, as such, prepare candidates for a wide range of occupations and higher level courses.

The revised GCSE qualification and subject criteria were reviewed by the regulators in order to identify whether any of the competences required by the subject presented a potential barrier to any disabled candidates. If this was the case, the situation was reviewed again to ensure that such competences were included only where essential to the subject. The findings of this process were discussed with disability groups and with disabled people.

Reasonable adjustments are made for disabled candidates in order to enable them to access the assessments and to demonstrate what they know and can do. For this reason, very few candidates will have a complete barrier to the assessment. Information on reasonable adjustments is found in *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration* by the Joint Council www.jcq.org.uk.

Candidates who are unable to access part of the assessment, even after exploring all possibilities through reasonable adjustments, may still be able to receive an award based on the parts of the assessment they have taken.

The access arrangements permissible for use in this specification are in line with Ofqual's GCSE subject criteria equalities review and are as follows:

	Yes/No	Type of Assessment
Readers	Yes	All written examinations
Scribes	Yes	All written examinations
Practical assistants	Yes	All written examinations
Word processors	Yes	All written examinations
Transcripts	Yes	All written examinations
Oral language modifiers	Yes	All written examinations
BSL signers	Yes	All written examinations
Modified question papers	Yes	All written examinations
Extra time	Yes	All written examinations

5.2 Arrangements for candidates with particular requirements (including Special Consideration)

All candidates with a demonstrable need may be eligible for access arrangements to enable them to show what they know and can do. The criteria for eligibility for access arrangements can be found in the JCQ document *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration*.

Candidates who have been fully prepared for the assessment but who have been affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control at the time of the examination may be eligible for special consideration. As above, centres should consult the JCQ document *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration.*

6 Administration of GCSE Sociology

In December 2011 the GCSE qualification criteria were changed by Ofqual. As a result, all GCSE qualifications have been updated to comply with the new regulations.

The most significant change for all GCSE qualifications is that, from 2014, unitised specifications must require that 100% of the assessment is terminal.

Please note that there are no changes to the terminal rule and re-sit rules for the June 2013 examination series:

• at least 40% of the assessment must be taken in the examination series in which the qualification is certificated

• candidates may re-sit each unit once before certification, i.e. each candidate can have two attempts at a unit before certification.

For full information on the assessment availability and rules that apply in the June 2013 examination series, please refer to the previous version of this specification GCSE Sociology (July 2009) available on the website.

The sections below explain in more detail the rules that apply from the June 2014 examination series onwards.

6.1 Availability of assessment from 2014

There is one examination series available each year in June (all units are available each year in June).

GCSE Sociology certification is available in June 2014 and each June thereafter.

	Unit B671	Unit B672	Unit B673	Certification availability
June 2014	✓	✓	✓	✓
June 2015	✓	✓	✓	✓

6.2 Certification rules

For GCSE Sociology from June 2014 onwards, a 100% terminal rule applies. Candidates must enter for all their units in the series in which the qualification is certificated.

6.3 Rules for re-taking a qualification

Candidates may enter for the qualification an unlimited number of times.

Where a candidate re-takes a qualification, **all** units must be re-entered and all units must be re-taken in the same series as the qualification is re-certificated. The new results for these units will be used to calculate the new qualification grade. Any results previously achieved cannot be re-used.

6.4 Making entries

6.4.1 Unit entries

Centres must be approved to offer OCR qualifications before they can make any entries, including estimated entries. It is recommended that centres apply to OCR to become an approved centre well in advance of making their first entries. Centres must have made an entry for a unit in order for OCR to supply the appropriate forms and administrative materials.

It is essential that correct unit entry codes are used when making unit entries.

Unit entry code	Component code	Assessment method	Unit titles
B671	01	Written Paper	*Sociology Basics*
B672	01	Written Paper	*Socialisation, Culture and Identity*
B673	01	Written Paper	*Applying Sociological Research Techniques*

6.4.2 Certification entries

Candidates must be entered for qualification certification separately from unit assessment(s). If a certification entry is **not** made, no overall grade can be awarded.

Candidates must enter for:

•   GCSE Sociology certification code J696.

6.5 Enquiries about results

Under certain circumstances, a centre may wish to query the result issued to one or more candidates. Enquiries about results for GCSE units must be made immediately following the series in which the relevant unit was taken and by the relevant enquiries about results deadline for that series.

Please refer to the JCQ *Post-Results Services* booklet and the OCR *Admin Guide: 14–19 Qualifications* for further guidance on enquiries about results and deadlines. Copies of the latest versions of these documents can be obtained from the OCR website at www.ocr.org.uk.

6.6 Prohibited qualifications and classification code

Every specification is assigned a national classification code indicating the subject area to which it belongs. The classification code for this specification is 4890.

Centres should be aware that candidates who enter for more than one GCSE qualification with the same classification code will have only one grade (the highest) counted for the purpose of the School and College Performance Tables.

Centres may wish to advise candidates that, if they take two specifications with the same classification code, colleges are very likely to take the view that they have achieved only one of the two GCSEs. The same view may be taken if candidates take two GCSE specifications that have different classification codes but have significant overlap of content. Candidates who have any doubts about their subject combinations should seek advice, either from their centre or from the institution to which they wish to progress.

Other information about GCSE Sociology

7.1 Overlap with other qualifications

There is a small degree of overlap between the content of this specification and that for GCSE Home Economics (Child Development) and GCSE Humanities.

7.2 Progression from this qualification

GCSE qualifications are general qualifications which enable candidates to progress either directly to employment, or to proceed to further qualifications.

Progression to further study from GCSE will depend upon the number and nature of the grades achieved. Broadly, candidates who are awarded mainly Grades D to G at GCSE could either strengthen their base through further study of qualifications at Level 1 within the National Qualifications Framework or could proceed to Level 2. Candidates who are awarded mainly Grades A* to C at GCSE would be well prepared for study at Level 3 within the National Qualifications Framework.

7.3 Avoidance of bias

OCR has taken great care in preparation of this specification and assessment materials to avoid bias of any kind. Special focus is given to the nine strands of the Equality Act with the aim of ensuring both direct and indirect discrimination is avoided.

7.4 Regulatory requirements

This specification complies in all respects with the current: *General Conditions of Recognition; GCSE, GCE, Principal Learning and Project Code of Practice; GCSE Controlled Assessment regulations* and the *GCSE subject criteria for Sociology*. All documents are available on the Ofqual website.

7.5 Language

This specification and associated assessment materials are in English only. Only answers written in English will be assessed.

7.6 Spiritual, moral, ethical, social, legislative, economic and cultural issues

This specification offers opportunities which can contribute to an understanding of these issues in the following topics:

- spiritual issues are prevalent in the specification, although not applicable to any particular unit

- cultural issues are a central concern of Sociology and underpin the GCSE subject criteria for Sociology, which forms the basis of this specification. They arise, therefore, throughout the specification

- moral and social issues are also a central concern of Sociology and should be considered throughout courses based on the specification

- the ethical dimension of social research should be considered in the Investigating society sub-section in Unit B671: *Sociology Basics* and further in B673: *Applying Sociological Research Techniques.* Ethics are at the forefront of sociological enquiry and ethical issues arise whenever social research is carried out. The importance of adhering to ethical guidelines is emphasised in Unit B672: *Socialisation, Culture and Identity*

- economic issues are touched upon in Unit B672: *Socialisation, Culture and Identity*, crime and deviance and aspects of social control.

7.7 Sustainable development, health and safety considerations and European developments, consistent with international agreements

This specification supports these issues, consistent with current EU agreements, as outlined below.

OCR has taken account of the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community and the report *Environmental Responsibility: An Agenda for Further and Higher Education*, 1993, in preparing this specification and associated specimen assessments. European and cross-cultural examples should be used where appropriate in the delivery of the subject content.

7.8 Key Skills

This specification provides opportunities for the development of the Key Skills of *Communication, Application of Number, Information and Communication Technology, Working with Others, Improving Own Learning and Performance* and *Problem Solving* at Levels 1 and/or 2. However, the extent to which this evidence fulfils the Key Skills criteria at these levels will be totally dependent on the style of teaching and learning adopted for each unit.

The following table indicates where opportunities may exist for at least some coverage of the various Key Skills criteria at Levels 1 and/or 2 for each unit.

Unit	C		AoN		ICT		WwO		IoLP		PS	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
B671	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
B672	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
B673	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

7.9 ICT

In order to play a full part in modern society, candidates need to be confident and effective users of ICT. Where appropriate, candidates should be given opportunities to use ICT in order to further their study of Sociology, especially in Unit B673.

7.10 Citizenship

Since September 2002, the National Curriculum for England at Key Stage 4 has included a mandatory programme of study for Citizenship. Parts of this programme of study may be delivered through an appropriate treatment of other subjects.

This section offers guidance on opportunities for developing knowledge, skills and understanding of citizenship issues during the course. These opportunities are also indicated within the content of:

GCSE Sociology Units B671–3.

- Citizenship provides valuable opportunities for candidates to learn about the diverse communities in which they now live and to understand how they function socially, politically and culturally. Through citizenship, pupils gain knowledge, understanding and skills to play an effective role in society as informed, thoughtful and responsible individuals who are aware of their duties and rights. They investigate, discuss and debate everyday topical issues and events (local, national and global) and explore different opinions and values. Citizenship enables pupils to develop and practise skills of enquiry, communication, participation and responsible action while learning about such issues. These skills are prevalent in the study of GCSE Sociology as a whole.

Unit B671: *Sociology Basics* (25% of GCSE)

This unit encourages candidates to develop a critical understanding of sociological evidence and research processes and includes knowledge of the main methods and strategies of sociological research. It also introduces basic key concepts in Sociology and makes links between the individual and society.

Assessment is through a 1 hour examination comprising two compulsory structured questions: one based on research methods and one based on key concepts.

Unit B672: *Socialisation, Culture and Identity* (50% of GCSE)

This unit offers a choice of substantive topics through which the themes of culture, socialisation and identity are developed. It builds upon the knowledge and skills acquired in Unit B671, and seeks to develop an understanding of the nature of sociological thought in the context of the topics studied.

This unit offers six optional sections from which candidates will be assessed on **three**:

- **Family**
- **Education**
- **Mass media**
- **Work**
- **Crime and deviance**
- **Youth.**

Assessment is through a 1 hour 30 mins examination comprising of 6 sections identified above, each of which contains four structured questions. Candidates must answer **all** questions from any **three** of the sections.

Unit B673: *Applying Sociological Research Techniques* (25% of GCSE)

This unit allows candidates the freedom to express their sociological knowledge and interest in topic areas relating to Units B671 and B672. A critical awareness of the nature of sociological knowledge, understanding and evidence will be developed.

Assessment is through a 1 hour examination comprising two sections. Assessment is based on pre-released investigations.

YOUR CHECKLIST

Our aim is to provide you with all the information and support you need to deliver our specifications.

✓ Bookmark **www.ocr.org.uk/gcse2012**

✓ Be among the first to hear about support materials and resources as they become available. Register for email updates at **www.ocr.org.uk/updates**

✓ Book your inset training place online at **www.ocreventbooker.org.uk**

✓ Learn more about active results at **www.ocr.org.uk/activeresults**

✓ Join our sociology social network community for teachers at **www.social.ocr.org.uk**

NEED MORE HELP?

Here's how to contact us for specialist advice:

Phone: **01223 553998**

Email: **general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk**

Online: **http://answers.ocr.org.uk**

Fax: **01223 552627**

Post: **Customer Contact Centre, OCR, Progress House, Westwood Business Park, Coventry CV4 8JQ**

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Become an approved OCR centre – if your centre is completely new to OCR and has not previously used us for any examinations, visit **www.ocr.org.uk/centreapproval** to become an approved OCR centre.

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored.

Contact us

Keep up to date with the latest news by registering to receive e-alerts at **www.ocr.org.uk/updates**

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