

Thank you for deciding to study Sociology at our 6th Form. Hopefully, this 2-year course will open your eyes to the world and society around you.

The tasks presented in this bridging unit are designed to give you a taste of what the subject is.

Being a new subject for you, the topics will seem common sense at first, as you will find that they are relatable and applicable to real-life contexts.

However, it is important for you to recognise that all these introductory topics have greater depth, and the subject is theoretically challenging. These topics will be explored in much greater depth, and you will have to think about your learning, in terms of reading, writing, and research.

I hope you will find the tasks intriguing and thought-provoking, which ignite your curiosity and drive to learn.

- For your Pre-A Level Summer Unit, you will need to have file paper to write your responses on. Please ensure you write the subheadings of the tasks.

Task 1: What is Sociology?

- a) Find a definition of sociology and write it down.
- b) Now define sociology *in your own words*.
- c) What do you think sociologists might study?

Task 2: Society and Culture

- a) Copy out the table in your own notes, leave enough space to write in the boxes. Think about different ways of life and expressions of norms and values.

	UK	Spain	USA
Foods			
Clothing			
Religious beliefs			
Festivals			
Language			

- b) Find a definition of *culture* and write it down. Is culture fixed, or is it socially constructed?

Task 3: Norms and Values

A norm is an informal, acceptable behaviour given to a specific social context.
Values are the commonly held beliefs of what is right or wrong in that society.

- a) Here are some expectations for behaviour in different social contexts. Can you match the behaviour to the social context? Write them out.

Social Context	Behaviour
At a funeral people tend to...	...keep calm and keep focused.
Young children may struggle to...	...they applaud and cheer loudly.
When people are at a concert...	...wear swimwear.
When you're at the beach you choose to...wear black.

- b) What happens when someone doesn't conform to these expectations?

Task 4: Social Issues

Social issues refer to problems within society that cause concern for its citizens and institutions. Sociologists research these issues to help understand the causes, patterns and trends of what is happening in society to inform government and various institutions, hopefully to initiate social policies, legislation or even social thinking.

- a) Here are some of the current social issues in the UK; choose one and investigate the situation. Make brief notes on:
- What is the situation?
 - Facts/ statistics
 - Who is affected?
 - What are the implications for people/society?



BREXIT

A recent significant social issue.

Britain's decision to exit from the European Union has had wide-ranging potential consequences for many areas: employment, financial well-being, rights to live and work in the EU.



KNIFE CRIME

In the year ending March 2023, there were 244 homicides in England and Wales where a sharp instrument, including knives, was used, accounting for 41% of all homicides.



NHS

Privatisation of the National Health Service has caused great concern amongst people in the UK.

There is a huge argument that the service is ineffective, and that it needs to be more privatised and run like a business, yet the other argument is that profit and competition are not the answer, and should not come before people/patients.

Task 5: Debates

Nature/Nurture?

The nature/nurture debate is a significant topic in the social sciences. Is human behaviour a result of natural factors – biological: hormones, neuro-chemistry, injuries? Or is it influenced by our environment, our socialisation and the way we are brought up?

- a) Copy out the table into your own notes – make sure you give yourself enough space to write. The table addresses different behaviours and gives 'nature' explanations (biological, psychological); can you think of 'nurture' explanations – based on social factors.

Behaviour	Possible nature explanation	Possible nurture explanation
Males are more aggressive	Excessive testosterone	
Females achieve higher grades	Women are genetically more intelligent	
Women tend to take responsibility for childcare	Female biology/oestrogen makes them more emotional and caring	
Working-class are more likely to be overweight	Low intelligence and impulse control	

Gender Equality?

- b) Despite increasing social policies that address the gender gap, many people experience different treatment in society. Consider how men, women and non-binary may be disadvantaged by the following institutions:

Social Institution	How might men, women and/or non-binary be disadvantaged in this institution?
Legal system	
Education	
Media	
Religion	
Work	
Healthcare	

And finally, it's important to be organised. As you start 6th Form, please make sure you are ready to learn with a lever-arch folder, file paper, plastic wallets and dividers.

This is a very content-heavy subject, so there will be a lot of notes and resources. Let's start as we mean to go on – and be organised!!