A LEVEL
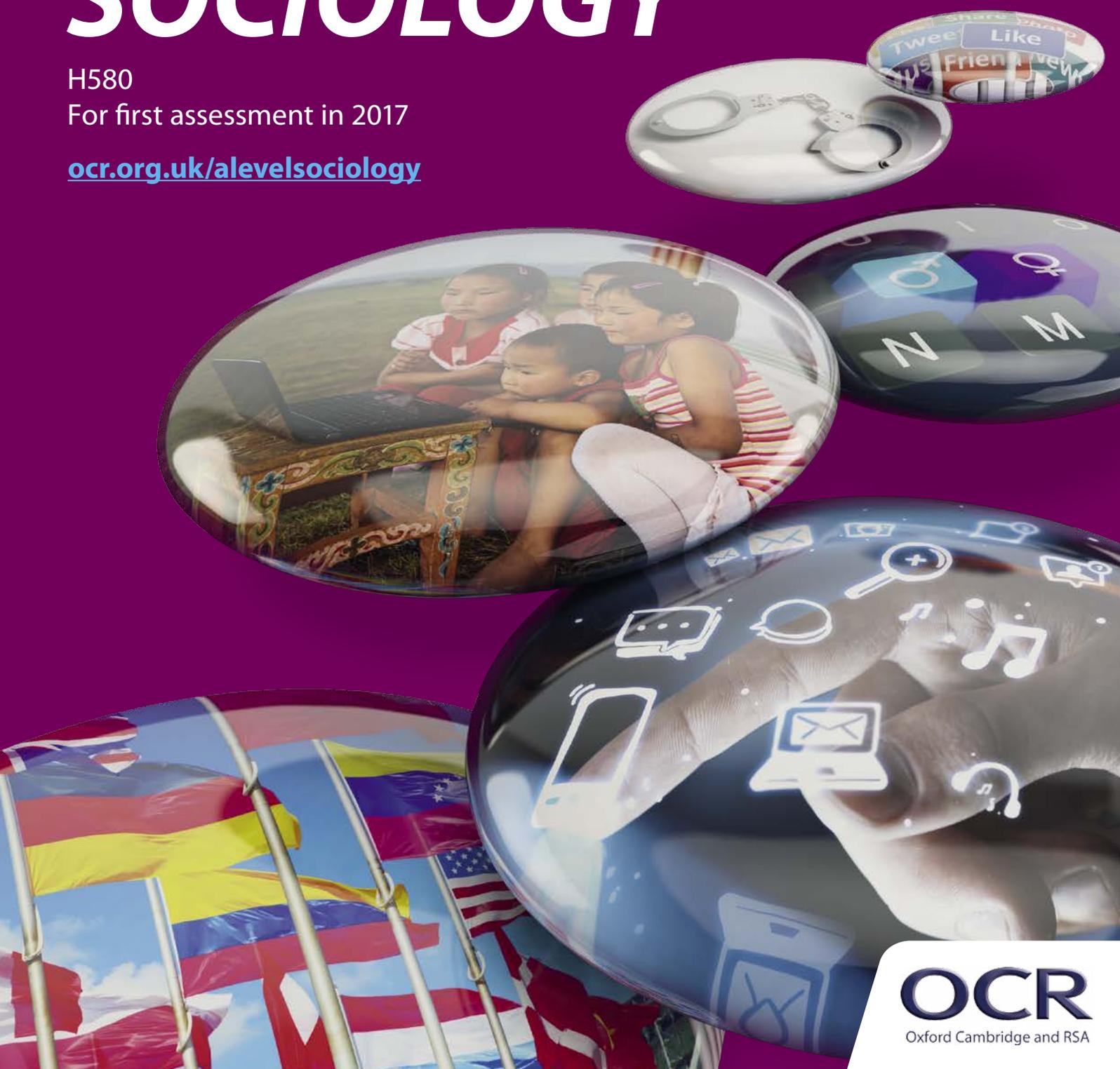## *Specification*

SOCIOLOGY

H580
For first assessment in 2017

ocr.org.uk/alevelsociology

OCR
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Contents

Introducing…
A Level in Sociology (from September 2015)

Our A Level in Sociology specification provides your students with the exciting opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the world around them and reflect on social issues that are often relevant to their own social experiences. They open up the possibility for fascinating discussions, for example 'what impact do digital forms of communication have on social relations?', 'how do sociologists investigate inequality in society?' and 'what are the patterns and trends of religion in relation to social class?'

Through the specification, students can acquire knowledge and a critical understanding of contemporary social processes and social changes. They have the opportunity to develop a broad set of desirable key skills, including the ability to analyse and formulate clear, logical arguments with scope for extensive evaluation from a range of theoretical perspectives.

Developing strong critical thinking skills and being able to consider issues with a global outlook will be of huge benefit to your students moving forward, whether this is in further education, the workplace or society in general.

Meet the team

We have a dedicated team of people working on our A Level in Sociology qualifications.

Find out more about our Sociology team at **ocr.org.uk**

If you need specialist advice, guidance or support, get in touch as follows:

- **01223 553998**

- **sociology@ocr.org.uk**

- **@OCRexams**

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

Teaching and learning resources

We recognise that the introduction of a new specification can bring challenges for implementation and teaching. Our aim is to help you at every stage and we're working hard to provide a practical package of support in close consultation with teachers and other experts, so we can help you to make the change.

Designed to support progression for all

Our resources are designed to provide you with a range of teaching activities and suggestions so you can select the best approach for your particular students. You are the experts on how your students learn and our aim is to support you in the best way we can.

We want to…

- Support you with a body of knowledge that grows throughout the lifetime of the specification

- Provide you with a range of suggestions so you can select the best activity, approach or context for your particular students

- Make it easier for you to explore and interact with our resource materials, in particular to develop your own schemes of work

- Create an ongoing conversation so we can develop materials that work for you.

Plenty of useful resources

You'll have four main types of subject-specific teaching and learning resources at your fingertips:

- Delivery Guides

- Transition Guides

- Topic Exploration Packs

- Lesson Elements.

Along with subject-specific resources, you'll also have access to a selection of generic resources that focus on skills development and professional guidance for teachers.

Skills Guides – we've produced a set of Skills Guides that are not specific to Sociology, but each covers a topic that could be relevant to a range of qualifications – for example, communication, legislation and research. Download the guides at **ocr.org.uk/skillsguides**

Active Results – a free online results analysis service to help you review the performance of individual students or your whole school. It provides access to detailed results data, enabling more comprehensive analysis of results in order to give you a more accurate measurement of the achievements of your centre and individual students. For more details refer to **ocr.org.uk/activeresults**

Professional development

Take advantage of our improved Professional Development Programme, designed with you in mind. Whether you want to come to face-to-face events, look at our new digital training or search for training materials, you can find what you're looking for all in one place at the CPD Hub.

An introduction to the new specifications

We'll be running events to help you get to grips with our A Level in Sociology qualification.

These events are designed to help prepare you for first teaching and to support your delivery at every stage.

Watch out for details at **cpdhub.org.uk**

To receive the latest information about the training we'll be offering, please register for A Level email updates at **ocr.org.uk/updates**

1 Why choose an OCR A Level in Sociology?

1a. Why choose an OCR qualification?

Choose OCR and you've got the reassurance that you're working with one of the UK's leading exam boards. Our new A Level in Sociology course has been developed in consultation with teachers, employers and Higher Education to provide students with a qualification that's relevant to them and meets their needs.

We're part of the Cambridge Assessment Group, Europe's largest assessment agency and a department of the University of Cambridge. Cambridge Assessment plays a leading role in developing and delivering assessments throughout the world, operating in over 150 countries.

We work with a range of education providers, including schools, colleges, workplaces and other institutions in both the public and private sectors. Over 13,000 centres choose our A levels, GCSEs and vocational qualifications including Cambridge Nationals and Cambridge Technicals.

Our Specifications

We believe in developing specifications that help you bring the subject to life and inspire your students to achieve more.

We've created teacher-friendly specifications based on extensive research and engagement with the teaching community. They're designed to be straightforward and accessible so that you can tailor the delivery of the course to suit your needs. We aim to encourage learners to become responsible for their own learning, confident in discussing ideas, innovative and engaged.

We provide a range of support services designed to help you at every stage, from preparation through to the delivery of our specifications. This includes:

- A wide range of high-quality creative resources including:
  - Delivery Guides
  - Transition Guides
  - Topic Exploration Packs
  - Lesson Elements
  - …and much more.

- Access to Subject Advisors to support you through the transition and throughout the lifetimes of the specifications.

- CPD/Training for teachers to introduce the qualifications and prepare you for first teaching.

- Active Results – our free results analysis service to help you review the performance of individual students or whole schools.

All A level qualifications offered by OCR are accredited by Ofqual, the Regulator for qualifications offered in England QN 601/3997/3.

1b.　Why choose an OCR A Level in Sociology?

This practical and engaging course has been redeveloped after feedback from teachers and other key stakeholders. The content has been designed to inspire, nurture and develop learners. The most popular aspects of previous qualifications have been retained or enhanced with a stronger global dimension to reflect society today. This qualification is designed to foster the development of critical and reflective thinking with a respect for social diversity; and to encourage an awareness of the importance of social structure and social action in explaining social issues.

Learners are encouraged to develop their own sociological awareness through active involvement with the contemporary social world.

Our A Level in Sociology specification is designed to encourage learners to be inspired, moved and changed by following a broad, coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study and to reflect on their own experience of the social world to enhance their ability to play informed roles within different social contexts. It prepares learners to make informed decisions about further learning opportunities and career choices.

Aims and learning outcomes

The main purpose (objective) of this qualification is to prepare learners by providing a suitable foundation for the study of sociology or related courses in higher education. Equally the purposes of this qualification are to prepare learners intending to pursue careers or further study in social sciences, or as part of a general education.

Our A level specification in Sociology enables learners to:

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

- analyse critically the nature and sources of information and to base reasoned judgements and arguments on evidence

- organise and communicate their knowledge and understanding in different and creative ways, and reach substantiated judgements

- appreciate the significance of theoretical and conceptual issues in sociological debate

- understand and evaluate sociological methodology and a range of research methods through active involvement in the research process

- develop skills that enable individuals to focus on their personal identity, roles and responsibilities within society

- develop a lifelong interest in social issues.

1c.　What are the key features of this specification?

From September 2015, the A Level in Sociology is made up of **three** mandatory components which are externally assessed.

Here are some of the key benefits of our new A Level in Sociology specification for you and your students:

- a straightforward specification with detailed guidance to support delivery

- improved support, resources and more teacher guidance

- strong focus on key sociological themes

- choice for teachers and students with options in Components 01 and 03

- focus on contemporary society

- the introduction of a new exciting section on 'Globalisation and the digital social world'

- the first year of this course is co-teachable with our AS level specification.

1d. How do I find out more information?

If already using OCR specifications you can contact us at: **www.ocr.org.uk**

If not already registered you can find out more information on the benefits of becoming one at: **www.ocr.org.uk**

If you are not yet an approved centre and would like to become one go to: **www.ocr.org.uk**

Find out more?

Ask the Subject Advisor

Email: **sociology@ocr.org.uk**

Telephone: 01223 553998

Join our Sociology community: **www.ocr.org.uk**

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2 The specification overview

2a. Overview of A Level in Sociology (H580)

Learners take all components 01, 02 and 03 to be awarded the OCR A Level in Sociology.

Content Overview	Assessment Overview	
Introducing socialisation, culture and identity Themes developed through the context of one of three options: • Families and relationships • Youth subcultures • Media	Socialisation, culture and identity (01) 90 Marks 1 hour 30 minutes written paper	**30%** of total A level
Research methods and researching social inequalities Understanding social inequalities	Researching and understanding social inequalities (02)* 105 Marks 2 hours 15 minutes written paper	**35%** of total A level
Globalisation and the digital social world Debates explored through a detailed study of one of three options: • Crime and deviance • Education • Religion, belief and faith	Debates in contemporary society (03)* 105 Marks 2 hours 15 minutes written paper	**35%** of total A level

* Indicates synoptic assessment

2b.   Content of A Level in Sociology (H580)

The A level specification content is set out in **three** parts:

1   Key questions – the key question to be explored.

2   Content – sociological themes, concepts, theories and ideas which should be included for each key issue.

3   Learners should – this provides content amplification to explain in more detail what learners need to know for the assessment of this qualification.

Although not directly assessed, learners are encouraged to carry out their own small-scale research projects as a way of enhancing their sociological understanding of methodology, substantive topic areas and core themes.

2c.   Content of Socialisation, culture and identity: (01)

This component introduces learners to the key themes of socialisation, culture and identity and develops these themes through the context of **one** of three options either: Families and relationships, Youth subcultures or Media. These options develop skills that enable individuals to focus on their personal identity,

roles and responsibilities within society and develop a lifelong interest in social issues.

The following tables outline the content that must be studied. This is split into two sections, Section A and Section B.

Section A: Introducing socialisation, culture and identity		
Key questions	**Content**	**Learners should:**
1. What is culture?	Culture, norms and values Types of culture: • subculture • high culture • popular culture • global culture • consumer culture Cultural diversity Cultural hybridity	be able to understand the relative nature of culture, norms and values. Cross-cultural material should be used here.
2. What is socialisation?	Primary and secondary socialisation	be able to link definitions of primary socialisation and secondary socialisation to relevant agencies of socialisation, understanding that socialisation is a lifelong process.

Key questions	Content	Learners should:
cont. **What is socialisation?**	Agencies of socialisation: • family • peer group • media • religion • education • workplace	understand the link between socialisation and the creation of identities.
	Nature/nurture debate	consider the implications of the nature/nurture debate for an understanding of socialisation.
	Formal agencies of social control: • police • law/legal system • courts • government • military Informal agencies of social control: • family • peer group/subcultures • media • religion • education • workplace	explore the overlap between formal and informal social control for work, education and religion.
3. What is identity?	The concept of identity	understand how identities are created including the influence of agencies of socialisation.
	Aspects of identity and the associated cultural characteristics: • ethnicity • nationality • gender • social class • sexuality • age • disability Hybrid identities	understand the different aspects of an individual's identity, their relative importance to individuals and ways in which they may intersect. consider changing identities.

Section B Option 1: Families and relationships		
This option focuses on the family as a central agency of socialisation and a main transmitter of culture in contemporary society. It allows learners to explore contemporary family structures and relationships.		
Key questions	**Content**	**Learners should:**
1. How diverse are modern families?	The diversity of family and household types in the contemporary UK: • nuclear families • extended families • lone parent families • reconstituted families • same-sex families • non-family households	also consider newer/emerging types of families and households.

	Aspects of and reasons for family and household diversity in the contemporary UK, including:
	
	• trends in marriage, divorce and cohabitation
	
	• demographic changes:
	   o birth-rate
	   o family size
	   o age at marriage
	   o age of child-bearing
	   o ageing population
	
	• family diversity in terms of:
	   o social class
	   o ethnicity
	   o sexuality
		have an overview of trends over the last 30 years and consider the key reasons for these changes. Detailed knowledge of statistics on marriage, divorce and demographic changes is not required.

	The ideology of the nuclear family and the theoretical debates about the role and desirability of the nuclear family in contemporary society: • functionalism • New Right • Marxism • feminism • postmodernism Debates about the extent of family diversity in the contemporary UK	consider issues of consensus versus conflict, social order and control in relation to theoretical views of the role of the family in contemporary society. A theoretical approach to considering the extent of family diversity should be taken.

2

Key questions	Content	Learners should:
2. To what extent are roles and relationships within families and households changing?	Roles and relationships between partners and how they are changing, including issues of power	consider a range of issues including the domestic division of labour and the 'dark side' of the family. A theoretical approach should be taken, applying functionalist, Marxist and feminist approaches.
	Roles and relationships between parents and children and how they are changing, including issues of power	consider issues such as the growth of the child-centred family and the extension of childhood.
		consider the impact of the ageing population on the relationship between grandparents, parents and children. A theoretical approach should be taken, applying feminist approaches.

2

Section B Option 2: Youth subcultures		
This option focuses on youth as an important period in the socialisation process when individuals are developing a sense of identity within their peer groups. It allows learners to explore different types of youth subcultures and the roles they may play in society.		
Key questions	**Content**	**Learners should:**
1. How and why are youth culture and subcultures formed?	Theoretical views of the role and formation of youth culture and subcultures: • functionalism • Marxism/neo-Marxism • feminism • postmodernism Subcultures as related to: • social class • gender • ethnicity • hybridity	use illustrative examples of subcultures to explore how and why youth culture and subcultures are formed. consider issues of consensus versus conflict, social order and control in relation to theoretical views of the role and formation of youth culture and subculture.
2. Why do young people participate in deviant subcultures?	Deviant subcultures: • delinquent subcultures • criminal subcultures • spectacular youth subcultures • anti-school subcultures • gangs Patterns and trends in youth deviance related to: • social class • gender • ethnicity Explanations for young people participating in deviant subcultures: • functionalism/New Right • Marxism/neo-Marxism • interactionism • culture and identity The media and youth deviance: • deviance amplification • folk devils • moral panics	consider newer/emerging types of deviant subcultures. consider patterns and trends (within the last 30 years) of youth deviance based on the evidence presented by official statistics. consider both theoretical and identity based explanations, which could include issues of ethnic identity and gender.

Section B Option 3: Media		
This option focuses on how media plays an increasingly important role as an agent of socialisation in contemporary society. It allows learners to explore a range of evidence relating to media representations and media effects.		
Key questions	**Content**	**Learners should:**
1. How are different social groups represented in the media?	Evidence of representations in the media and how far these are changing in relation to: • ethnicity (majority and minority ethnic groups) • gender (masculinity and femininity) • social class (middle, working, upper, under) • age (young and old)	be able to discuss representation of a range of ethnicities. For example learners could consider UK nationalities (Irish, Scottish, Welsh, English) and also newer immigrant groups as well as more established minority ethnic groups.
	Theoretical views of media representations: • Marxism • neo-Marxism • pluralism • feminism • postmodernism	understand explanations for these representations, and any changing representations, utilising theoretical perspectives as appropriate. consider issues of consensus versus conflict, social order and control in relation to theoretical views of media representations. use postmodernism as a critique of other theoretical views.
2. What effect do the media have on audiences?	Theoretical views of media effects: • direct • indirect • active audience The role of the media in deviance amplification and the creation of moral panics	understand a range of theories on the effects of the media on the audience, including: hypodermic syringe; two-step flow; cultural effects; uses and gratifications.

2c. Content of Researching and understanding social inequalities: (02)

This component explores the methods of sociological enquiry and develops knowledge and understanding of contemporary social processes and social change in the context of social inequality and difference. This component aims to foster the development of critical and reflective thinking with a respect for social diversity in terms of social class, gender, ethnicity and age. It develops links between the nature of sociological thought and methods of sociological enquiry.

Although not directly assessed, this component encourages learners to carry out their own small-scale research projects as a way of enhancing their sociological understanding of methodology, substantive topic areas and core themes.

The following tables outline the content that must be studied. This is split into two sections, Section A and Section B.

Section A: Research methods and researching social inequalities
In this section, learners are introduced to a range of methods and sources of data as well as the factors influencing the design of sociological research and the relationship between theory and methods. Learners are encouraged to consider the practical, ethical and theoretical issues arising in sociological research and to apply knowledge of research methods to the particular context of social inequalities.

Key questions	Content	Learners should:
1. What is the relationship between theory and methods?	Positivism: • patterns • trends • objectivity • value freedom • quantitative data Interpretivism: • meanings and experiences • verstehen and empathy • rapport • subjectivity • researcher imposition • reflexivity • qualitative data Key research concepts: • validity • reliability • representativeness • generalisability	understand how social research is guided by theory. use these concepts in an evaluative way when considering the research process and methodological theories.

Key questions	Content	Learners should:
2. What are the main stages of the research process?	Key concepts in the research process: • factors influencing the choice of research topic • aims/hypothesis/research questions • primary data • secondary data • operationalisation • pilot studies • data collection • respondent validation • longitudinal studies • interpretation of data • the relationship between sociology and social policy	consider how sociological research contributes to social policy.
	Sampling process	
	Sampling techniques • random • systematic • stratified • snowball • volunteer • opportunity • purposive • quota	understand the practical, ethical and theoretical factors influencing choice of sampling process. understand the advantages and disadvantages of random and non-random sampling techniques.
	Access and gatekeeping	understand how samples are accessed and the issues with access.
	Ethics	understand ethical considerations such as those used by the British Sociological Association and why ethical principles should be followed.

Key questions	Content	Learners should:
3. Which methods are used in sociological research?	Research methods: • questionnaires • structured interviews • statistical data (official and non-official) • content analysis • observations (participant, non-participant, covert, overt) • unstructured interviews • semi structured interviews • ethnography Quantitative and qualitative data Mixed methods • triangulation • methodological pluralism	consider the uses of research methods in the context of social inequalities.

2

Section B: Understanding social inequalities		
Within this section learners will have the opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding of contemporary patterns and trends of social inequality. Learners are able to engage in theoretical debate, explore conceptual issues and develop skills of analysis and evaluation of sociological research and evidence.		
Key questions	**Content**	**Learners should:**
1. What are the main patterns and trends in social inequality and difference?	Social inequality and difference in relation to: • social class • gender • ethnicity • age	consider the main patterns and trends in relation to work and employment. consider evidence of social inequalities from a range of areas of social life. consider how social inequalities affect life chances.
2. How can patterns and trends in social inequality and difference be explained?	The main sociological explanations of social inequality and difference: • functionalism • Marxism • Weberian • feminism • New Right	have an understanding of the distinctive concepts and ideas associated with each theory.

2c.   Content of Debates in contemporary society: (03)

This component engages learners in theoretical debates and how these relate to a contemporary global society. The component will develop knowledge and understanding of social processes and social change. It develops links between the topics studied in this component, the nature of sociological thought, contemporary social policy and the core themes.

Contemporary and global debates are introduced

through a compulsory topic of 'Globalisation and the digital social world' in Section A, whilst Section B explores them in more depth from a detailed study of **one** of three options: either Crime and deviance, Education, or Religion, belief and faith.

The following tables outline the content that must be studied. This is split into two sections, Section A and Section B.

Section A: Globalisation and the digital social world		
Key questions	**Content**	**Learners should:**
1. What is the relationship between globalisation and digital forms of communication?	Definitions of globalisation Developments in digital forms of communication in a global society: • digital revolution • global village • networked global society • media convergence • social media • virtual communities • digital social networks Applying sociological theories to digital forms of communication: • Marxism • feminism • postmodernism	be aware of the problems with defining globalisation. consider how developments in digital communication are related to social capital. have an overview of how developments in digital forms of communication have been theoretically interpreted.
2. What is the impact of digital forms of communication in a global context?	The impact of digital forms of communication on: • people's identity • social inequalities • relationships The impact of digital forms of communication on culture: • conflict and change • cultural homogenisation • cultural defence/ 'glocalisation'	consider people's identity and social inequalities in relation to: • social class • gender • age consider both the positive and negative impacts of digital forms of communication.

Section B Option 1: Crime and deviance		
This option focuses on debates in contemporary society through a detailed study of crime and deviance. The social construction of crime and deviance are considered and the ways in which crime is socially distributed, explained and reduced. This option introduces a global dimension, with reference to patterns and trends. It aims to give an understanding of different theoretical approaches to the study of crime and deviance.		
Key questions	**Content**	**Learners should:**
1. How are crime and deviance defined and measured?	Definitions: • crime and deviance • social order • social control • the relativity of crime and deviance • the social construction of crime and deviance	consider the relativity of crime and deviance over time, between societies and within societies.
	Measuring crime: • official crime statistics • victim surveys • self-report studies	consider the advantages and disadvantages of each way of measuring crime. have awareness that official crime statistics could include police recorded crime figures and the Crime Survey for England and Wales.
2. What are the patterns and trends in crime?	The social distribution of offending and victimisation: • social class • gender • age • ethnicity Patterns of crime in a global context: • global organised crime • green crime	

Key questions	Content	Learners should:
3. How can crime and deviance be explained?	Theoretical views of crime and deviance: • functionalism • Marxism • neo-Marxism/radical criminology • interactionism • realism (left and right) • New Right • subcultural theories • feminism	consider the explanations of crime and the patterns and trends of offending in relation to social class, gender, age and ethnicity.

4. How can crime and deviance be reduced?	Social policy and crime:
	• left wing:
	  o social and community crime prevention and punishment
	  o restorative justice
	  o structural changes in society
	• right wing:
	  o situational crime prevention
	  o environmental crime prevention
	  o retributive justice
	  o punitive punishment and control
		consider policies relating to crime prevention, punishment and control.

2

	Section B Option 2: Education	
This option focuses on debates in contemporary society through a detailed study of education. Learners have the opportunity to explore the role of education in society and patterns of educational achievement. Learners can also reflect on global educational inequalities as well as inequalities within the contemporary UK. It aims to give an understanding of different theoretical approaches to the study of education.		
Key questions	**Content**	**Learners should:**
1. What is the role of education in society?	Theoretical views of the role of education: • functionalism • Marxism • liberal • social democratic • New Right • feminism Theoretical explanations of the relationship between education and work: • functionalism • Marxism • New Right	consider work-based training and vocationalism post-1988 as well as the traditional theoretical explanations of the relationship between education and work.
2. What are the patterns and trends of educational inequalities?	Differential educational achievement by: • social class • ethnicity • gender Educational inequalities in a global context: • the global 'gender apartheid' in education • the disparity in educational provision around the world	consider the inter-relationship between social class, gender and ethnicity.

Key questions	Content	Learners should:
3. How can differential educational achievement be explained?	Explanations for differential educational achievement: • inside and outside school factors • structural, material and cultural factors • theoretical approaches • functionalism • Marxism • interactionism • social democratic • feminism • New Right	consider differential educational achievement in relation to social class, gender and ethnicity.
4. How has the UK education system changed?	The diversity of educational provision Government policies from 1988 onwards, including vocational and work-based training Ideological influences on government educational policy: • New Right • social democratic The impact of educational policies on: • competition, diversity and choice • raising standards • equality and equality of opportunity	consider different types of educational institutions, including different types of school. consider a range of policies from 1988 onwards. Any contemporary educational policy will be rewarded where relevant. explore the links between educational policies and ideological influences. consider educational policy in relation to gender, class and ethnicity.

2

	Section B Option 3: Religion, belief and faith	
This option focuses on debates in contemporary society through a detailed study of religion, belief and faith. Learners have the opportunity to explore the role of religion in an increasingly global society. Learners can also consider patterns and trends of religiosity both in the UK and on a more global scale. It aims to give an understanding of different theoretical approaches to the study of religion, belief and faith.		
Key questions	**Content**	**Learners should:**
1. How are religion, belief and faith defined and measured?	Defining religion, faith and belief Different types of religious institutions and movements: • churches and denominations • sects and cults • new religious movements • new age movements • religious fundamentalism Measuring religion, faith and belief: • religious belief • religiosity • belief without belonging • vicarious religion	consider the complexity of measuring religion, belief and faith and consider the advantages and disadvantages of each measure.
2. What is the role of religion, belief and faith?	Theoretical views of the role of religion, belief and faith for the individual and for society: • functionalism • Marxism • neo-Marxism • Weberianism • feminism • phenomenology • postmodernism Theoretical views of the relationship between religion and social change: • functionalism • Marxism • neo-Marxism • Weberianism	consider the theoretical debate on whether religion is positive or negative and whether religion is a conservative force, or a force for change.

Key questions	Content	Learners should:
3. What are the patterns and trends of religion, belief and faith?	Patterns and trends in relation to: • social class • gender • ethnicity • age Religion, belief and faith in a global context: • change in the significance of religion in societies • differences in the significance of religion between societies	consider the resurgence and decline of religion in societies.
4. Is secularisation occurring?	Debates on secularisation in relation to: • religious belief • religious practice • power and influence of religion in society Theoretical views on secularisation: • pro-secularisation theorists • anti-secularisation theorists, including postmodern views Religion and social policy	consider evidence on global patterns of religion in relation to the secularisation debate. consider government policies in relation to religious equality, religious discrimination and religious freedom.

2d.   Prior learning, knowledge and progression

No prior knowledge of the subject is required. The specification builds on, but does not depend on, the knowledge, understanding and skills specified for GCSE Sociology.

Throughout the course of study, learners are encouraged to develop a critical awareness of sociological concepts and issues in contemporary society. This specification is designed to foster the development of critical and reflective thinking with

a respect for social diversity; and to encourage an awareness of the importance of social structure and social action in explaining social issues.

The specification therefore provides a suitable foundation for the study of sociology or related courses in Higher Education. Equally, it is suitable for learners intending to pursue careers or further study in social sciences, or as part of a course of general education.

3 Assessment of OCR A Level in Sociology

3a. Forms of assessment

The A Level in Sociology is a linear qualification with 100% external assessment.

This qualification consists of **three** examined components. Both Sections A and B of all three components will test all three Assessment Objectives.

Component 01:

Socialisation, culture and identity

Section A: Introducing socialisation, culture and identity

A mix of short and medium tariff compulsory questions, some based on source material.

Section B: Options

Learners choose one from a choice of three options (either Families and relationships, Youth subcultures or Media)

Within each option, there will be three questions that will test the quality of extended responses via a levels of response mark scheme.

Component 02:

Researching and understanding social inequalities

Section A: Research methods and researching social inequalities

A mix of short and medium tariff compulsory questions, some based on source material.

Section B: Understanding social inequalities

There will be two compulsory essay questions that will test the quality of extended responses via a levels of response mark scheme.

Component 03:

Debates in contemporary society

Section A: Globalisation and the digital social world

A mix of short and medium tariff compulsory questions, some based on source material.

Section B: Options

Learners choose one from a choice of three options (Crime and deviance, Education, or Religion, belief and faith)

Within each option, there will be three questions that will test the quality of extended responses via a levels of response mark scheme.

3b. Assessment objectives (AO)

There are three assessment objectives in OCR's A Level in Sociology.

These are detailed in the table below. Learners are expected to demonstrate their ability to:

	Assessment Objective	Weighting Range
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: • sociological theories, concepts and evidence • sociological research methods	35 – 45%
AO2	Apply sociological theories, concepts, evidence and research methods to a range of issues	30 – 40%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate sociological theories, concepts, evidence and research methods in order to: • present arguments • make judgements • draw conclusions	20 – 30%

AO weightings in A Level in Sociology

The relationship between the assessment objectives
and the components are shown in the following table:

Component	% of A level		
	AO1	AO2	AO3
Socialisation, culture and identity (H580/01)	40 – 45%	40 – 45%	15 – 20%
Researching and understanding social inequalities (H580/02)	30 – 35%	30 – 35%	35 – 40%
Debates in contemporary society (H580/03)	40 – 45%	20 – 25%	30 – 35%

3c. Assessment availability

There will be one examination series available each year in May/June to **all** learners. This specification will be certificated from the June 2017 examination series onwards.

3d. Retaking the qualification

Learners can retake the qualification as many times as they wish. They retake all components of the qualification.

3e. Assessment of extended response

The assessment materials for this qualification provide learners with the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured. The marks for extended responses are integrated into the marking criteria.

3f. Synoptic assessment

Synoptic assessment draws together the knowledge, understanding and skills learnt in different aspects of the A level Sociology course. It includes the explicit assessment of understanding of the connections between the nature of sociological thought; methods of sociological enquiry; and the two core themes using higher order skills.

Synoptic assessment is included in both Component 02 and Component 03.

Synoptic learning in sociology engages learners in theoretical debate while encouraging an active involvement in the research process. It fosters a critical awareness of contemporary social processes and change.

Learners are encouraged to think holistically and develop their skills of thinking as a sociologist.

3g. Calculating qualification results

A learner's overall qualification grade for A Level in Sociology will be calculated by adding together their marks from the three components taken to give their total weighted mark. This mark will then be compared to the qualification level grade boundaries for the qualification for the relevant exam series to determine the learner's overall qualification grade.

4 Admin: what you need to know

The information in this section is designed to give an overview of the processes involved in administering this qualification so that you can speak to your exams officer. All of the following processes require you to submit something to OCR by a specific deadline.

More information about the processes and deadlines involved at each stage of the assessment cycle can be found in the Administration area of the OCR website.

OCR's *Admin overview* is available on the OCR website at **http://www.ocr.org.uk/administration**.

4a. Pre-assessment

Estimated entries

Estimated entries are your best projection of the number of learners who will be entered for a qualification in a particular series. Estimated entries should be submitted to OCR by the specified deadline. They are free and do not commit your centre in any way.

Final entries

Final entries provide OCR with detailed data for each learner, showing each assessment to be taken. It is essential that you use the correct entry, considering the relevant entry rules.

Final entries must be submitted to OCR by the published deadlines or late entry fees will apply.

All learners taking A level in Sociology must be entered using the entry code H580.

Entry code	Title	Component code	Component title	Assessment type
H580	Sociology	01	Socialisation, culture and identity	External Assessment
		02	Researching and understanding social inequalities	External Assessment
		03	Debates in contemporary society	External Assessment

4b. Accessibility and special consideration

Reasonable adjustments and access arrangements allow learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do, without changing the demands of the assessment. Applications for these should be made before the examination series. Detailed information about eligibility for access arrangements can be found in the JCQ *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.

Special consideration is a post-assessment adjustment to marks or grades to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time the assessment was taken.

Detailed information about eligibility for special consideration can be found in the JCQ *A guide to the special consideration process*.

4c. External assessment arrangements

Regulations governing examination arrangements are contained in the JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations*.

Head of centre annual declaration

The Head of Centre is required to provide a declaration to the JCQ as part of the annual NCN update, conducted in the autumn term, to confirm that the centre is meeting all of the requirements detailed in the specification.

Any failure by a centre to provide the Head of Centre Annual Declaration will result in your centre status being suspended and could lead to the withdrawal of our approval for you to operate as a centre.

Private Candidates

Private candidates may enter for OCR assessments.

A private candidate is someone who pursues a course of study independently but takes an examination or assessment at an approved examination centre. A private candidate may be a part-time student, someone taking a distance learning course, or someone being tutored privately. They must be based in the UK.

Private candidates need to contact OCR approved centres to establish whether they are prepared to host them as a private candidate. The centre may charge for this facility and OCR recommends that the arrangement is made early in the course.

Further guidance for private candidates may be found on the OCR website: **http://www.ocr.org.uk**.

4d.   Results and certificates

Grade scale

A level qualifications are graded on the scale: A*, A, B, C, D, E, where A* is the highest. Learners who fail to reach the minimum standard for E will be Unclassified (U). Only subjects in which grades A* to E are attained will be recorded on certificates.

Results

Results are released to centres and learners for information to allow any queries to be resolved **before** certificates are issued.

Centres will have access to the following results' information for each learner:

- the grade for the qualification

- the raw mark for each component

- the total weighted mark for the qualification.

The following supporting information will be available:

- raw mark grade boundaries for each component

- weighted mark grade boundaries for each qualification.

Until certificates are issued, results are deemed to be provisional and may be subject to amendment. A learner's final results will be recorded on an OCR certificate. The qualification title will be shown on the certificate as 'OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Sociology'.

4e.   Post-results services

A number of post-results services are available:

- **Enquiries about results** – If you are not happy with the outcome of a learner's results, centres may submit an enquiry about results.

- **Missing and incomplete results** – This service should be used if an individual subject result for a learner is missing, or the learner has been omitted entirely from the results supplied.

- **Access to scripts** – Centres can request access to marked scripts.

4f.   Malpractice

Any breach of the regulations for the conduct of examinations and coursework may constitute malpractice (which includes maladministration) and must be reported to OCR as soon as it is detected.

Detailed information on malpractice can be found in the JCQ *Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments: Policies and Procedures.*

5 Appendices

5a. Overlap with other qualifications

There is no significant overlap between the content of this specification and those for other Advanced GCE qualifications.

5b. Avoidance of bias

The A level qualification and subject criteria have been reviewed in order to identify any feature which could disadvantage candidates who share a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010. All reasonable steps have been taken to minimise any such disadvantage.

Your checklist

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

- [ ] Bookmark **ocr.org.uk/alevelsociology** for all the latest resources, information and news on AS and A Level Sociology

- [ ] Be among the first to hear about support materials and resources as they become available – register for Sociology updates at **ocr.org.uk/updates**

- [ ] Find out about our professional development at **cpdhub.ocr.org.uk**

- [ ] View our range of skills guides for use across subjects and qualifications at **ocr.org.uk/skillsguides**

- [ ] Discover our new online past paper service at **ocr.org.uk/examcreator**

- [ ] Learn more about Active Results at **ocr.org.uk/activeresults**

- [ ] Join our Sociology social network community for teachers at **social.ocr.org.uk**

Download high-quality, exciting and innovative AS and A Level Sociology resources from ocr.org.uk/alevelsociology

Free resources and support for our A Level Sociology qualification, developed through collaboration between our Sociology Subject Specialists, teachers and other subject experts, are available from our website. You can also contact our Sociology Subject Specialists for specialist advice, guidance and support, giving you individual service and assistance whenever you need it.

Meet the team at ocr.org.uk/sociologyteam and contact them at:
01223 553998
sociology@ocr.org.uk
@OCRexams

To stay up to date with all the relevant news about our AS and A Levels, register for updates at ocr.org.uk/updates

Sociology community

The social network is a free platform where teachers can engage with each other – and with us – to find and offer guidance, discover and share ideas, best practice and a range of Sociology support materials.
To sign up, go to social.ocr.org.uk

follow us on

facebook.com/
ocrexams

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company/ocr

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youtube.com/
ocrexams

ocr.org.uk/alevelsociology

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