Thank you for choosing Sociology A Level. The most important thing this subject will give you is a ‘sociological imagination’: the ability to think outside the familiar routines of our daily lives in order to look at them with fresh, critical eyes. Once you have discovered Sociology, there is no going back! We are very much looking forward to embarking on this journey with you. The chances are very high that you have not studied the subject before and will therefore have a lot of questions: below we try to answer some of them for you.

1. Who will teach me?

There are five staff in the Social Science department, all of whom teach Sociology (though not necessarily in any given year). Ms Williams and Ms Zoil are both full time; Mr Dougherty works on Thursdays and Fridays and Mrs Harris and Mr White are both on the Leadership team and so have limited timetables. Our office is very conveniently located opposite Sixth Form Central.

2. What will I learn?

Sociology gives you a deep insight into four main topic areas focused mainly on contemporary Britain. Through all these topics run two core themes: socialisation, culture and identity; and social differentiation, power and stratification. In other words: what binds us together? And what shapes the experience of different groups of individuals? See link to the full specification [here](#). The actual specification is quite broad brush, so this useful additional document, also produced by AQA, gives a bit more detail.

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*Please note: we have no current plans to change the options listed above; but if results suggest you might do better on a different topic, we may change the options that we teach.*

We will of course be going beyond the specification to extend your learning and to give you the deep insights needed for top grades. There is no coursework in Sociology, but you do need to develop a sense of how sociological research is conducted, so we will give you opportunities along the way to carry out your own research.

2. How can I get a good head start in Sociology?

Use the A Level Mindset in Sociology form ([here](#)) for ideas about extended reading, watching and habits to get you off to a good start. The single most useful thing you can do is to start (if you haven’t already) reading or following quality news media so you have a good
feel for what’s going on. The BBC website is informative and well balanced, but probably the best paper for sociological issues is The Guardian, which has a very good archive of material and which is still free online (though you may, like us, want to donate to keep it that way!) Documentaries on current affairs will also help give you an informed view.

You should read over your notes after each lesson, making sure you fully understand what we have covered and noting any questions you may have for next lesson. Keep a glossary from the outset - there is a lot of technical terminology in this subject and you need to master this vocabulary to do well!

It is also never too early to start making revision notes! Use flash cards, mindmaps and thinking maps to summarise key ideas and keep these safe - they will be invaluable in the run up to your exams.

The Library is well stocked with books in our subjects, so make sure that you check out what it has to offer at an early stage. Lots of extra reading and links (eg to useful articles, MOOCs and Ted talks) will also be suggested on the Google Classroom (see 7 below).

3. How am I tested in Sociology?

The final exam will be three two hour written papers, each of equal weight (80 marks). They comprise a mix of questions, but the main focus is on extended writing, with essays up to 30 marks (45 minutes). Questions will often be accompanied by a short introductory piece, which you need to link to in your answers. Many of the questions require you to make links between different parts of a topic area, so it is important that you keep thinking about the ‘big picture’.

During your course, you will be given regular assessments, typically in the form of an essay. You will also have extended end of topic tests. It is important that you prepare thoroughly for every assessment as these will form the basis for decisions about tracking and UCAS predicted grades.

4. How do I know how well I am doing?

You should track your progress and the feedback you are given using this progress form. Please print this out and keep it up to date in your folder. You are also very welcome to discuss your progress with your teachers.

5. How do I organise my folders?

It is up to you to find a way to manage your notes - they are your notes, after all - but you need to ensure that you are bringing to lessons notes from the current topic and that you have a separate section for marked work, your progress record and other general documents.

You may sometimes be asked to produce at short notice all your work for a work scrutiny, so you need to make sure that it is easy to assemble all your notes in one place in a logical way.
You should keep all marked work, even if the grade you get is disappointing. Revisiting old mistakes is an important part of learning!

6. What do I need to bring to lessons?

You should always come fully prepared for lessons. That means you need to bring your own stationery, textbook, and your notes/folders.

7. What other resources are there?

You will be invited to join Google ‘Classroom’, our online learning system. There will be a classroom for general Sociology interest and your teachers may set one up for their particular parts of the course. Please make sure that you leave notifications switched on, and that you regularly check these sites.

8. I have missed a lesson. What should I do?

Catch up by borrowing notes from someone who is in the same class as you, checking Classroom where appropriate and doing any necessary reading. If you still are not sure about topics covered, see the relevant member of staff. Please do not expect staff to e-mail you details of missed work as a matter of course.

If you miss an assessment, it will be your responsibility to arrange with your teacher to catch up under timed conditions during a free period in school.

9. I don’t understand something. What should I do?

You should always feel comfortable asking for help in lessons, and speaking to your teacher(s) afterwards. If you think you need help beyond what is feasible in the classroom, then you should come along to surgery, which is held on Mondays in B006 at 2pm. If we feel that you need extra help or clarification, we may invite you to attend.

10. I want to do Sociology or a related course at University.

Great! Please let staff know what your plans are. We are always interested in learning more about what different universities offer on their courses, so it would be really helpful to get your views after you have been on visits and open days.

Ms Williams
May 2021