AQA A Level Sociology: Student and Parent Guide

This guide provides a clear overview of what students will learn in AQA A Level Sociology, why it matters, and examples of powerful knowledge they will gain throughout the course.

Year 12 Overview

1. 1. Education with Theory and Methods

- What students learn: How education systems work, how different groups experience education, and how sociologists study education.
- Why it matters: Helps students understand inequality and the role of education in society.
- Powerful knowledge: Functionalist (Durkheim), Marxist (Althusser), and Feminist views; research methods such as interviews and observations.

2. 2. Families and Households

- What students learn: How family structures have changed, roles within families, and demographic trends.
- Why it matters: Encourages understanding of social change and diversity.
- Powerful knowledge: Functionalist (Parsons), Marxist (Engels), Feminist (Oakley) perspectives; concepts such as the symmetrical family, the social construction of childhood and the domestic division of labour.

Year 13 Overview

3. 3. Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods

- What students learn: Why people commit crimes, how society responds, and how sociologists research crime.
- Why it matters: Builds critical thinking about justice, inequality, and social control.
- Powerful knowledge: Theories of crime (Merton, Cohen, Becker), concepts such as moral panic, and advanced methods like official statistics and ethnography.

4. The media

- What students learn: The role of the media in modern society
- Why it matters: Encourages understanding of issues around the power of the media, its ownership and and the ways in which ideologies are spread and stereotypes confirmed/denied through the media.
- Powerful knowledge: Theories of media around ownership, audiences and representations with links made between media and social policy development.

Skills and Assessment

- Students develop critical thinking, essay writing, and research skills.
- Assessment includes three 2-hour exams with short answers, 10-mark applications, and 20- and 30-mark essays.