



Shenley Brook End Sixth Form
Summer transition tasks for
A Level Sociology

Due date Monday 11 September 2023

Sociology AQA

Objectives: Essay writing & Research- Compare the sociological perspectives (Functionalist/Marxist/Feminist/New Right) and **Evaluate which perspective is the most useful in understanding society and why.**

Tasks

Submit Essay on Comparing Sociological Theories (Use research and notes to help you as well as the essay writing guide on the next few pages as guidance). The essay should be a minimum of 2 sides and only hand written.

Resources/Research

AQA A LEVEL SOCIOLOGY BOOK ONE INCLUDING AS LEVEL-Trobe et al THEORY AND METHODS TOPIC

Wider Reading

[Sociological Theory: Functionalism \(Sociology Theory & Methods\) - YouTube](#)

[Sociological Theory - Feminism \(Sociology Theory & Methods\) - YouTube](#)

[Sociological Theory - Marxism \(Sociology Theory & Methods\) - YouTube](#)

[Research Methods: Interpretivism \(Sociology Theory & Methods\) - YouTube](#)

[Research Methods: Positivism \(Sociology Theory & Methods\) - YouTube](#)

You must spend at least 8 hours of work time on this transition work

Submission Date

Monday 11th September

Sociology Essay Writing Guide

Step 1: Read the question

Most essays in sociology require you to write a **minimum** of four developed paragraphs. You should try and make four distinct points – one per paragraph.

‘Command’ words in questions are important, but ...

... so are words which set the context for a specific question

Look out for questions such as: ‘Assess the contribution of ...to our understanding of ... **today**.’

‘Does this approach still help our understanding of ... today?’

Students often fail to answer the whole question, a result of the ‘diving straight in’ syndrome / failure to take time to plan responses

Small words can be important e.g. ‘religious **beliefs** and **practices**’, ‘**types** and **amounts** of crime’, ‘functionalist **theory** and **method**’

Another small word – ‘**today**’ – answers that are “timeless” limit the AO3 marks as they do not address the whole question .

Good students do not take positions stated in quotes as a ‘given’, but ‘question the question’ and ‘question the item’.

Need to understand how theory / perspectives and research method issues permeate sociological enquiry and debate in paper 1 and 3.

Students need to locate the sociology in contemporary society and use up-to-date evidence – look for words like ‘today’ in questions

Investigation of societies outside the UK is a must

Students need to know strengths and weaknesses of perspectives, theory, methodology, etc., but also must be able to apply and evaluate these in the context of the world today

More developed AO3 -
More sophistication, depth
and rigour

**Use the Items as ‘hooks’ to assist with your planning of extended answers
– NOTE: There are more items in year 2 e.g. for the 10 marker**

Introduction

Referring closely to the essay title, explain what it is about and what key issues or arguments it raises that you intend to discuss. You may need to briefly define some key concepts in the title. Get into the essay as quickly as possible - don't waffle.

Main Body

Every paragraph should be explicitly linked to the essay title. You should be able to develop an argument or debate between a range of views, contrasting one with another.

Linking phrases (see 'Suggestions for starting your paragraphs so that you gain marks for analysis and evaluation') will show the examiner that you are developing the debate and assessing the evidence.

ARGUMENT

Each paragraph should begin with a point that directly addresses key words in the question and moves the debate forward with linking phrases such as 'however', 'in contrast to this' 'by comparison'

PERSPECTIVE

Suggest which perspective(s) would agree with this argument

EVIDENCE

Bring in evidence from sociological studies, statistics or the Item to back up the point you are making

CRITICISM

The best essays evaluate all the way through an essay; criticise your:

argument (too deterministic/ doesn't take account of...)

Evidence: (old data, based on small-scale study, doesn't take account of...)

Perspective: (too deterministic, doesn't take account of the influence of social structures, doesn't take account of effects of gender/ ethnicity/class,...)

Conclusion

Don't just repeat what you have said. Draw all the strands of the debate together and answer the question. Or point out that the evidence is inconclusive and state why - but focus on the key words in the question. (see 'how to produce an excellent conclusion')

| P.E.E.L LANGUAGE | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| POINT | EVIDENCE | EXPLANATION | LINK |
| It has been suggested that... | The evidence clearly shows... | The source clearly indicates... | With this in mind, it is evident that... |
| It is believed that... | This is supported by... | This shows us that... | Therefore, it is evident that... |
| Some people argue that... | This is demonstrated by... | It is clear from this that... | All this evidence demonstrates... |
| Many people believe that... | The source tells us that... | The evidence explains that... | |
| One argument is that... | | This supports the argument by... | |
| One school of thought is that... | | It appears that... | |
| | | This demonstrates that... | |

Step 3: Write and structure your essay academically.

Make sure you use sentence starters and link sentences to show your train of thought. You should try and attempt to show all of the assessment objectives in your writing.

- AO1 – Can you say what the similarities and differences are within the different cultures?
- AO2 – Can you apply some of the sociological concepts within your writing?
- AO3 – Can you show that you are able to analyse and evaluate ideas, concepts, evidence in order to present arguments, make judgements, draw conclusions?

| | | |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| The relevance of this to the question is that | From the _____ perspective | The contrast between |
| Support for this is evidenced by | This can be applied to | This is confirmed by |
| The usefulness of | An argument for | This provides a balance to |
| This is significant because | This does not take account of | However |
| Alternatively | A different interpretation | The problem with this |
| Cannot be explained by | On the contrary | It makes little sense because |
| Having weighed up the evidence | The weight of evidence suggest | 'another use of |
| 'a major contribution was to | This means/does not mean | As shown by |

The PEEEL template is still useful, but needs to be more developed

Point (AO1)

Explanation (AO1)

Evidence (AO2/3)

Evaluation (AO3)

In a PEEEL paragraph you are hitting all the AOs – you are outlining concepts, applying concepts to topics/evidence and evaluating. This is the best method to use if you want top bands in your extended writing answers