



Learner Guide

Cambridge IGCSE™ / Cambridge O Level Sociology 0495 / 2251

For examination from 2020



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About this guide

This guide explains what you need to know about your Cambridge IGCSE / O Level Sociology course and examinations. You should use this guide alongside the support of your teacher.

It will help you to:

- ✓ understand what skills you should develop by taking this Cambridge IGCSE / O Level course
- ✓ understand how you will be assessed
- ✓ understand what we are looking for in the answers you write
- ✓ plan your revision programme
- ✓ revise, by providing revision tips and an interactive revision checklist (Section 5).

Cambridge Assessment International Education prepares learners for life, helping them develop an informed curiosity and a lasting passion for learning.

In line with this ethos, the Cambridge IGCSE / O Level Sociology course will help you to gain a better understanding of how we become who we are. You will be able to analyse human behaviour in your own society, between different cultures and across different periods of time. You will start to understand the importance of methodological choices for sociologists and try some out for yourself. You will be able to use all of this new-found sociological knowledge and evidence to challenge your own beliefs and the beliefs of other people about issues such as equality, education, the family and crime.

Sociology will open your mind and help you to become a successful Cambridge learner: confident, responsible, reflective, innovative and engaged.

Section 1: Syllabus content – what you need to know about

This section gives you an outline of the syllabus content for this course. Ask your teacher for more detail about each topic. You can also find more detail in the revision checklists in this guide.

The Cambridge Sociology syllabus is made up of seven units of study which explore the nature of social relationships, processes and structures.

The first three of these study units are assessed on Paper 1 and you should study all of these. The remaining four optional units are assessed on Paper 2 and you must study at least two of these. Your teacher will inform you which specific units you will be learning about.

Don't forget to save this file to keep a record for yourself.

Component	Units	Content
Paper 1	All 3 of these units: Unit 1: Theory and methods Unit 2: Culture, identity and socialisation Unit 3: Social inequality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do different sociologists interpret society? • How do sociologists study society? • What types of information and data do sociologists use? • What is the relationship between the individual and society? • How do we learn to be human? • What is social stratification? • What are the main features of social inequality and how are these created?
Paper 2	A minimum of two of these optional units: Unit 4: Family Unit 5: Education Unit 6: Crime, deviance and social control Unit 7: Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the different types of family? • How are family roles changing? • What are the changes affecting the family? • What is the function of education? • What factors help to explain differences in educational achievement? • What are crime, deviance and social control? • What are the patterns of crime? • What are the explanations of crime? • Who controls the media? • What is the influence of the media?

Section 2: How you will be assessed

You will be assessed at the end of the course by two examination papers:

- Paper 1
- Paper 2

Find out from your teacher which two optional units you will be studying for Paper 2.

Components at a glance

This table summarises the key information about each examination paper. You can find details and advice on how to approach each component in the 'About each paper' sub-section.

Component	How long and how many marks	Skills assessed	Details	Percentage of qualification
Paper 1	2 hours (including 15 minutes reading time) 80 marks	AO1: Knowledge and understanding AO2: Interpretation of evidence AO3: Analysis and evaluation	You answer two questions from a choice of three: one compulsory data response question from Section A and one optional structured question from either Section B or Section C.	54%
Paper 2	1 hour 45 minutes (including 15 minutes reading time) 70 marks	AO1: Knowledge and understanding AO2: Interpretation of evidence AO3: Analysis and evaluation	You answer two optional structured questions from a choice of four. Questions may also draw on knowledge from the units in Paper 1.	46%

About each paper

It is important that you understand the different types of question in each paper and how you should approach them.

Paper 1

This examination paper is comprised of three questions – you answer the first compulsory question and then one other question.

- Paper 1 is worth 80 marks and you will have two hours (including 15 minutes reading time).
- Plan out your timings carefully. You will have approximately one hour for Question 1 and 45 minutes for Question 2 or 3.
- Remember in Question 1 the importance of reading and analysing the source material carefully before you start. You will have just over a mark a minute for your responses.

Unit 1: Theory and methods

- How do different sociologists interpret society?
- How do sociologists study and research society?
- What types of information and data do sociologists use?

This unit will form Question 1 on Paper 1 of your examination paper. It is compulsory and will involve you completing some data response and analysis. There will be seven parts to the question that you must answer. It is therefore crucial that you use your reading time wisely here and actively read and engage with the data provided before you start to answer any of the questions set.

Unit 2: Culture, identity and socialisation

- What is the relationship between the individual and society?
- How do we learn to be human?

This unit considers the relationship between the individual and society and how far humans are shaped and influenced by social processes and institutions, e.g. the family and media. This will be Question 2 on your examination paper and will be a five-part structured question.

Unit 3: Social inequality

- What is social stratification?
- What are the main features of social inequality and how are these created?

This unit explores the way society is stratified in all parts of the world. You will look at social inequalities, why they exist and how they are created and maintained. Gender, ethnicity, social class and age are the key areas of focus here. This will be Question 3 on your examination paper and will be a five-part structured question.

Please note: You MUST answer Question 1 and EITHER Question 2 OR Question 3.

Question 1 (45 marks)

This question will include source material and is made up of seven sub-questions, a–g. These build up in difficulty and some will require you to refer to and interpret data and information from the source(s). Sources may be text-based, image-based, data-based or a combination of these.

Command words you can expect to see in Question 1 may include: identify, describe, explain, and to what extent. A typical set of sub-questions for question one might look something like this:

Command words	Explanation
a) Using Source X, identify ... (2 marks)	Here you are being asked to pick something out of the source. No long answer is required.
b) Identify two ... (2 marks)	Here the source is not referred to in the question so you do not need to explicitly refer to it. Make sure, though, that the two 'things' you have identified are different and clearly labelled. Again, no description is required as the command word doesn't ask for this.
c) Using Source X, describe ... (4 marks)	Here the command word requires you to say more. As well as identifying something you need to say something about it. You are also being asked to refer to the source so make sure that you do this.
d) Describe two ... (4 marks)	Just like in 1(b) you need to ensure that you have clearly labelled your two different points. Then you need to unpack each of them – make sure you're not just identifying them.
e) Describe two ... and two ... (8 marks)	The requirement is the same here as for 1(d) except there are two parts to the question. Again, just make sure you're labelling carefully and saying enough.
f) Explain why ... (10 marks)	This answer has a change of command word that signals that the difficulty level of the question has increased. In an explanation you are not just looking to provide the examiner with information on something, you are also aiming to give reasons for why something happens.
g) To what extent ...? (15 marks)	Whilst focusing on sociological research and investigations, this is still an essay question. Therefore, as in all the other 15 mark questions, you need to have a range of points on both sides of the debate (aim for 3 of each) that are evidenced sociologically. These points all need to be developed and discussed in some detail and your answer should finish with a focused conclusion in which you make a judgement on the claim in the question.

Question 2 or 3 (35 marks)

You will answer **either** Question 2 **or** Question 3. These questions will be made up of five sub-questions, a–e. As with Question 1, these build in difficulty as they progress.

Command words you can expect to see in Question 2 and 3 include: what is meant by, describe, explain how, explain why, and to what extent.

Command words	Explanation
a) What is meant by ...? (2 marks)	You are being asked to provide a definition of a sociological key term or concept here so make sure that it is accurate and precise and that you include two elements to your answer in order to score both marks available. An example can often be useful for your second element. So, the question 'what is meant by the term socialisation' might produce an answer that said: "Socialisation is the process where we learn society's norms and values. This can be taught by our families". As you can see, there are two clear and accurate parts to this answer, therefore two marks would be awarded.
b) Describe two ... (4 marks)	You are being asked to say something about two different things here. In simple terms, you will one get 1 mark for an accurate identification of something relevant to the question and another mark for what you say about this. Then repeat the process for the remaining two marks.
c) Explain how ... (6 marks)	Examiners will be looking for a range of points here (aim for three) that you are able to discuss sociologically. Make sure that you are developing the ideas that you are discussing with sociological concepts, evidence and theory wherever possible.
d) Explain why... (8 marks)	This is a similar question to the part (c) question, but the examiners will be focusing more specifically on the sociological quality of your answer. Aim for three or four fully developed points, each one substantiated with sociological evidence and always focused explicitly on what the question is asking about. As this isn't an essay question, no conclusion is necessary so don't waste time on this.
e) To what extent ...? (15 marks)	This is your extended essay-style question, so as well as the quality of your response, you also need to think about constructing a logical and coherent argument. While an introduction is not essential, a conclusion is expected to make a judgement on the claim in the question. The 'rules' remain the same as for all 15 mark questions, so the examiners will be looking for range, depth, development and sociological engagement. Follow the advice given in order to be successful here.

Paper 2

This paper comprises of four optional questions on the four units outlined below. You must answer questions on **two** of the units that you have studied – your teacher will guide you on this. Each question has five sub-parts to it and is structured from a–e. The difficulty and demand increases as the question progresses.

- Paper 2 is worth 70 marks and you will have 1 hour 45 minutes (including 15 minutes reading time). This works out at 45 minutes per question.
- Each question is marked out of 35 so you know that you have a little more than a mark a minute as your guide.
- Use your reading time to plan out what you are going to say before you start writing, particularly for the essay questions.

Command words you can expect to see in Questions 1 to 4 include: what is meant by, describe, explain how, explain why, and to what extent.

a) What is meant by ...? – 2 marks

b) Describe two ... – 4 marks

c) Explain how ... – 6 marks

d) Explain why... – 8 marks

e) To what extent ...? – 15 marks

Unit 4: Family

- What are the different types of family?
- How are family roles changing?
- What are the changes affecting the family?

This optional unit enables you to explore the sociology of the family including definitions, structure, variations and alternatives. Changing roles and relationships within families will also be considered. This will be Question 1 on your examination paper.

Unit 5: Education

- What is the function of education?
- What factors help to explain differences in educational achievement?

This optional unit considers the influence of education on the individual and society. This includes the role of education, the main changes in education and patterns of educational achievement in relation to gender, ethnicity and social class. This will be Question 2 on your examination paper.

Unit 6: Crime, deviance and social control

- What are crime, deviance and social control?
- What are the patterns of crime?
- What are the explanations of crime and deviance?

This optional unit considers what we mean by criminal, deviant and normal behaviour in different social contexts. This includes definitions and explanations of crime and deviance and patterns of crime. This will be Question 3 on your examination paper.

Unit 7: Media

- Who controls the media?
- What is the influence of the media?

This optional unit examines contemporary culture and communication through the media. Key areas that you will study include the nature and content of the media, the influence of the media and developments in new media. This will be Question 4 on your examination paper.

Section 3: What skills will be assessed

The areas of knowledge, understanding and skills that you will be assessed on are called **assessment objectives** (AO)

- AO1 – Knowledge and understanding
- AO2 – Interpretation of evidence
- AO3 – Analysis and evaluation

Assessment objectives (AO)	What does the AO mean?	What do you need to be able to do?
AO1 Knowledge and understanding 35–40% of total marks in Paper 1 and 2	This assessment objective looks at your sociological knowledge and understanding. (Theory, concepts, terms and evidence). Possible command words might be: 'identify', 'define', 'what is meant by...'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • show your knowledge and understanding of different sociological topics (e.g. the family and the media) • understand and apply sociological terms and concepts (e.g. dual-worker family, socialisation, etc.) • understand sociological theories (e.g. feminism) and the considerations sociologists must take when designing a research enquiry.
AO2 Interpretation of evidence 30–35% of total marks in Paper 1 and 2	This assessment objective looks at your ability to interpret sociological evidence. Possible command words might be: 'describe'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • show awareness of the main methods of sociological research methods and evidence and what they are used for • interpret and apply sociological evidence and data • show an awareness of different types and sources of evidence.
AO3 Analysis and evaluation 25–30% of total marks in Paper 1 and 2	This assessment objective looks at your ability to analyse and evaluate sociological studies, methods and evidence. Possible command words might be: 'explain', 'to what extent...?'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluate the strengths and limitations of sociological studies and methods • be aware of limitations and bias in sociological evidence and understand the difference between fact, opinion and values • reach conclusions based on a reasoned consideration of available evidence • organise and present sociological evidence and arguments in a coherent and logical manner.

Most learners find the skills required in AO1 the easiest to learn and to show in an examination. There is a lot to learn and understand, but the other skills are considered more demanding. The syllabus lists everything that you need to know and understand for each unit, both in the key questions and in the key terms sections. Make sure you learn these thoroughly.

For your AO2 skill, you will need to think carefully about which sociological evidence, data, concepts and/or theory to use in your answers. You will also need to interpret data from a source in Paper 1.

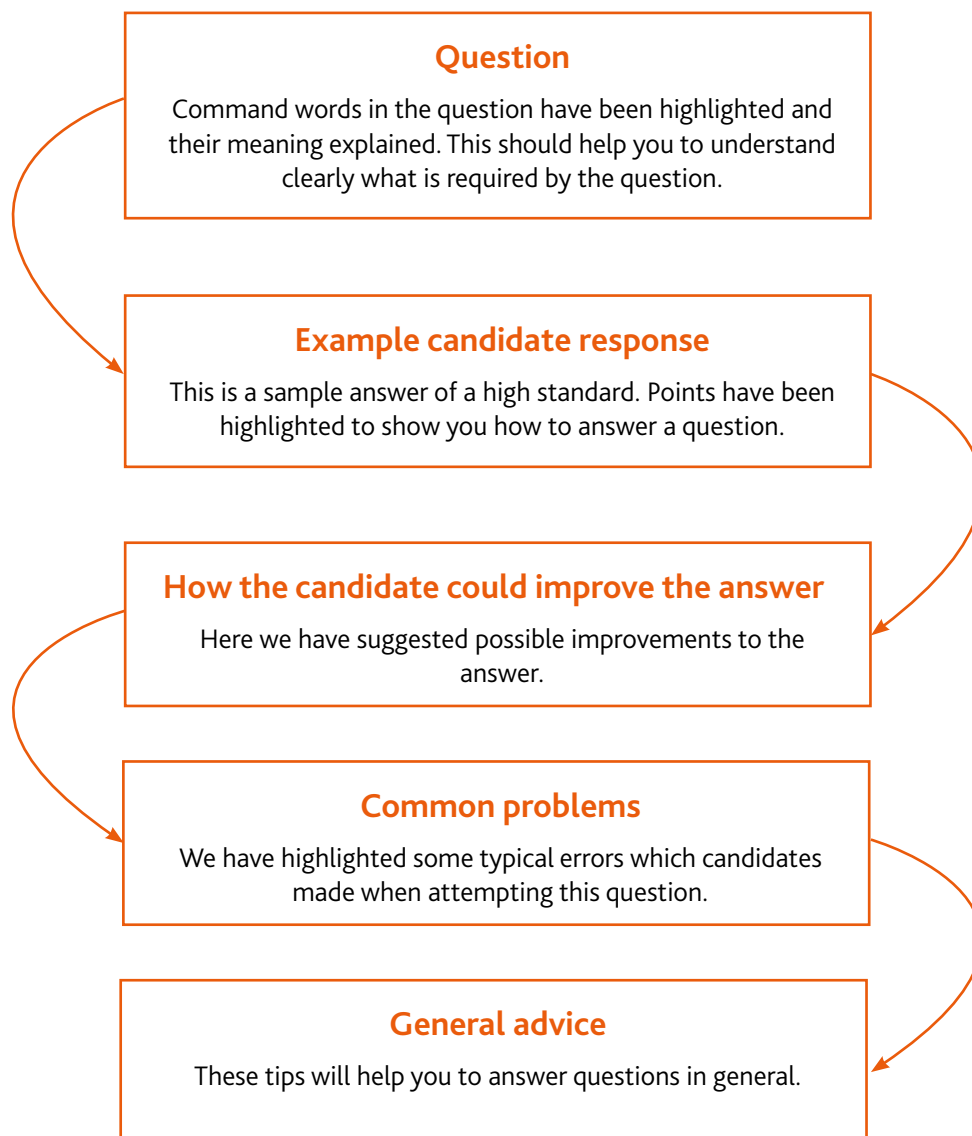
AO3 is a difficult skill to master and one that you will need to practice and receive feedback from your teachers on in order to be successful. Evaluation might be pointing out a limitation or problem in a research study, criticising a theoretical perspective or positively pointing out the contribution that a research study or theory has made to the study of society. Analysis could be looking at patterns and trends in data or pointing out differences between sociological perspectives or findings from research studies. Words and phrases like 'however' and 'on the other hand' are often useful signals to the examiner that you are evaluating. Your evaluation will be even better if you can fully develop the points you make.

Section 4: Example candidate response

This section takes you through an example question and candidate response from a past paper. It will help you to see how to identify command words within questions and to understand what is required in your response. A command word or phrase is the part of the question that tells you what you need to do with your knowledge. For example, you might need to describe something, explain something, argue a point of view or list what you know.

All information and advice in this section is specific to the example question and response being demonstrated. It should give you an idea of how your responses might be viewed by an examiner but it is not a list of what to do in all questions. In your own examination, you will need to pay careful attention to what each question is asking you to do.

This section is separated as follows:



Question 1(e) (Paper 2, June 2018)

On Paper 2 you must answer two different part e questions from two different sections. There is also a 15 mark question on Paper 1, therefore confidence in knowing what the examining teams are looking for is essential for success. The 15 mark question is essentially an extended essay.

1(e) To what extent is marriage still the norm in modern industrial societies?

(15)

The command words are 'To what extent ...?' – this instruction is telling you that a two-sided debate is expected with arguments both for and against the claim in the question. So, in the exemplar question above, the candidate is expected to offer arguments to substantiate the view that marriage is still normal in modern industrial societies alongside counter arguments to suggest that it is no longer the norm.

As it's a 'To what extent ...?' question, a judgement is also expected. Typically, this will take the form of a developed conclusion, fully focused on the question at the end of the answer.

Example candidate response

Before 20th century marriages were considered as the important part of life. Getting their children to get married was considered as the social responsibility of the parents. However this concept is now changed to a greater level and marriage is not an important part of an individual's life in modern industrial society. People consider marriage as an expensive thing and try to avoid getting married. To spend money on the ceremonies of the wedding is considered as a waste of money. Women and men both likely to cohabit with each other rather than taking responsibilities of each other and fulfilling them is considered a burden on them. The easily availability of contraception has also led the marriages to decline in modern industrial society. It is easy to take abortion if women get pregnant from cohabitation so there is no need of getting married. There is less importance of secularization nowadays and both the sex don't want to be bound towards marriage vows. Women are now more career orientated and don't want to take the traditional role that was carried out by most of women before industrial revolution. They want to be independent in their life by pursuing their career and don't like to rely on men for breadwinner. Because of this they are not getting married. It is also socially acceptable for the society about not getting married. Their perception has changed and they consider it as a wish of both the partners to get married or not. The rising rate of divorce has also led many of the marriages to be broken as the cereal packet family expectations are not met and women are more likely to get divorce from their partner. Feminism also supports the view that marriage just shows the patriarchal behaviour in a family and this led towards neglection of women's right in society. It is appropriate to not get married as women faces most of the problem.

However this is not the case. Marriages are still considered important in modern industrial society. The increase number in step-families and reconstituted shows that men and

women are getting married again after divorce. The privatized nuclear family is increasing and people like to live in short families more than living with the extended family. As life expectancy are increasing people are living more years so they are getting married in later years of life too. Old people also need a partner to support them in their old age so there are also getting married. Women are carrying out dual burden and are maintaining their both life outside and inside the home. The growth in symmetrical families has also led marriages to be a norm in today's world. Functionalist also supports this view that marriages are important in modern industrial society and they carried out the harmonious functions of society. So in order to stabilize a society marriage is an important tool to be carried out.

Mark awarded = 12 out of 15

Examiner comments

- References to the past at the beginning of the answer are not relevant and so would not be credited. The question asks about modern industrial societies.
- Unusually, the candidate starts with the 'against' points which are plentiful in range with some good development and some good sociological engagement.
- The 'for' side then develops the debate further, but not always with sufficient development or sociological engagement. A short conclusion is offered but it isn't as well focused upon the question as it could have been. A good response that reaches the top mark available in Band 3.

How the candidate could improve the answer

This is a Band 3/4 answer that shows a two-sided, discursive response to the question. It is well balanced (considers both sides of the debate) and largely focused on the question throughout. It has achieved 12 marks but has not managed to score in the top band.

- The first six lines of the answer do not answer the question (as they talk about marriage in the past) and are not good practice, particularly when timing is so crucial. The candidate could have used this time to develop the points made further.
- Starting with the 'against' points is fine and will, of course, be credited, but is not recommended practice as it doesn't allow the candidate to demonstrate their understanding of the specific issues in the question. It is far more logical to begin with the 'for' side and then to move on to evaluation points. This way you are more likely to keep focused on the specific issues raised by the question set. Too many candidates drift away in their focus and make points that are less relevant, which is something that should be avoided.
- The first 'against' point made and developed about the cost of marriage is a good example of a non-sociological point. This will always be credited but will not score the higher order marks as it lacks explicit sociological focus. Compare this with the later 'against' point about the career-orientated nature of women today which is far more sociological in nature with the specific sociological terms used by the candidate. Even here, though, there is a noticeable lack of theoretical engagement. The candidate could easily have discussed feminism within this section of the debate and so improved the point further;
- The candidate has done well to include a conclusion to their answer here but it is short and pretty straightforward. This could have been far better developed to do justice to the opposing arguments put forward in the answer, perhaps using theory here too to 'up' the level and quality of the judgements being made. The candidate could have ended their response with a clearly supported and well-focused judgement.
- No sociological evidence has been used in the answer to substantiate the points made. These would certainly have added to the quality of the response and helped it to be more sociological in focus too. There are lots of appropriate studies that could have been used and what you select will depend on the material that your teacher covers with you, but here, for example, Sue Sharpe's study could have been used to substantiate the point about women being more career-focused today. Similarly, in the section about patriarchy, a feminist study such as that by Dobash and Dobash could have been discussed.
- The answer here is lacking in paragraphs and structure. The problem with this is that it is not always evident when one point ends and another begins. This then also leads to a lack of fully developed points being made. Paragraphing really is essential in these extended responses to fully maximise the marks available. Try and adopt the 'PEEEL' structure here: Point, Example, Evidence, Explanation, Link (back to the question to show how/why what you've written is relevant).

Common mistakes

- The 15 mark questions are often where candidates fail to maximise the marks available to them. A short introduction can be useful to focus the answer appropriately but it does not attract specific marks from the mark scheme and therefore should not be prioritised by candidates. Common mistakes frequently seen are candidates spending a lot of time at the beginning of extended response answers (15 mark questions) discussing points of no/marginal relevance. In this specific question, for example, several candidates talked about the importance of marriage in the past but this isn't relevant to the question which is about marriage in modern industrial societies.
- Another issue often seen in the 15 mark questions is for candidates not to formulate a debate, instead offering a one sided response. The maximum mark this kind of answer can attract is 8 marks. The expectation is that a two-sided debate is produced and substantiated – this is the point of the question.
- The next issue is the lack of range of points on both sides of the debate. Not something that was an issue for this candidate but something that the examining teams frequently see. Candidates are encouraged to aim for a minimum of three fully developed points for the argument and the same against.
- Listed answers are not the expectation – this is an extended essay response question so all points should be unpacked and fully discussed. This is the explanation part of the answer, where you are able to use examples, evidence, studies, theories, statistics, etc. to really demonstrate your understanding of the issues being assessed. This also ensures, of course, that your answer remains sociological in focus rather than drifting into commonsense.
- Linked to the above point, candidates need to ensure that all points made are sociological in focus and that you engage with relevant concepts, theory and evidence wherever possible.
- As this is a 'to what extent ...?' question, a judgement is required. The easiest way to do this is to write a developed conclusion at the end of your answer which explicitly focuses on the question set and the answer you have written. In simple terms, make sure you have answered the question in your conclusion!
- Finally, it's really important to remember that the part (e) sub-question is worth nearly half of the marks available to you in a question therefore you need to ensure it is given an appropriate amount of your time and attention. Use your reading time wisely and plan how you will answer the question in a mind-map style before you begin to write in full prose. Some candidates choose to tackle the part (e) questions first to ensure that they don't run out of time. This might be something worth considering in your own exam preparation. Try it out and see what you think!

General advice

- Plan the answer before you start to write – this will help you to focus your mind and your answer.
- Don't waste time on a lengthy, descriptive introduction.
- Ensure that you have at least three distinct 'for' points that you can develop and discuss.
- Ensure that you have at least three distinct 'against' points that you can develop and discuss.
- Remember that this question is worth 15 marks – half a side of paper will therefore not be enough. You need to write an extended response.
- Substantiate the points you make with sociological evidence (studies, statistics, trends, etc. from your local context as well as from a global platform).
- Ensure your answer is sociological in focus and not common-sense – concepts, theories and sociological terms are the expectation.
- Know your studies – what has sociological research uncovered and how can you include it in your answer?
- Can you make theoretical links? This, if done accurately, will always improve the quality of your response. So, for example, if you're discussing the unequal roles played by males and females in the family then you should be linking in with feminism and patriarchy. If you're talking about the essential functions of the family then why not refer to functionalist theory?
- End your answer with a focused and developed conclusion that directly answers the question set and allows you to make a judgement on the claim in the question.
- Make sure you work out your timings for each of the sub-questions before you get into the examination room and stick to them!
- Most important of all – make sure you are answering the question set. If what you're writing doesn't help you to do this, then why are you including it? Be selective.

Section 5: Revision

This advice will help you revise and prepare for the examinations. It is divided into general advice for all papers and more specific advice for Paper 1, and Paper 2.

Use the tick boxes to keep a record of what you have done, what you plan to do or what you understand.

General advice

Before the examination

Find out when the examinations are and plan your revision so you have plenty of time to revise. Create a revision timetable and divide it into sections to cover each topic.

Find out how long each paper is, how many questions you have to answer, how many marks there are for each question, and work out how long you have for each question.

Find out the choices you have on each paper, make sure you know how many sections there are and which sections you should answer from.

When there is a choice of questions in a section, make sure you revise enough to have a choice.

Know the meaning of the command words used in questions and how to apply them to the information given. Look at past examination papers and highlight the command words and check what they mean.

Make revision notes. Try different styles of notes until you find what works best for you.

Work for short periods then have a break. Revise small sections of the syllabus at a time.

Test yourself by writing out key points, mind-mapping, using flashcards, learning key studies, etc.

Make sure you define sociological terms accurately, e.g. *norms* are not simply 'how we behave and do what's normal without thinking'. It is 'the behaviour that societies expect of their members in specific situations or contexts'.

Definitions must not reuse the words to be defined as this will not be credited by the examining teams, e.g. *value consensus* means the general agreement across a society (*consensus*) on a set of things that are considered important and worth striving for (*values*).

Make your own dictionary or draw up a glossary of key terms for each section of the syllabus and make sure you learn them. You could try this using flashcards where the key term is written on one side of the card and the accurate definition on the other. This will allow you to make your revision more active.

Look at bar charts, tables, articles, etc. to find out what they show, e.g., recognising patterns and trends in quantitative data and meanings and opinions in qualitative data.

Practise mind-mapping answers to past questions – would you be confident at answering these questions in exam conditions? Check up on anything you're unsure or confused about.

Learn your sociological studies thoroughly. What do they show? How you might use them? Where in the world are they? What are the key findings? Which theory or debate can you use them with? Make a list of studies for each section of the syllabus. Look at past questions and decide which study would be best to answer each one. Know your own local examples, whenever possible too.

Learn to spell sociological terms, concepts and studies correctly.

Have a look at past questions so that you are clear of what to expect in an examination.

Look at mark schemes to help you to understand how the marks are awarded for each question.

In the examination

Read the instructions carefully and answer the right number of questions from the right sections.

Do not answer more questions than are needed, as this will not gain you more marks in the examination.

Plan your time according to the marks for each question. For example, a question worth four marks requires less time and a shorter answer than one worth 10 marks. If a question has several parts, then the parts with more marks will need more time and more developed answers.

Do not leave out questions or parts of questions. Remember, no answer means no mark.

Read each question very carefully.

- Identify the command words – you could underline or highlight them.
- Identify the other key words and perhaps underline them too.
- Try to put the question into your own words to understand what it is really asking.

Read all parts of a question before starting your answer. Think carefully about what is needed for each part. You will not need to repeat material.

Look very carefully at any sources you are given in Paper 1.

- Read the title, labels, axes of graphs, etc. to find out exactly what any data provided is showing you.
- Look for dates, location and authors, etc. to assess factors such as representativeness, bias and validity.
- Try highlighting or underlining to pick out anything that the question asks you about.

Answer the question. This is very important!

Use your knowledge and understanding.

Do not just write all you know; only write what is needed to answer the question.

Plan your answers. Clear, concise, well-ordered, well-argued, well-supported answers get more marks than long, rambling, muddled, repetitious answers of only marginal relevance. This is particularly true for the longer extended essay style questions. Quality can often be better than quantity so use your reading time wisely.

Use sociological terms, concepts, theories and studies in your answers as much as possible.

Use any source material given in the question to support your answer when asked for.

Pay close attention to the number of marks each question is worth and tailor the length of your response to that. Remember that you don't have to answer the sub-questions in the order that they appear on the question paper. As long as you label your answers clearly it is fine to prioritise the longer answers first to ensure that you do not run out of time later.

Use sociological evidence, concepts and theories even when it is not required specifically by the question. Studies and examples can come from your home area as well as from other countries or cultures.

Make sure your writing is clear and easy to read.

Paper 1 (Unit 1) advice

Q1(a) 2 marks – use the source to identify and extract the required answer – no description is required.

Q1(b) 2 marks – use the source and/or your wider sociological knowledge to identify the correct answer – no description is required.

Q1(c) 4 marks – if the question asks for 'two' elements then these must be clearly separated and sufficiently different to credit. The two elements need to be described and developed. Ensure information is being taken directly from the source if this is asked for, and make this clear if so, e.g. 'As Source X shows ...'.

Q1(d) 4 marks – see above. Use your wider sociological knowledge here rather than the specific source material.

Q1(e) 8 marks – here again you will see the number 'two' referenced – ensure the advice above is heeded and your answers are fully developed.

Q1(f) 10 marks – the command word here is 'explain' therefore it is expected that you will justify your responses and consider the 'why' element. Examiners will be looking for both range and detail/development to reward in the answer. A minimum of three different points will need to be unpacked, developed and explained.

Q1(g) 15 marks – marked as per the essay guidance found in the next section of this document.

Paper 2 advice

In the part (a) question (2 marks), candidates should look to include two separate elements in their definition, e.g. 'deviance' – define the breaking of social norms and values and supplement this with an example of an act of deviance or state that deviance does not have to be criminal.

Part (b) questions (4 marks) need two distinctly different points – it is good practice to separate and label these clearly. Make sure each point isn't just listed but described/developed.

In part (c) questions (6 marks) make sure there are more than two points made, evidenced and developed.

For part (d) questions (8 marks) adopt the same approach as for part (c) but develop points further, consider more range and ensure concepts/theory are used appropriately. Make a minimum of three clearly different points here.

For the (c) and (d) questions you need to be able to develop points in order to achieve the higher levels; 'list like' answers will limit the amount of marks that can be awarded.

In terms of the 15 mark part (e) questions, you should organise your answers into paragraphs and develop each idea fully using theory, studies, examples and/or concepts wherever relevant. The best answers typically include three points for and three against the claim in the question, sometimes more. Each point should be directly focused upon what the question is asking and should engage sociologically and conceptually wherever possible. Make sure you properly describe and explain all the points you are making and link them directly to the question asked.

On part (e) questions there should be a balanced argument that considers both sides of the debate. The response needs to include a range of points for each side (three points for each side of the debate) that are well-developed and evidence based, with a justified conclusion. Conceptual/theoretical engagement is expected in Bands 3 and 4. One-sided responses cannot get beyond Band 2.

In the part (e) essay style question, a conclusion is required in order to reach the highest marks available (Band 4) and this is where you should ensure that you have answered the specific question set and have thus made a judgement upon it.

Introductions and definitions of key terms at the beginning of (c), (d) and (e) questions take up valuable time and do not gain marks, they are not needed at all in parts (c) and (d) and do not really add to the quality of your response in part (e) questions. Conclusions are similarly unnecessary in part (c) and (d) questions but are necessary in the part (e) evaluative essay questions where a judgement is required.

You should refer to sociological terminology, theory, evidence and concepts where relevant. Using sociological terms and evidence will raise the overall quality of your answer and will allow you access to the marks awarded by the examiners for sociological/conceptual engagement.

Revision checklists

In the next part of this guide we have provided some revision checklists. These include information from the syllabus that you should revise. They don't contain all the detailed knowledge you need to know, just an overview. For more detail see the syllabus and talk to your teacher.

The table headings are explained below:

Unit	What key knowledge you need to know	R	A	G	Comments
These are the units of study that you will be learning about.	Content in the syllabus you need to cover	<p>You can use the tick boxes to show when you have revised an item and how confident you feel about it.</p> <p>R = RED means you are really unsure and lack confidence; you might want to focus your revision here and possibly talk to your teacher for help</p> <p>A = AMBER means you are reasonably confident but need some extra practice</p> <p>G = GREEN means you are very confident.</p> <p>As your revision progresses, you can concentrate on the RED and AMBER items in order to turn them into GREEN items. You might find it helpful to highlight each topic in red, orange or green to help you prioritise.</p>			<p>You can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add further information of your own, such as names of sociological studies, theoretical links, concepts needed, examples, etc. • add learning aids, such as rhymes and acronyms to help you learn and remember the information needed. • pinpoint areas of difficulty you need to check further with your teacher or textbooks – be clear here. Remember, YOU are in charge of your revision schedule and organisation so you need to be proactive here. • include reference to a useful resource or useful page references in your textbook.

Note: the tables below cannot contain absolutely everything you need to know, but it does use examples wherever it can.

Paper 1

Unit	What key knowledge you need to know	R	A	G	Comments
Unit 1: Theory and methods 1(a) How do different sociologists interpret society?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structuralist and interpretivist approaches; the individual, identity and society • How different views (functionalist, Marxist, feminist) on conflict and consensus create alternative perspectives 				
Unit 1: Theory and methods 1(b) How do sociologists study society?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The distinction between positivist and interpretivist approaches to research methods • The main steps in devising and implementing a research strategy: research aims, selection of topic, hypothesis setting and revision, pilot studies, sampling • Difficulties in implementing a research strategy • Ethical issues affecting the choice and implementation of a research strategy • The main methods used in sociological investigation: questionnaires/ social surveys, interviews, experiments, case studies, longitudinal studies, participant and non-participant observation, content analysis and triangulation. Coverage should include the strengths and limitations of each method, assessment of their usefulness in sociological research and awareness of the types of evidence produced. • The importance of analysing and evaluating research with reference to issues of validity, reliability, generalisability, representativeness and research/ researcher bias 				
Unit 1: Theory and methods 1(c) What types of information and data do sociologists use?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The difference between primary and secondary data; the uses, strengths and limitations and value of each type of data • Qualitative and quantitative data. The strengths and limitations of qualitative sources including historical and personal documents, diaries and media content. The ability to interpret and evaluate evidence from short qualitative sources. The strengths and limitations of quantitative sources including official statistics. The ability to interpret data from diagrams, charts, graphs and tables. 				

Unit	What key knowledge you need to know	R	A	G	Comments
Unit 1: Theory and methods Key Terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the definitions of all key terms in this unit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bias – Case study – Causation – Comparative study – Conflict – Consensus – Content analysis – Correlation – Covert participant observation – Ethical issues – Field experiments – Focus group – Generalisability – Group interview – Hawthorne/Observer Effect – Historical documents – Hypothesis – Identity – Interpretivism – Interviewer bias – Interviewer effect – Laboratory experiments – Longitudinal survey – Macro/micro approaches – Non-participant observation – Objectivity – Official/non-official statistics – Open/closed/pre-coded questions – Overt participant observation – Perspectives – Pilot study – Positivism – Postal questionnaires – Primary data – Qualitative data/research 				

Unit	What key knowledge you need to know	R	A	G	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quantitative data/research - Questionnaires - Reliability - Representativeness - Respondent - Response rate - Sampling methods/random/snowballing/quota/stratified - Sampling frame - Secondary data - Self-completion questionnaires - Semi-structured interview - Social survey - Structuralism - Structured interview - Subjectivity - Survey population - Telephone questionnaires - Trend - Triangulation - Unstructured interview - Validity 				
<p>Unit 2: Culture, identity and socialisation</p> <p>2(a) What is the relationship between the individual and society?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture, norms, values, roles, status and beliefs as social constructions and how these influence human behaviour; relativity • Conformity and non-conformity; the agencies and processes of social control. Examples of rewards and sanctions applied in different societies and organisations (e.g. schools, the workplace) • The formation and existence of sub-cultures (e.g. youth sub-cultures, religious sub-cultures) in society and how these impact on consensus and conflict • Diversity and cultural variation in human behaviour and issues related to cultural relativism/multiculturalism. The debate about whether globalisation is creating a global culture. • Age/age group as an example of social construction 				

Unit	What key knowledge you need to know	R	A	G	Comments
Unit 2: Culture, identity and socialisation 2(b) How do we learn to be human?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary and secondary socialisation • Processes through which children learn social expectations (e.g. manipulation, hidden curriculum) • Main agencies of socialisation (e.g. family, education, media) and their impact on the individual, including the consequences of inadequate socialisation • The nature/nurture debate • Role, age, gender, ethnic group and class as influences on social identity 				
Unit 2: Culture, identity and socialisation Key Terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the definitions of all key terms in this unit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Adolescence – Adulthood – Age/age groups – Agencies of socialisation – Belief – Child-centred – Childhood – Coercion – Cultural relativism – Culture – Customs – Diversity – Elderly – Ethnic minority – Ethnicity/race – Femininity/masculinity – Feral children – Gender/sex – Globalisation/global culture – Hidden curriculum – Imitation – Inadequate socialisation – Law – Lifestyle 				

Unit	What key knowledge you need to know	R	A	G	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manipulation/canalisation - Multicultural society - Nature/nurture - Norms/values - Ostracism - Peer group - Peer pressure - Primary socialisation - Rewards/sanctions - Role - Role conflict - Role modelling - Secondary socialisation - Social class - Social conformity - Social construction - Social control/formal and informal - Social identity - Social institutions - Social interaction - Social order - Status (achieved/ascribed) - Stereotype - Sub-culture - Value consensus - Youth sub-culture 				
Unit 3: Social inequality 3(a) What is social stratification?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms of social stratification in modern industrial societies: class, age, ethnicity and gender • Open and closed societies • Ascribed and achieved status • Life chances and why these differ between and within stratified groups 				

Unit	What key knowledge you need to know	R	A	G	Comments
<p>Unit 3: Social inequality</p> <p>3(b) What are the main features of social inequality and how are these created?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wealth and income: the evidence and reasons for the distribution of wealth and income in different societies and the impact of welfare states and other government measures to reduce inequality, including equal opportunities legislation. The problems of defining wealth and poverty. The causes of poverty and the consequences of being rich or poor in a global context. • Ethnicity: examples of racial prejudice and discrimination in education, employment and housing. Scapegoating and the consequences of racism for ethnic groups. • Gender: effect of gender on the life chances of males and females, with particular reference to gender discrimination in employment. The changing role of women in modern industrial societies and explanations of gender discrimination. • Social class: ways of defining and measuring social class. The changing nature and role of different classes and class cultures. The nature, extent and significance of social mobility. 				
<p>Unit 3: Social inequality</p> <p>Key Terms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the definitions of all key terms in this unit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Absolute poverty – Achieved status – Age/Ageism – Apartheid – Ascribed status – Blue collar worker/white collar worker – Bourgeoisie – Capitalism – Caste – Civil rights/human rights – Closed society – Culture of poverty – Cycle of poverty – Dependency culture – Disability – Discrimination – Distribution of wealth/redistribution of wealth – Domestic labour – Elite 				

Unit	What key knowledge you need to know	R	A	G	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Embourgeoisement/proletarianisation - Equal opportunities - Fatalism - Feminism - Gendered division of labour - Glass ceiling - Immediate/deferred gratification - Income - Industrial societies - Institutional racism - Intergenerational social mobility - Intragenerational social mobility - Life chances - Lifestyle - Market situation - Marxism - Meritocracy - Middle class - Minority ethnic groups - Minority groups - Occupational structure - Open society - Patriarchy - Poverty line - Poverty trap - Power - Prejudice - Privileged groups - Professions/professional worker - Racism - Relative poverty - Reserve army of labour - Scapegoating - Skilled worker/unskilled worker - Slavery - Social class 				

Unit	What key knowledge you need to know	R	A	G	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social exclusion - Social inequality - Social mobility - Social stratification - Status - Traditional societies - Underclass - Upper class - Vertical and horizontal segregation - Wealth - Welfare state - Working class/new working class 				

Paper 2 (remember to find out from your teacher which of these optional units you will be studying)

Unit	What key knowledge you need to know	R	A	G	Comments
Unit 4: Family (a) What are the different types of family?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nuclear and extended family, reconstituted/step-family, single-parent family and same sex family • The influence of social stratification and ethnicity on family diversity • The functions of the family and the 'loss of functions' debate • Alternatives to the family, including other types of households (e.g. one-person household, shared household) and communes • Cross-cultural comparisons and variations in marriage including monogamy, serial monogamy, polygamy and polyandry. Alternatives to marriage, such as cohabitation and civil partnerships. Explanations of changing trends in marriage and divorce. 				

Unit	What key knowledge you need to know	R	A	G	Comments
Unit 4: Family (b) How are family roles changing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conjugal roles, maternal and paternal roles, roles of children and members of the wider family, including grandparents • Changes in family relationships and conjugal roles, including symmetrical family debate and issues relating to patriarchy and gender equality within the family • Variations in family relationships reflecting the influences of social stratification and ethnicity • The negative aspects of family life, including domestic violence, gender inequality, child abuse and neglect 				
Unit 4: Family (c) What are the changes affecting the family?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrialisation, urbanisation and family change • Demographic trends: family size and birth rates; death rates and life expectancy • The consequences for the family of an ageing population 				
Unit 4: Family Key Terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the definitions of all key terms in this unit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Arranged marriage – Beanpole family – Boomerang family – Birth rate – Cereal packet family – Child-centeredness – Civil partnerships – Cohabitation – Commune – Conjugal roles – Dark side of the family – Death rate – Demographic trends – Divorce – Divorce rate – Domestic division of labour – Domestic violence – Dual burden – Dual worker families 				

Unit	What key knowledge you need to know	R	A	G	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dysfunctional family - Empty-nest families - Empty-shell marriage - Extended family - Family diversity - Family functions - Family roles - Feminism - Fertility rate - Gender - Gender equality - Household unit - Industrialisation - Joint conjugal roles - Kinship - Marital breakdown - Marriage - Matriarchy - Matrifocal - Modern industrial societies - Monogamy - Nuclear family - One-parent/single-parent family - One-person household - Patriarchy - Polyandry - Polygamy - Polygyny - Primary socialisation - Reconstituted family - Secularisation - Segregated conjugal roles - Serial monogamy - Step-child - Step-parent - Symmetrical family 				

Unit	What key knowledge you need to know	R	A	G	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Traditional conjugal roles – Traditional societies – Urbanisation 				
Unit 5: Education (a) What is the function of education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal and formal education • Education as an agency of socialisation and social control • The relationship between education and social mobility • Different types of schools, including state, comprehensive, private, single-sex and faith schools 				
Unit 5: Education (b) What factors help to explain differences in educational achievement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patterns in educational achievement and experience in relation to gender, ethnicity and social class • Material, cultural and linguistic influences of family background on educational achievement • The influence of school, teachers, pupil sub-cultures and the peer group on educational achievement • Measuring intelligence, selection and its relationship to educational achievement • The roles of the official curriculum and the hidden curriculum 				
Unit 5: Education Key Terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the definitions of all key terms in this unit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Anti-school sub-culture – Comprehensive system – Cultural capital – Cultural deprivation – Culture of masculinity – Discrimination – Educational achievement – Educational inequality (based on class, gender and ethnicity) – Elaborated code – Ethnocentrism – Equality of opportunity – Faith schools – Formal education 				

Unit	What key knowledge you need to know	R	A	G	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Functions of education - Hidden curriculum - Home factors - Immediate/deferred gratification - Informal education - Intelligence - IQ tests - Labelling - Life chances - Material deprivation - Meritocracy - Official curriculum - Positive discrimination - Post-compulsory education - Private school - Restricted code - Rewards - Sanctions - School factors - Secondary socialisation - Selective education - Self-fulfilling prophecy - Setting - Single-sex schools - Socialisation - Social conformity/conformity - Social control - Social expectations - Social factors - Social mobility - Social stratification - State schools - Streaming - Vocationalism 				

Unit	What key knowledge you need to know	R	A	G	Comments
Unit 6: Crime, deviance and social control (a) What are crime, deviance and social control?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The difference between crime and deviance, including how definitions of these terms may vary between societies and across time; relativity of crime and deviance Formal and informal social control, including agencies of social control such as the media, religion, the police, courts and the penal system 				
Unit 6: Crime, deviance and social control (b) What are the patterns of crime?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measurements of crime and their strengths and limitations: official statistics, self-report studies and victim surveys Patterns and explanations of crime by age, class, gender and ethnicity Policing and law enforcement, including policing strategies, e.g. targeting, surveillance, crime prevention Crime related to new technologies (e.g. the internet) Dealing with crime: community sentencing, punishment, prison, rehabilitation, other deterrents 				
Unit 6: Crime, deviance and social control (c) What are the explanations of crime and deviance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sociological explanations of deviant and criminal behaviour: Labelling theory, Marxist theory, Functionalist theory, socialisation (e.g. family and peer groups), lack of opportunity, relative deprivation, masculinity, status frustration The role of law enforcement agencies and the media in defining crime and deviance, stereotyping, labelling and deviancy amplification The development of sub-cultures and links to crime and deviance, with particular reference to youth 				
Unit 6: Crime, deviance and social control Key Terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the definitions of all key terms in this unit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agencies of social control Anomie Community sentencing Conformity Corporate crime Crime Crime rates Crime prevention 				

Unit	What key knowledge you need to know	R	A	G	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cybercrime - Dark figure - Deterrent - Deviance - Deviancy amplification - Deviant career - Dominant values - Exile/Ostracism - Formal social control - Inadequate socialisation - Informal social control - Internet crime - Judicial system - Juvenile delinquency - Labelling - Law enforcement agencies - Masculinity - Master status - Material deprivation - Moral panic - Official crime statistics - Peer group - Penal system - Policing - Prison - Rehabilitation - Relative deprivation - Rewards - Sanctions - Self-report studies - Socialisation - Sociological explanation - Status frustration - Stereotyping 				

Unit	What key knowledge you need to know	R	A	G	Comments
Unit 7: Media (a) Who controls the media?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The various forms of the media, (e.g. television, radio, newspapers, books, films, Internet, including social media) • Role of advertising • Ownership and control of the media • Freedom and censorship in the media • Pluralist, Marxist and postmodernist perspectives on the nature and role of the media • Patterns of media use, (e.g. by gender, age, social class and ethnicity) • Media representation of ethnicity, gender, age, class and disability 				
Unit 7: Media (b) What is the influence of the media?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the traditional/new media in shaping values, attitudes and behaviour, with particular reference to television and violence; political beliefs and voting; patterns of consumption; gender stereotyping; traditional stereotyping, the influence of the Internet in areas such as social networking. • Agenda setting, gate-keeping and stereotyping through the selection and presentation of the news • Explanations of the influence of the media: hypodermic-syringe model, audience selection, cultural effects approach, uses and gratifications model • Bias and distortion in the media, including propaganda and moral panics • Developments in the media including changes in ownership, globalisation, interactivity, the digital divide, diversification and convergence within the media • Influence of media representations on the audience 				
Unit 7: Media Key Terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the definitions of all key terms in this unit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Advertising – Agenda setting – Audience selection – Bias – Broadcasting 				

Unit	What key knowledge you need to know	R	A	G	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Censorship - Citizen journalism - Convergence - Cultural effects approach - Democracy - Digital divide - Distortion - Diversification - Dominant values - Exaggeration - Folk devils - Gate-keeping - Globalisation - Hypodermic-syringe model - Imitation - Indoctrination - Interactivity - Invisibility - Labelling - Lifestyle - Marxist - Mass communication - Media content - Media culture - Media representation: ethnicity/gender/age/class/disability - Moral panic - Narrowcasting - New media - News values - Newsworthiness - Norm-setting - Opinion polls - Pluralist - Postmodern/postmodernist - Propaganda - Public/private funding 				

Unit	What key knowledge you need to know	R	A	G	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public service broadcasting - Role models - Scapegoats - Sensationalism - Social control - Social media - Socialisation - Stereotyping (e.g. gender/traditional) - The press - Traditional media - Uses and gratification model 				

Section 6: Useful websites

The websites listed below are useful resources to help you study for your Cambridge IGCSE / O Level Sociology course.

Cambridge International is not responsible for the accuracy or content of information contained in these resources. The inclusion of a link to an external website should not be understood to be an endorsement of that website or the site's owners (or their products/services).

www.cambridgeinternational.org/programmes-and-qualifications/cambridge-o-level-sociology-2251/ or www.cambridgeinternational.org/programmes-and-qualifications/cambridge-igcse-sociology-0495/ – this is the Cambridge public website where you can check and download your syllabus (content to cover), past papers and examiner reports. These should all be the starting point for your revision and examination preparation. There is also a really useful section where you can see what other resources are recommended for you to access – this includes the Cambridge endorsed supporting textbook for your course.

www.sociology.org/ – interesting Sociology related articles, posts and blogs that will enable you to extend your knowledge and understanding of Sociology and widen your academic reading.

www.polity.co.uk/browne/students/glossary/ – this is a learner-friendly Sociology online glossary which is good for both conceptual understanding and for helping you to produce revision style flashcards.

www.thestudentroom.co.uk/gcse/subjects/sociology/ – not specific to the Cambridge IGCSE / O Level Sociology syllabus but a good general resource. The website allows for interactivity and gives good advice about revision and exam preparation.

www.igcsesociology.weebly.com/study-guide.html# – contains some study guides and revision resources to help learners revise for their IGCSE / O Level Sociology examinations.

www.quizlet.com/en-gb/students – a site dedicated to helping you study effectively.

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