

Sociology

OCR GCSE in Sociology J696

July 2009

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The specification for this qualification has been updated. Vertical black lines indicate a significant change to the previous printed version. Changes can be found on pages 10, 20, 25 and 26.

1 About these Qualifications

This booklet contains OCR's GCSE specification in Sociology for teaching from September 2009.

This specification is designed to enable candidates to focus on their own experience of the social world, whilst encouraging them to build on this framework in order to analyse different aspects of contemporary society in a reflective and innovative way.

Candidates are encouraged to critically analyse sources of information, whilst communicating this knowledge in a creative way in order to play informed roles within different social contexts.

Sociology is a very popular choice at A Level, and this specification provides an excellent grounding in Sociology for those who wish to progress to the various advanced levels of study.

1.1 GCSE (Full Course)

From September 2009 the GCSE is made up of **three** mandatory externally assessed units; **two** of these units are equally weighted at 25% and **one** unit is weighted at 50% of the total assessment.

Unit B671: *Sociology Basics* 25%

This unit is made up of **two** sections. Section A encourages candidates to develop a critical understanding of sociological evidence and research processes and includes knowledge of the main methods and strategies of sociological research. Section B introduces the basic key concepts in Sociology and starts to introduce the links between the individual and society.

Unit B672: *Socialisation, Culture and Identity* 50%

This unit offers a choice of substantive topics through which the themes of culture, socialisation, power and control are developed. It builds upon the knowledge and skills acquired in Unit B671: *Sociology Basics* and seeks to develop an understanding of the nature of sociological thought in the context of the topics studied.

Unit B673: *Applying Sociological Research Techniques* 25%

This unit gives candidates the opportunity to build upon knowledge gained in Unit 1. A critical awareness of the nature of sociological research, understanding and evidence will be developed through this unit via the inclusion of pre-released case studies.

1.2 Qualification Title and Levels

This qualification is shown on a certificate as:

- OCR GCSE in Sociology

This qualification is approved by the regulatory authorities (QCA, DCELLS and CCEA) as part of the National Qualifications Framework.

Candidates who gain Grades D to G will have achieved an award at Foundation Level 1 (Level 1 of the National Qualifications Framework).

Candidates who gain Grades A* to C will have achieved an award at Intermediate Level 2 (Level 2 of the National Qualifications Framework).

1.3 Aims and learning outcomes

The aims of this specification are to:

- Encourage candidates to be inspired, moved and changed by following a broad, coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study
- Encourage candidates to reflect on their own experience of the social world to enhance their ability to play informed roles within different social contexts
- Prepare candidates to make informed decisions about further learning opportunities and career choices
- Help candidates to recognise that their sociological knowledge, understanding and skills will allow them to develop an understanding of the interrelationships between individuals, groups, institutions and societies
- Help candidates to analyse critically the nature and sources of information and to base reasoned judgments and arguments on evidence
- Encourage candidates to organise and communicate their knowledge and understanding in different and creative ways, and reach substantiated judgments

1.4 Prior Learning/Attainment

Candidates entering this course should have achieved a general educational level equivalent to National Curriculum Level 3, or an Entry 3 at Entry Level within the National Qualifications Framework.

2 Summary of Content

2.1 GCSE Units

Unit B671: *Sociology Basics*

- Investigating society
- Collecting and using information and evidence
- Culture
- Socialisation
- Identity

Unit B672: *Socialisation, Culture and Identity*

Three topics from:

1. **Family**

- Family and identity
- Traditional definitions of the family
- Structural changes in the family
- Changing family relationships

2. **Education**

- Education and identity
- The role of education
- Changes and their effects
- Patterns and trends in educational achievement

3. **Mass Media**

- Media and identity
- Types of mass media
- The content of the mass media
- The relationship between the audience and media

4. **Work**

- Workplace and identity
- Types of work
- People's experiences of work
- Equality in the workplace

5. Crime and Deviance

- Definitions of crime and deviance
- Controlling crime and deviance
- Patterns of crime
- Explanations of crime

6. Youth

- Defining youth
- Control through peer-groups and gangs
- Youth subculture
- Gangs

Unit B673: *Applying Sociological Research Techniques*

- Planning and applying research techniques
 - Collecting and using information and evidence
 - Concluding a sociological study
 - Evaluating the techniques used and the evidence collected
-

3 Content

3.1 Unit B671: *Sociology Basics*

This unit aims to give candidates a basic introduction to the key methodologies and concepts used within Sociology. It is a logical starting point for any Sociology course and a useful introduction to the concepts and topics that will be studied in more depth in units B672: *Socialisation, Culture and Identity* and Unit B673: *Applying Research Techniques*.

Section A of this unit encourages candidates to develop a critical understanding of sociological evidence and research processes. This includes knowledge of the main methods and stages of sociological research. In Section B, candidates are introduced to the basic key concepts in Sociology and start to make links between the individual and society, looking particularly at ideas of culture, socialisation and identity.

There are **five** key areas to consider:

1. Investigating society (Section A)
2. Collecting and using information and evidence (Section A)
3. Culture (Section B)
4. Socialisation (Section B)
5. Identity (Section B)

3.1.1 Investigating society

This key area is examined in **Section A** of the question paper.

Key content:

Primary methods:

- questionnaires;
- interviews (structured, semi-structured and unstructured);
- observations (participant, non-participant overt and covert);
- content analysis.

Candidates should have a clear definition of each method and understand its main uses within sociological research. Candidates should be made aware of each method's main advantages and disadvantages and be clear about the type of evidence that can be gathered using each method.

Conducting research:

- the main stages of social research;
- creating aim and hypotheses;
- practical issues (time, cost and access);
- sampling (type – stratified, snowball, random and systematic);

-
- composition – (size of sample, social factors such as gender, age and religion);
 - using more than one method;
 - social surveys;
 - pilot studies;
 - case studies;
 - longitudinal studies.
-

Candidates should have a general understanding of the main principles, stages and features of research design.

- Ethical issues:
- researchers' responsibilities to themselves and others;
 - conduct and competence of researchers;
 - consent of participants;
 - confidentiality of information and data;
 - suitability of topic under investigation.
-

Candidates should have a basic understanding of the main ethical issues of sociological research and should be able to illustrate this understanding using examples.

3.1.2 Collecting and using information and evidence

This key area is examined in **Section A** of the question paper.

Key content:

- Different types of data:
- the distinction between secondary and primary data;
 - the distinction between qualitative and quantitative data.
-

Candidates should have a basic understanding of the different types of data available to sociologists. Candidates should know why different types of data are used and required, and how they can complement each other.

- Quantitative evidence:
- statistics (official and non-official).
-

Candidates should be clear what evidence is available and should know which topics may be suitable for research. They should look at the advantages and disadvantages of the evidence and be given examples of quantitative data to interpret and evaluate during their Sociology course.

- Qualitative evidence:
- historical documents and evidence;
 - personal documents and diaries;
 - media material (e.g. newspapers, TV, radio, internet, magazines).
-

Candidates should be clear what evidence is available and should know which topics may be suitable for researching. They should look at the advantages and disadvantages of the evidence and be given examples of qualitative evidence to interpret and evaluate during their Sociology course.

- Evaluation:
- basic strengths and weaknesses of information collected by different sociological methods;
 - exaggeration, distortion, selection and bias;
 - fitness for purpose;
 - making generalisations;
 - representativeness
 - reliability of research methods;
 - validity of the data.
-

Candidates should be able to evaluate the main strengths and weaknesses of information gathered from primary methods and secondary evidence.

3.1.3 Culture

This key area is examined in **Section B** of the question paper.

Key content:

- Concepts:
- norms;
 - values;
 - identity (how we see ourselves and how others see us);
 - status (ascribed and achieved);
 - roles (including multiple roles and role conflict);
 - culture;
 - subculture.

Candidates should have a clear definition and a simple understanding of each concept, using relevant examples. They should understand how these concepts relate to each other, and should be aware of how they are affected by factors such as era, culture, society, religion, gender and class.

3.1.4 Socialisation

This key area is examined in **Section B** of the question paper.

Key content:

- Process of socialisation:
- primary socialisation;
 - secondary socialisation;
 - formal social control;
 - informal social control;
 - rewards and sanctions.

Candidates should have a general overview of the process of socialisation and an understanding of how it affects behaviour and identity. They should also consider the importance of social control in the above process.

- Agents of socialisation:
- family;
 - mass media;
 - peers;
 - education;
 - work.

Candidates should have a simple understanding of which agencies are involved in the process of socialisation and the process the agents utilise to socialise individuals and groups, both in the primary and the secondary stage. Concepts such as peer-group pressure, media role models, manipulation/canalisation and the hidden curriculum should be covered. Each agent of socialisation should be studied with simple examples to show how it socialises and controls us.

3.1.5 Identity

This key area is examined in **Section B** of the question paper.

Key content:

This area of study introduces candidates to the concept of identity with an in-depth focus on gender. It thus provides basic knowledge that can be used and developed in other sociological topics and units of study.

- Gender identities:
- how gender identity is constructed via the socialisation process;
 - the role of social control in maintaining and reinforcing gender identities;

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- stereotypical assumptions about the nature of men and women;
 - femininity and masculinity.
-

Candidates should consider at a basic level how gender identities are created and maintained by the agents of socialisation and the process of social control. They should also focus on gender stereotyping: where gender stereotypes come from, a simple understanding of how they are used and how they may impact upon a person's gender identity. Relevant examples should be used to aid candidates here. Finally, candidates should consider the differences between male and female identities and any changes that are occurring to these identities in contemporary society. The use of examples and candidates' own experiences are to be drawn on in this section.

3.2 Unit B672: *Socialisation, Culture and Identity*

This unit offers a choice of substantive topics through which the themes of socialisation, culture, identity, power and control are developed. It builds upon the knowledge and skills acquired in Unit B671: *Sociology Basics* and seeks to develop an understanding of the nature of sociological thought in the context of the topics studied.

Links between substantive topics, the nature of sociological thought, and the methods of sociological enquiry are encouraged in order to raise the critical awareness of sociological thought.

Candidates choose to study **three** out of the following:

1. Sociology of the family
2. Sociology of education
3. Sociology of the mass media
4. Sociology of the workplace
5. Sociology of crime and deviance
6. Sociology of youth

3.2.1 Sociology of the family

In this option, candidates explore issues of culture and socialisation through a detailed study of the family. The family is a central institution of socialisation and one of the main transmitters of culture in the contemporary UK. Studying this option should allow candidates to develop a critical understanding of the family and individual identity. This includes knowledge of family structures and relationships and the creation of identity.

There are **four** key issues to consider:

- Family and identity;
- Traditional definitions of the family;
- Structural change in the family;
- Changing family relationships.

Family and identity

Key concepts:

- identity;
- norms;
- roles;
- values;
- culture;
- socialisation;
- family.

Content:

- development of individual identity and the learning of social roles;
- the role of the family in socialisation and identity;
- contemporary functions of the family.

Guidance:

- examples of how individuals learn the culture of a society;
- examples of non-socialised children;
- functions; for example, economic; socialisation; social control.

Traditional definitions of the family

Key concepts:

- households;
- marriage;
- nuclear family;
- extended family.

Content:

- knowledge of the supposed traditional families: nuclear and extended;
- cross-cultural discussions of nuclear/extended families.

Guidance:

- a knowledge of general statistics/patterns to discuss whether the 'traditional' family still exists;
- examples of Asian and Afro-Caribbean family experiences.

Structural changes in the family

Key concepts:

- divorce;
- serial monogamy;
- cohabitation;
- reconstituted families;
- family;
- lone parent families;
- beanpole families;
- single hood;
- boomerang families.

Content:

- different types of family;
- patterns of statistics;
- family diversity in structure due to class and ethnicity;
- effects of family diversity on individuals and society;
- alternatives to family.

Guidance:

- e.g. nuclear; extended/ polygamy/ monogamy;
- debate over the death of the 'traditional family';
- matrifocal families/patrifocal families;
- debates such as new right moral panic on lone parent families;
- effects of divorce on children;
- debates over civil partnerships and gay fostering;
- single hood;
- boomerang families;
- homosexual families.

Changing family relationships

Key concepts:

- conjugal roles;
- symmetrical families;
- housewives/ househusbands;
- domestic violence;
- child abuse;
- dark side of the family.

Content:

- domestic division of labour and decision-making in the home;
- relationships between husbands/wives/children and extended family (including differences due to class, gender, ethnicity);
- dark side of the family;
- domestic violence and child abuse.

Guidance:

- Wilmott and Young/Oakley debates over who does what in the home;
- Gershuny 'lagged adaptation' and Edgell 'decision-making';
- domestic violence and child abuse, the impact of feminism;
- debating the positive or negative nature of the 'traditional' family;
- changes in employment and demography;
- changes in the law and social policy;
- changing influence of religion.

3.2.2 Sociology of education

In this option, candidates explore issues of culture and socialisation through a detailed study of education. Candidates are expected to develop a critical understanding of the issues surrounding education. This includes knowledge of the role of education, the main changes in education and their effects on the education system and the patterns of educational achievement.

There are **four** key issues to consider:

- Education and identity;
- The role of education;
- Changes and their effects;
- Patterns and trends in educational achievement.

Education and identity

Key concepts:

- identity;
- norms;
- roles;
- values;
- culture;
- socialisation.

Content:

- development of individual identity and the learning of social roles;
- the role of education in socialisation and identity.

Guidance:

- examples of how individuals learn the culture of a society;
- consider how the individual is socialised by education.

The role of education

Key concepts:

- education;
- socialisation;
- segregation;
- social control;
- formal curriculum;
- hidden curriculum.

Content:

- functions of education: economic, socialisation, gender role socialisation, selection and role allocation, social integration, obedience;
- socialisation, learning and the curriculum;
- alternatives to schooling.

Guidance:

- consideration of the purpose of education and or schooling;
- place of schools in teaching gender roles through segregation and compliance;
- home schooling; free schools.

Changes and their effects

Key concepts:

- comprehensive education;
- setting;
- streaming;
- selection;
- Ofsted;
- inclusive education;
- national curriculum;
- Sats.

Content:

- the structure of the current education system, with an overview of its advantages and disadvantages;
- main changes since 1988 and the impact of those changes;
- issues in contemporary education.

Guidance:

- primary, secondary, further education, higher education;
- independent, state schools, faith schools;
- debate over the advantages and disadvantages of different types of schools;
- introduction of competition, choice, national curriculum, inclusive education (special needs), Ofsted and public nature of statistics;
- debate of the relative merits and issues due to the changes.

Patterns and trends in educational achievement

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• inequality;• opportunity;• material deprivation;• cultural deprivation;• labelling;• self-fulfilling prophecy;• subculture;• stereotyping.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• patterns of inequality of educational achievement according to class, gender and ethnicity;• explanations for differential academic achievement, looking specifically at social mobility and meritocracy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• knowledge of general statistical patterns;• material/cultural factors;• 'inside' and 'outside' school factors;• place of agents of socialisation in academic achievement.

3.2.3 Sociology of the mass media

In this option, candidates explore issues of culture and socialisation through a detailed study of the mass media. Candidates are expected to develop a critical understanding of the mass media. This includes knowledge of the relationship between media and its audience, and the creation and presentation of its content.

There are **four** key issues to consider:

- Media and identity;
- Types of mass media;
- The content of the mass media;
- The relationship between the audience and media.

Media and identity

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• identity;• norms;• roles;• values;• culture;• socialisation;• media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• development of individual identity and the learning of social roles;• the role of the media in socialisation and identity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• examples of how individuals learn the culture of a society;• consider how the individual is socialised by the media.

Types of mass media

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• mass media;• globalisation;• communication;• interactivity;• convergence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• definitions and types of media;• new developments in mass media and their effects;• trends in ownership and control that illustrate globalisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• e.g. printed/electronic/broadcast;• world wide web creating online communities, international economies;• converging products, e.g. phones you can watch films on;• e.g. trans-national organisations.

The content of the mass media

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• selection;• bias;• stereotyping;• editor;• gatekeeper;• censorship;• agenda-setting;• news values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• media content creation: factors affecting the creation and selection of events and images in mass media;• media content presentation in relation to validity;• media content presentation in relation to the presentation of certain groups e.g. looking at gender, class, age and ethnicity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• e.g. editorial/political/technical/practical considerations;• looking at bias, editing;• looking specifically at the way images are created, e.g. distortion, repetition, invisibility;• using examples to discuss stereotypes, e.g. breadwinner male, housewife female.

The relationship between the audience and media

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• audience;• socialisation;• media effects models;• moral panics;• self-censorship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• how the media shapes values, attitudes and behaviour;• how the audience uses and controls the media;• the media's role in creating deviance: moral panics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the media and socialisation, e.g. the hypodermic syringe model vs. uses and gratifications model;• e.g. the audience and control over the Internet (self-censorship audience report misuse);• the audience and their need for a share of profitability;• pressure groups/PR departments/advertising executives/legal controls such as libel and contempt;• knowledge of the process of the creation of moral panics with contemporary examples to show understanding.

3.2.4 Sociology of the workplace

In this option, candidates explore issues of culture and socialisation through a detailed study of work. Candidates are expected to develop a critical understanding of issues surrounding work and employment. This includes knowledge of people's experiences of work, how work is changing and issues surrounding work and equality.

There are **four** key issues to consider:

- Workplace and identity;
- Types of work;
- People's experience of work;
- Equality in the workplace.

Workplace and identity

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• identity;• norms;• roles;• values;• culture;• socialisation;• workplace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• development of individual identity and the learning of social roles;• the role of the workplace in socialisation and identity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• examples of how individuals learn the culture of a society;• discuss the long-term unemployed: how are they not socialised in the same way as the employed?

Types of work

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• work;• employment;• unemployment;• leisure;• life chances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• exploration of different definitions of work and what constitutes work;• the meaning of work/employment;• how work influences life chances, family life and standard of living;• causes of unemployment and the distribution of unemployment according to class, ethnicity, gender and region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• e.g. white collar/blue collar and whether the distinctions still exist;• debate over whether housework is work;• what is the difference between the experience of being self-employed or employed? How does paid work influence our non-working lives?;• structural and individual reasons for unemployment.

People's experience of work

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• automation• computerisation;• re-skilling;• de-skilling;• alienation;• flexi-time;• part-time;• full-time;• intrinsic/extrinsic job satisfaction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• technological developments;• advantages and disadvantages of changing technology to workers and employers;• changing patterns of work;• enjoyment of work: intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction;• effect on family life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• examples of changes, e.g. Blackberry (hand-held computer/phone/Internet);• expansion of ICT;• e.g. alienation (call centres) vs. liberation (working from home);• e.g. working from home/loss of job for life/flexible working patterns/increase in part- and flexi-time/longer working hours as always available;• positive and negative effects;• functions of work: status, money noting the effects of unemployment.

Equality in the workplace

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• pay and working conditions;• career opportunities;• Trade Unions;• equal opportunities;• discrimination;• racism;• sexism: double burden;• ageism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• what is the influence of gender, ethnicity and age on employment opportunities and life chances?;• how workers gain rights: Trade Unions/industrial action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• debate on equality in the workplace;• examination of influences on equality: class, race, gender, age, legislation, discrimination, lack of skills;• types of power that the worker wields: Trade Unions, direct action, indirect action.

3.2.5 Sociology of crime and deviance

Candidates are expected to develop a critical understanding of crime, deviance and social control. This includes knowledge of definitions of crime and deviance, types of control and patterns of crime.

There are **four** key issues to consider:

- Definitions of crime and deviance;
- Controlling deviance and crime;
- Patterns of crime;
- Explanations of crime.

Definitions of crime and deviance

Key concepts:	Content:	Guidance:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• deviance;• crime;• delinquency;• norms;• values;• beliefs;• historical deviance;• situational deviance;• cross-cultural deviance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the social nature/relativity of deviance/standardisation of deviance, normality and conformity;• the relationship between crime and deviance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• how deviance changes historically, cross-culturally and according to social context;• the standardisation of deviance through international law, e.g. EU law;• e.g. is all crime deviant and vice-versa?

Controlling crime and deviance

Key concepts:

- informal control;
- formal control;
- conformity;
- agents of social control.

Content:

- types of social control (formal/informal);
- agencies of social control (family, school, peer-group, mass media, workplace and formal agencies including police and courts);
- solutions to crime: the effect of prisons; community service; mental health orders; ASBOs.

Guidance:

- use localised examples, e.g. why do people break the school rules? Refer to the idea of rules and the acceptable range: e.g. formal and informal rules, from minor to serious crime;
- understand how agencies actually impose control;
- understand the suitability of certain solutions to certain crimes, e.g. whether prisons are always the best solution.

Patterns of crime

Key concepts:

- official statistics;
- self-report studies;
- victim surveys.

Content:

- measurements of crime;
- crime and its impact on the community;
- patterns of crime by class; gender; ethnicity and age.

Guidance:

- knowledge of the different issues of validity connected with the differing measurements of crime;
- media responses to crime and fear of crime;
- knowledge of who commits crime and who is the victim.

Explanations of crime

Key concepts:

- socialisation;
- peer-group pressure;
- lack of opportunity;
- structural causes;
- labelling;
- sociological explanations.

Content:

- knowledge of the different explanations of why people commit crime;
- understanding the structural versus cultural nature of causes.

Guidance:

- ability to identify and evaluate the reasons why people commit crime.

3.2.6 Sociology of youth

Candidates are expected to develop a critical understanding of the social construction of youth; the peer-group's role as an agent of social control; the role of subculture for the youth of today and gang membership.

There are **four** key issues to consider:

- Defining youth;
- Control through peer group and gangs;
- Youth subculture;
- Gangs.

Defining youth

Key concepts:

- youth;
- rites of passage;
- adolescence;
- childhood;
- transition;
- social construction of youth;
- loss of innocence;
- disappearance of childhood;
- teenagers.

Content:

- knowledge of the biological vs. social construction views of youth;
- knowledge of cross-cultural rites of passage/initiation;
- knowledge of the debate over whether childhood is being eroded.

Guidance:

- examples of what symbolises childhood in the contemporary UK, e.g. legal rights and age limits such as when one can marry;
- debate the difference between biological views and sociological views;
- examples of any rites of passage that allow understanding of transition;
- debate over whether childhood still exists.

Control through peer group and gangs

Key concepts:

- informal control;
- formal control;
- conformity;
- agents of social control;
- Peer-group pressure.

Content:

- types of social control (formal/informal);
- agencies of social control (family, school, peer-group, mass media, workplace and formal agencies including police and courts);
- the role of the peer group in controlling the behaviour of young people.

Guidance:

- consider whether young people are controlled more by their peer group than other agencies of social control;
- understand how peer groups actually do control the behaviour of individuals, e.g. exclusion, peer-group pressure.

Youth subculture

Key concepts:

- youth culture;
- youth subcultures;
- bedroom subculture;
- growth of affluence;
- solution to problems;
- peer-group pressure;
- manipulation by the media.

Content:

- defining the different types of youth culture;
- relationship between youth subculture and identity ;
- reasons for the development of youth culture/youth subcultures.

Guidance:

- knowledge of different examples of youth culture/subcultures;
- ability to link subculture to identity/ behaviour/music/drugs;
- ability to look at issues of strata: class/race/gender, e.g. gender related issues: girl subcultures and invisible girls;
- knowledge of the differing reasons for the emergence of different subcultures.

Gangs

Key concepts:

- gangs;
- territory;
- delinquent subculture;
- social network;
- scapegoat;
- labelling;
- sense of belonging;
- status frustration;
- boredom.

Content:

- defining different types of gangs;
- reasons for joining gangs.

Guidance:

- examples of gangs;
 - being able to debate why young people join gangs.
-

3.3 Unit B673: *Applying Sociological Research Techniques*

This unit in the GCSE Sociology specification requires that candidates build on the knowledge gained in Unit B671 with reference to sociological research. Candidates will be provided with pre-released material, which will take the form of two investigations, both focusing on the same topic (as specified below). The investigations can be drawn from *any* area of sociological research. Candidates will then be examined on their understanding of the investigations – the process involved in preparing the topic for study, applying different methods and evidence to investigate it and then drawing conclusions from the data. Candidates should be able to analyse and evaluate different research methods and should be aware of the factors that are important when researching topic areas. Candidates should know about the strengths and weaknesses of research techniques, as applied to familiar material. They should be able to identify problems that can arise in research and identify and justify some possible solutions. Candidates may be required to make comparisons between the two investigations provided. They are expected to understand and use sociological concepts and terminology that are relevant to sociological research.

3.3.1 The topic area

The topic area specified each year is shown below for five years from 2010. The topic areas are included in Units B671 and B672.

Year of Examination	Pre-release Topic Area
2010	Gender
2011	Education
2012	Family
2013	Media
2014	Work

The topic area may be adapted and applied to any aspect of social life, which need not be from the specification. For example:

- The topic of gender could be related to work, sport, crime or any other area of social life that is not necessarily covered in the specification.
- The topic of family could be related to different ethnic patterns, socialisation, marriage or any area of social life that is not necessarily mentioned in the specification.

3.3.2 Sociological research techniques

Candidates must be aware of how research methods, secondary sources and results relate to the hypothesis/aims within the pre-released case studies. If research methods, secondary sources and results fail to relate sociologically to the hypothesis/aims of the investigation, candidates need to see this as a research issue. For both investigations in the pre-released material, candidates must be able to explain the importance of the hypothesis. They must be able to relate the hypothesis to the topic area and the wider social structure (including links to society and to other topics/social issues covered in the specification).

Key content and guidance:

Candidates should have a clear understanding of a hypothesis as a prediction to be tested. They need to understand how to test the hypothesis objectively.

Hypothesis: A testable statement or claim about society and not a question.

Aim: A planned action, the outcome of which is intended to produce data that could help to prove/disprove the hypothesis.

Primary methods:

- questionnaires;
- observation (participant, non-participant overt and covert);
- interviews (structured, semi-structured and unstructured);
- content analysis.

Candidates should have a clear definition of each method and its main uses within sociological research. They should be clear about the type of evidence that can be gathered using each method.

Candidates should be able to justify the choice of the methods used with regards to each of the two investigations and should be able to critically analyse the issues associated with the choice of methods. They should consider the main advantages and disadvantages of each method, in relation to the aims and hypothesis of each of the two investigations.

Secondary sources:

- official statistics;
- non-official statistical data;
- historical documents and personal documents and diaries;
- broadcast media material (e.g. TV, radio);
- published media material (e.g. newspapers, magazines);
- Internet;
- published sociological studies.

Candidates should know about the different types of sources available to sociologists. They should know why different types of sources are used and required, and how they complement each other when used in sociological research.

Candidates should be able to justify why certain sources may have been selected with regard to the specific case study and should be able to critically analyse the issues associated with the choice of source. They should consider the main advantages and disadvantages of each source, in relation to the aims and hypothesis of the case study.

Evidence:

- quantitative;
- qualitative.

3.3.3 Planning and applying research techniques

Key content and guidance:

Preparing a topic for research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• creating aims;
Research plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the main stages of social research;
Selection of secondary sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• practical issues (time, cost and access);
Selection of primary methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• pilot studies;
Recognition of possible problems and strategies to resolve these	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• sampling frame;
Selection and representation of respondents and/or sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• sampling (type – stratified, snowball, random and systematic; composition – social factors such as gender, age, religion and size);• using more than one method;• avoiding researcher bias.

Candidates should be able to understand and apply the main principles, stages and features of research design.

Ethical issues:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• researchers' responsibilities to themselves and others;• conduct and competence of researcher;• consent of participants;• confidentiality of information and data;• suitability of topic under investigation.
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Candidates should have an understanding of the main ethical issues of sociological research and be able to apply these to the case studies.

3.3.4 Collecting and using information and evidence

Key content and guidance:

Primary methods:	Applying the chosen methods of collecting data.
Secondary sources:	How to apply the evidence collected from secondary sources to the hypothesis and aims.

Candidates should be able to explain how the methods and sources were used and why.

Different types of data:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the distinction between secondary and primary data;• the distinction between qualitative and quantitative data.
--------------------------	--

Candidates should be able to justify why different types of data were used/not used in relation to the aims and hypothesis in the case study. Candidates should be able to explain how the specific data used can support/complement different types of data.

Quantitative evidence:	Primary <ul style="list-style-type: none">• statistical data from the primary methods used. Secondary <ul style="list-style-type: none">• official statistics;• non-official statistical data.
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Candidates should be able to explain the type of data collected in relation to the aims and hypothesis in the case study.

Qualitative evidence:

Primary

- any descriptive data from the primary methods used.

Secondary: in-depth data from:

- historical documents and evidence;
- personal documents and diaries;
- media material, e.g. newspapers, TV, radio, Internet, magazines.

3.3.5 Concluding the study

Key content and guidance:

Drawing conclusions from the evidence

- findings from the primary methods;

Relating the evidence back to the aims

- findings from the secondary sources;

Proving or disproving the hypothesis

- making generalisations;
- making conclusions from the data in relation to the aims of the study;
- relating the data collected back to the hypothesis to see if the claim is true.

Candidates should be able to recognise whether or not any patterns emerge from the data. They should be able to identify results that support the aims and show the hypothesis to be true, and results that contradict and do not support them.

3.3.6 Evaluating the techniques used and the evidence collected

Key content and guidance:

Critical understanding of the issues of research developed from applying the techniques

- designing the techniques, e.g. questionnaire, observation schedule, sampling method;
- using the methods and sources to collect data;
- strengths and weaknesses of information collected by the primary methods used;
- strengths and weaknesses of information collected from the secondary sources;
- exaggeration, distortion, selection and bias;
- researcher objectivity
- representation;
- reliability of research methods;
- validity of data obtained;
- ethical issues
- accepting or amending the hypothesis;
- taking the research further.

Candidates should be able to evaluate all the techniques used and all the evidence collected during the research. Consideration of the researcher's own skills and background, in relation to those needed to conduct research, should also be possible. Candidates should be able to identify further possible changes to the study to overcome problems or weaknesses and/or ways the study could be developed further.

4 Scheme of Assessment

4.1 GCSE Scheme of Assessment

GCSE Sociology J696

Unit B671: *Sociology Basics*

25% of the total GCSE marks
1 hr written paper
60 marks

This question paper has **two** sections:

Section A: Candidates are required to answer a **compulsory** structured question, on research methods in Sociology. This will be based on source material presented in the examination.

Section B: Candidates are required to answer a **compulsory** structured question on key concepts in Sociology. This will be based on source material presented in the examination.

Candidates answer **all** questions.

This unit is externally assessed.

Unit B672: *Socialisation, Culture and Identity*

50% of the total GCSE marks
1 hr 30 mins written paper
120 marks

This questions paper has **six** sections with one four-part structured question in each:

Candidates are required to answer **three** four-part structured questions chosen from any section. There will be **one** question on each of the following topics:

Section A: Family

Section B: Education

Section C: Mass media

Section D: Work

Section E: Crime and deviance

Section F: Youth

Candidates answer any **three** questions.

This unit is externally assessed.

Unit B673: *Applying Sociological Research Techniques*

25% of the total GCSE marks
1 hr written paper
60 marks

This question paper is based on pre-released research material.

The pre-released material will consist of two pieces of research that can be drawn from any area of sociological research. Both case studies will focus on the topic of the year.

The pre-released material consists of a maximum of 10 sides of A4 and is sent to centres before the examination.

Candidates answer **all** questions.

This unit is externally assessed.

4.2 Entry Options

GCSE candidates must be entered for all **three** units.

Candidates must be entered for certification to claim their overall GCSE qualification grade. All candidates should be entered under the following certification code:

OCR GCSE in Sociology – J696.

4.3 Tiers

This scheme of assessment is untiered, covering all of the ability range grades from A* to G. Candidates achieving less than the minimum mark for Grade G will be ungraded.

4.4 Assessment Availability

There is one examination series each year, in June. All units will be assessed from June 2010.

Assessment availability can be summarised as follows:

Unit	June 2010	June 2011 etc
B671	✓	✓
B672	✓	✓
B673	✓	✓

GCSE certification is available from June 2011.

4.5 Assessment Objectives

Candidates are expected to demonstrate the following in the context of the content described:

AO1 Demonstrate Knowledge and Understanding

- Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of social structures, processes and issues.

AO2 Apply Knowledge and Understanding

- Apply knowledge and understanding in a range of contexts both familiar and unfamiliar.

AO3 Analysis and Evaluation

- Select, interpret, analyse and evaluate information from different sources.

AO weightings – GCSE

The relationship between the units and the assessment objectives of the scheme of assessment is shown in the following grid.

Unit	% of GCSE			Total
	AO1	AO2	AO3	
Unit B671: <i>Sociology Basics</i>	11	9	5	25%
Unit B672: <i>Socialisation, Culture and Identity</i>	22	15	13	50%
Unit B673: <i>Applying Sociological Research Techniques</i>	4	10	11	25%
	37%	34%	29%	100%

4.6 Quality of Written Communication

Quality of written communication is assessed in all units.

Candidates are expected to:

- ensure that text is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate so that meaning is clear;
- present information in a form that suits its purpose;
- use a suitable structure and style of writing.

5 Technical Information

5.1 Making Unit Entries

Please note that centres must be registered with OCR in order to make any entries, including estimated entries. It is recommended that centres apply to OCR to become a registered centre well in advance of making their first entries.

It is essential that unit entry codes are quoted in all correspondence with OCR.

Unit Entry code	Unit titles	Component code	Assessment type
B671	<i>Sociology Basics</i>	01	Paper Based Test
B672	<i>Socialisation, Culture and Identity</i>	01	Paper Based Test
B673	<i>Applying Sociological Research Techniques</i>	01	Paper Based Test

5.2 Terminal Rules

Candidates must take at least 40% of the assessment in the same series they enter for the full course qualification certification. Either B671 (25%) + B673 (25%) or B672 (50%) or all three units or B671/ B673 and B672.

5.3 Unit and Qualification Re-sits

Candidates may re-sit each unit once before entering for certification for a GCSE.

Candidates may enter for the qualifications an unlimited number of times.

5.4 Making Qualification Entries

Candidates must enter for qualification certification separately from unit assessment(s). If a certification entry is **not** made, no overall grade can be awarded.

Candidates may enter for:

- GCSE certification (entry code J696).

A candidate who has completed all the units required for the qualification must enter for certification in the same examination series in which the terminal rules are satisfied.

GCSE certification is available from June 2011.

5.5 Grading

Both GCSE (Short Course) and GCSE results are awarded on the scale A* to G. Units are awarded a* to g. Grades are indicated on certificates. However, results for candidates who fail to achieve the minimum grade (G or g) will be recorded as *unclassified* (U or u) and this is **not** certificated.

Both GCSE (Short Course) and GCSE are unitised schemes. Candidates can take units across several different series provided the terminal rules are satisfied. They can also re-sit units or choose from optional units available. When working out candidates' overall grades OCR needs to be able to compare performance on the same unit in different series when different grade boundaries have been set, and between different units. OCR uses a Uniform Mark Scale to enable this to be done.

A candidate's uniform mark for each unit is calculated from the candidate's raw marks on that unit. The raw mark boundary marks are converted to the equivalent uniform mark boundary. Marks between grade boundaries are converted on a pro rata basis.

When unit results are issued, the candidate's unit grade and uniform mark are given. The uniform mark is shown out of the maximum uniform mark for the unit e.g. 60/120.

The specification is graded on a Uniform Mark Scale. The uniform mark thresholds for each of the assessments are shown below:

(GCSE) Unit Weighting	Maximum Unit Uniform Mark	Unit Grade								
		a*	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	u
50%	120	108	96	84	72	60	48	36	24	0
25%	60	54	48	42	36	30	24	18	12	0

Candidate's uniform marks for each module are aggregated and grades for the specification are generated on the following Uniform Mark Scale.

Qualification	Max Uniform Mark	Qualification Grade								U
		A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
GCSE	240	216	192	168	144	120	96	72	48	0

Awarding Grades

The written papers will have a total weighting of 100%.

A candidate's mark for each paper will be combined in the appropriate weighting to give a total mark for the specification. The candidate's grade will be determined by the total uniform mark.

5.6 Enquiries about Results

Under certain circumstances, a centre may wish to query the result issued to one or more candidates. Enquiries about Results for GCSE units must be made immediately following the series in which the relevant unit was taken (by the Enquiries about Results deadline).

Please refer to the *JCQ Post-Results Services* booklet and the *OCR Admin Guide* for further guidance about action on the release of results. Copies of the latest versions of these documents can be obtained from the OCR website.

5.7 Shelf-Life of Units

Individual unit results, prior to certification of the qualification, have a shelf-life limited only by that of the qualification.

5.8 Guided Learning Hours

GCSE Sociology requires 120–140 guided learning hours in total.

5.9 Code of Practice/Common Criteria Requirements/Subject Criteria

This specification complies in all respects with the current *GCSE, GCE and AEA Code of Practice* as available on the QCA website, *The Statutory Regulation of External Qualifications 2004* and the subject criteria for GCSE Sociology.

5.10 Classification Code

Candidates who enter for the OCR GCSE specifications may not also enter for any other GCSE specification with the certification title *Sociology* in the same examination series.

Every specification is assigned to a national classification code indicating the subject area to which it belongs.

The classification code for this specification is 4890.

Centres should be aware that candidates who enter for more than one GCSE qualification with the same classification code will have only one grade (the highest) counted for the purpose of the School and College Performance Tables.

Centres may wish to advise candidates that, if they take two specifications with the same classification code, schools and colleges are very likely to take the view that they have achieved only one of the two GCSEs. The same view may be taken if candidates take two GCSE specifications that have different classification codes but have significant overlap of content. Candidates who have any doubts about their subject combinations should seek advice, for example from their centre or the institution to which they wish to progress.

5.11 Disability Discrimination Act Information Relating to this Specification

GCSEs often require assessment of a broad range of competences. This is because they are general qualifications and, as such, prepare candidates for a wide range of occupations and higher level courses.

The revised GCSE qualifications and subject criteria were reviewed to identify whether any of the competences required by the subject presented a potential barrier to any disabled candidates. If this was the case, the situation was reviewed again to ensure that such competences were included only where essential to the subject. The findings of this process were discussed with disability groups and with disabled people.

Reasonable adjustments are made for disabled candidates in order to enable them to access the assessments and to demonstrate what they know and can do. For this reason, very few candidates will have a complete barrier to the assessment. Information on reasonable adjustments is found in *Regulations and Guidance Relating to Candidates who are Eligible for Adjustments in Examinations* produced by the Joint Council www.jcq.org.uk.

Candidates who are unable to access part of the assessment, even after exploring all possibilities through reasonable adjustments, may still be able to receive an award based on the parts of the assessment they have taken.

The access arrangements permissible for use in this specification are in line with QCA's GCSE subject criteria equalities review and are as follows:

	Yes/No	Type of assessment
Readers	Y	All written examinations
Scribes	Y	All written examinations
Practical assistants	Y	All written examinations
Word processors	Y	All written examinations
Transcripts	Y	All written examinations
BSL signers	Y	All written examinations
Live speaker	Y	All written examinations
MQ papers	Y	All written examinations
Extra Time	Y	All written examinations

5.12 Arrangements for Candidates with Particular Requirements

Candidates who are not disabled under the terms of the DDA may be eligible for access arrangements to enable them to demonstrate what they know and can do. Candidates who have been fully prepared for the assessment but who are ill at the time of the examination, or are too ill to take part of the assessment, may be eligible for special consideration. Centres should consult the *Regulations and Guidance Relating to Candidates who are Eligible for Adjustments in Examinations* produced by the Joint Council.

6 Other Specification Issues

6.1 Overlap with other Qualifications

There is a small degree of overlap between the content of this specification and those for GCSE Home Economics (Child Development), GCSE Humanities, Foundation and Intermediate GNVQ in Health and Social Care.

6.2 Progression from these Qualifications

GCSE qualifications are general qualifications which enable candidates to progress either directly to employment, or to proceed to further qualifications.

Progression to further study from GCSE will depend upon the number and nature of the grades achieved. Broadly, candidates who are awarded mainly Grades D to G at GCSE could either strengthen their base through further study of qualifications at Level 1 within the National Qualifications Framework or could proceed to Level 2. Candidates who are awarded mainly Grades A* to C at GCSE would be well prepared for study at Level 3 within the National Qualifications Framework.

6.3 Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social, Legislative, Economic and Cultural Issues

This specification offers opportunities which can contribute to an understanding of these issues in the following topics:

- Spiritual issues are prevalent in the specification, although not applicable to any particular unit.
- Cultural issues are a central concern of Sociology and underpin the GCSE subject criteria for Sociology, which forms the basis of this specification. They arise, therefore, throughout the specification.
- Moral and social issues are also a central concern of Sociology and should be considered throughout courses based on the specification.
- The ethical dimension of social research should be considered in the Methodology sub-section in Unit B671: *Sociology Basics* and further in B673: *Applying Sociological Research Techniques*. Ethics are at the forefront of sociological enquiry and ethical issues arise whenever social research is carried out. The importance of adhering to ethical guidelines is emphasised in Unit B672: *Socialisation, Culture and Identity*.

- Economic issues are touched upon in Unit B672: *Socialisation, Culture and Identity, Crime Deviance and Social Control*.

6.4 Sustainable Development, Health and Safety Considerations and European Developments, Consistent with International Agreements

This specification supports these issues, consistent with current EU agreements, in the following topics:

- OCR has taken account of the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community and the Report *Environmental Responsibility: An Agenda for Further and Higher Education*, 1993, in preparing this specification and associated specimen assessments. Environmental issues may be particularly addressed in the options Protest and social movements and Contemporary social changes. European and other cross-cultural examples should be used where appropriate in the delivery of the subject content.

6.5 Avoidance of Bias

OCR has taken great care in the preparation of this specification and assessment materials to avoid bias of any kind.

6.6 Language

This specification and associated assessment materials are in English only.

6.7 Key Skills

This specification provides opportunities for the development of the Key Skills of *Communication, Application of Number, Information Technology, Working with Others, Improving Own Learning and Performance* and *Problem Solving* at Levels 1 and/or 2. However, the extent to which this evidence fulfils the Key Skills criteria at these levels will be totally dependent on the style of teaching and learning adopted for each unit.

The following table indicates where opportunities may exist for at least some coverage of the various Key Skills criteria at Levels 1 and/or 2 for each unit.

Unit	C		AoN		IT		WwO		IOLP		PS	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
B671	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
B672	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
B673	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Detailed opportunities for generating Key Skills evidence through this specification are posted on the OCR website (www.ocr.org.uk). A summary document for Key Skills Coordinators showing ways in which opportunities for Key Skills arise within GCSE courses has been published.

6.8 ICT

In order to play a full part in modern society, candidates need to be confident and effective users of ICT. Where appropriate, candidates should be given opportunities to use ICT in order to further their study of Sociology, especially in unit B673.

6.9 Citizenship

Since September 2002, the National Curriculum for England at Key Stage 4 has included a mandatory programme of study for Citizenship. Parts of this Programme of Study may be delivered through an appropriate treatment of other subjects.

This section offers guidance on opportunities for developing knowledge, skills and understanding of citizenship issues during the course. These opportunities are also indicated within the content of:

GCSE Sociology units B671–3.

- Citizenship provides valuable opportunities for candidates to learn about the diverse communities in which they now live and to understand how they function socially, politically and culturally. Through citizenship, pupils gain knowledge, understanding and skills to play an effective role in society as informed, thoughtful and responsible individuals who are aware of their duties and rights. They investigate, discuss and debate everyday topical issues and events (local, national and global) and explore different opinions and values. Citizenship enables pupils to develop and practise skills of enquiry, communication, participation and responsible action whilst learning about such issues. These skills are prevalent in the study of GCSE Sociology as a whole.

Appendix A: Grade Descriptions

Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The descriptions must be interpreted in relation to the content in the specification; they are not designed to define that content. The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of the assessment may be balanced by better performance in others.

The grade descriptors have been produced by the regulatory authorities in collaboration with the awarding bodies.

Grade F

Candidates recall, select and communicate basic knowledge and understanding of some aspects of social structures, processes, and issues.

They identify and explain in a simple, limited and uncritical way the use of methods, sources, information and data to address a question or issue.

They identify evidence and relate it in a simple way to arguments. They present simple conclusions that are sometimes supported by evidence.

Grade C

Candidates recall, select and communicate sound knowledge and understanding of different social structures, processes and issues.

They apply appropriate concepts, terms and theories in a range of contexts. They analyse, in a limited way, the structures, processes and issues mentioned in the specification. They recognise and describe relevant issues, making reference to appropriate arguments and evidence. They make straightforward links between structures, processes and issues.

They identify and explain, in a limited way, the use of methods, sources, information and data to address a question or issue. They deploy a range of information and data as evidence for conclusions.

Grade A

Candidates recall, select and communicate detailed knowledge and thorough understanding of relevant social structures, processes and issues.

They apply relevant concepts, terms and theories effectively in a range of contexts. They recognise issues and debates and deploy relevant evidence to reach valid conclusions. They analyse links between structures, processes and issues to produce grounded analyses.

They identify, explain and evaluate the use of a range of appropriate methods, sources, information and data to address a question or issue. They interpret information and data presented

in a variety of forms, critically evaluate its relevance in relation to the arguments, and reach substantiated conclusions. They use concepts, terminology and conventions accurately and appropriately.

Appendix B: At a Glance – GCSE Sociology

Unit B671: *Sociology Basics (25% of GCSE)*

This unit encourages candidates to develop a critical understanding of sociological evidence and research processes and includes knowledge of the main methods and strategies of sociological research. It also introduces basic key concepts in Sociology and makes links between the individual and society.

Assessment is through one 60-minute examination comprising of two compulsory structured questions, one based on research methods and one based on key concepts.

Unit B672: *Socialisation, Culture and Identity (50% of GCSE)*

This unit offers a choice of substantive topics through which the themes of culture, socialisation and identity are developed. It builds upon the knowledge and skills acquired in Unit B671, and seeks to develop an understanding of the nature of sociological thought in the context of the topics studied.

This unit offers six optional sections from which candidates must study **at least three**:

- **Family**
- **Education**
- **Mass media**
- **Work**
- **Crime and deviance**
- **Youth.**

Assessment is through one 90-minute examination comprising of four structured questions per section. There are six sections in this paper and candidates must answer **all** questions from any **three** of the sections.

Unit B673: *Applying Sociological Research Techniques (25% of GCSE)*

This unit allows candidates the freedom to express their sociological knowledge and interest in topic areas relating to units B671 and B672. A critical awareness of the nature of sociological knowledge, understanding and evidence will be developed.

Assessment is through one 60-minute examination comprising of two sections. Assessment is based on pre-released investigations.