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SOCIOLOGY

TRANSITION RESOURCES
EXAM BOARD: AQA

Transition Material
Sociology A-level – Session 1

This series of exercises will introduce you to some of the **key terms** used within Sociology A-level. The key terms are numbered and there are tasks included for you to complete. You will finish by completing a definitions table of each of the key terms, using your understanding from reading the terms.

Once each of these key terms exercise has been completed, there will be some exercises where you can look at some aspects of society and use your new-found knowledge of key terms to help you to understand and discuss what is going on. But that's a few weeks away yet …baby steps.

Remember, each of these exercises should only take about an hour per week; some may take a little less, some a little more. If you find anything really interesting you can always dig deeper into it yourself – independent learning and further reading is a key skill for all A Level subjects.

Key Term 1: Socialisation

TASKS

1.) *Make a list of 8 behaviours that you have been taught are correct to perform in society.*

2.) Make a list of 8 behaviours that you know you would get you into trouble in society.

3.) Think about your own development- what things in your life have shaped the person you have become? Your speech, your attitudes, your dress, your interests etc.

What is Socialisation?

This is the most important key term in Sociology. **Socialisation** is the process by which we learn norms and values i.e. the correct way to behave in society. **Norms** are rules that everyone in society is expected to follow. Example of a norm could be treating others with respect, queuing, not physically hurting people, working hard, punctuality and wearing clothes. **Values** are ideas and concepts that are important to people, such as respect. Norms are based on values.

Sociologists believe that we learn what is good or bad behaviour from our society and upbringing. This process is called socialisation and is always happening. It is carried out by specific social institutions. The main institutions that teach us norms and values include: The Family, passes on **Primary Socialisation-** the first people we come into contact with and learn basic right and wrong from. Education, The Mass Media, The Workplace, Religion and The Peer Group, are all sources of **Secondary Socialisation**. Each of these will be discussed later on. Different types of sociologist have different opinions on whether this socialisation is good for us. Norms and values are closely linked. For example, if I value respect and order, then I may follow the norm that we should queue. The values I hold shape the norms that I follow.

Socialisation is the process by which we learn norms and values. Sociologists argue that this happens in two stages: Primary and Secondary (see session 2 next time)

TASK

Do norms and values change? Find an adult that you live with. Firstly, explain to them in your own words what a norm and a value is. Now ask them what norms and values they grew up with that they think have changed over their lifetime and write these down. Then ask which norms and values they grew up with have not changed and write these down.

Watch this video about Norm (he's cool and sick) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1cLfd50BdcE

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Key Term 2: Primary Socialisation

This takes place in the first five years of a person's life. The main agent of primary socialisation is the family. This teaches you the fundamental norms and values of society and continues to do so later in life. The mass media is also increasingly involved in the process of primary socialisation, as children are now exposed to the media from a very young age through children's books, TV shows, films and apps.

What do you learn in Primary Socialisation? A whole range of skills, from learning to speak to basic manners (such as saying please and thank you). During this period you learn the fundamental skills for getting on in your society.

TASK

Apart from those mentioned above, what other things did you learn in your first 5 years of life?

What if you don't receive Primary Socialisation? Children who do not receive primary socialisation (usually because they have been isolated from other human beings) are known as **feral children**.

Key Term 3: Feral Children

There have been many cases of feral children, though some are believed to have been faked. There are many fictional stories of children raised without humans (like Tarzan and Mowgli) and some real-life stories that are similar (e.g. **Amala and Kampala**, raised by wolves in India), but most sociologists believe that the children are not 'raised' by the animals – they just grow up near them. Most cases of feral children are the result of neglect (they are ignored by their parents). This might include the Ukrainian girl **Oxana Malaya**, who grew up in a kennel, or **Danielle Crockett**, a girl from Florida, USA, who was kept alone in a locked room. Feral children are important to sociologists as they can be seen as more evidence of the importance of socialisation to help us learn. Feral children are generally unable to communicate and are often unable to walk properly or use their hands well.

TASK

Use Google or YouTube to watch a clip on Feral Children- use names from the text below to search.

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Key Term 4: Secondary Socialisation

This is the second wave of socialisation that we receive when we begin to interact more with others outside of our immediate family. This is performed by several other social institutions, including:

• Education • The Media • Religion • The Workplace • The Peer Group.

TASK

Fill in the table below with examples of things (especially behaviours) you learn from each of the social institutions bullet pointed above:

Education	Media	Religion	Workplace	Peer Group

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Key Term 5: Formal Social Control

TASK

How are people controlled in society? Think about what things encourage us and discourage us from performing certain behaviours (Think family, school, religion, police etc.)

Social Control refers to how society controls our behaviour and forces us to follow norms and values. There are two kinds of social control: formal social control and informal social control. Our behaviour is controlled through the use of consequences (sanctions). These consequences are either positive sanctions (rewards) or negative sanctions (punishments). Agents of Formal Social Control are supported by the law. These include the police and the law courts. They are able to use the law to punish those who break the law through formal warnings, imprisonment, fines and community service etc. The main purpose of these agents is to enforce the laws of society and regulate social behaviour.

Key Term 6: Informal Social Control

Agents of Informal Social Control These agents are still very influential. However, they do not have the backing of the law by themselves (though they can bring in the courts or the police). These agents still apply their own positive and negative sanctions. Each of the Agents of Socialisation we have looked at can also act as Agents of Informal Social Control as they have the ability to sanction different behaviour and force people to follow norms and values. As with socialisation, you need to be able to explain why each of these is a successful or unsuccessful agent of social control. The chart below shows different sanctions some agents may use:

Agent	Positive Sanction	Negative Sanction
The Family	Praise, pocket money, presents	Punishment (verbally or physically), withdrawal of support, guilt
Education	Rewards (e.g. House Points), prizes, praise, recognition, stickers	Detentions, guilt, being told off, exclusion, isolation, withdrawal of privileges
Peers	Praise, popularity, respect	Disrespect, bullying, isolation, name-calling
Religion	Promises of heaven / good afterlife, praise	Threats of hell / bad afterlife, guilt, isolation (excommunication).
Workplace	Praise, pay-rise, promotion, opportunities, bonus	Disciplinary, withheld promotion or pay-rise, sacking

TASK

Which of the agents of social control (both formal and informal) do you think have more of an impact on your own behaviours? Explain how and why?

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Key term 7: IDENTITY

TASK

What are the distinctive characteristics that make you who you are? And where do you think you have got these from? Family? Peers? Etc.

Your identity is what makes you who you are – everything that contributes to how you see yourself and how others see you. A person's identity is shaped by their values – whether something is an important part of your identity can be affected by what you believe to be significant. For example, for some people their job is a large part of their identity, while for others it is only a small part of who they are.

Aside from our hobbies, interests and personality, our identities are shaped by several sociological concepts. Our family, education, work, peers, religion and entertainment choices all have an effect on our identity, as well as our gender, ethnicity, sexuality, age, body shape and sense of nationality. A good way to think about your identity is to think about how you would introduce yourself. Two important sociological concepts linked to identity are social roles and social status.

Sometimes we can construct different identities for different social situations, including online. And to further complicate matters, how we see ourselves is not always how others see us.

TASK

Are there any things that you change about the identity that you project to others, depending on the social situation? Do you present a different identity to your family than you do to your friends?

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Key term 8: ROLES

TASK

List the different roles that:

A.) Women usually/traditionally do in the family/around the home:

B.) Men usually/traditionally do in the family/around the home:

What are roles?

A social role is the part (or parts) you play in society. Certain norms are linked to specific roles. For example, the Prime Minister is expected to behave in specific ways that are in keeping with his role. Sociologists believe that we learn our roles in society through socialisation and they become part of our identity. Most people have multiple roles; we are not limited to just one part in society. For example, I might be a teacher, brother, son, friend, peer and manager, all at the same time. Each of those roles has with it certain norms that I would be expected to follow. The difficulty comes when we experience role conflict – when one of my roles clashes with another of my roles. For example, my role as a teacher is to mark my students' work. But what if there is a family crisis and I cannot get my marking done due to my role as a son and brother? We also have gender roles in society- that is, the roles that men and women adopt.

TASKS

Watch some TV (best homework EVER!!!). More specifically watch the adverts. Make notes on the sorts of products being advertised and the gender roles that are being shown or reinforced (who is doing different things? What is the gender of the voiceover if there is one?) What stereotypes are being emphasised in these adverts. Make your notes below.

Do you think that gender roles (the roles that men and women are generally, or traditionally, expected to do) are out-of-date? Are they changing? In what ways are they changing?

Are there roles that you think men and women are better suited to? Or do you think that men and women can perform all roles equally well? Write down your thoughts and give examples to illustrate what you mean.

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Key Term 9: SOCIAL STATUS

TASK

What do you think gives people their status? i.e. their position in society? List some ideas.

Social status refers to your position in society. This is generally imagined as a sort of hierarchy. We gain our position in society in two main ways:

1) Ascribed Status: this is when you have no control over your status; it is given to you. Examples of this could be being born into a specific family (e.g. the Royal Family) or inheriting wealth that affects your status (e.g. make you a millionaire.) A person might have an ascribed status as a widow or an orphan as well.

2) Achieved Status: this is when you have earned your status. This could be done through education, getting a new job, becoming a parent or even getting married or committing a crime. An achieved status is any position you gained due to your own actions.

Another term associated with social status is **socio-economic status or social class**. In the UK, there is a social hierarchy to which different people belong. This is known as the social class system. In this country, social class is generally determined by our job. If you are child, it would be determined by your parents' jobs. However, some sociologists have also said that social class is affected by a person's education and their connections in society.

There are three main classes in British society:

1) **Upper Class:** this refers to small proportion of people who are at the top of British society. They often have a lot of influence and generally have a lot of money.

2) **Middle Class:** this class is generally well-educated and tends to be made of professionals like doctors or of people in managerial positions. Sometimes these are known as 'white collar' occupations.

3) **Working Class:** there are different levels of working class, but many working-class people are likely to do jobs that do not require a university degree. Within this group you can find skilled workers and unskilled workers. These are sometimes referred to as 'blue collar' occupations.

TASK

What impact do you think social class has upon a person's life, both positively and negatively? Try to think about the following areas and note your thoughts and explanations.

Education	Housing
Health	**Social life**

TASK

Some sociologists think that the idea of social classes is outdated and they don't really exist any more. What do you think?

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Key Term 9: DIVERSITY

TASK: List the ways in which people vary in society- think about different groups and identities that exist these days.

Diversity is another word for difference. As Sociologists, we must compare differences within British society and between our society as a whole and other societies around the world. Doing this helps us better understand the way we have developed. Academics who study other cultures are sometimes called anthropologists. Some important key terms:

1. Culture: The whole life of a society, including its norms and values, language and traditions.

2. Dominant Culture: The main, or biggest, culture of a society or country.

3. Subculture: A culture within another culture. This has its own norms and values, but will often share some norms and values with its Dominant Culture.

4. Cultural Relativity/Diversity: when a culture has different norms and values and traditions to another culture.

TASKS

In the UK today, what do you think is the dominant culture? Write down some of its key features.

Identify a subculture within the UK today. Try to avoid thinking along ethnic lines and choose a subculture that defines itself along different lines – perhaps by age or hobbies/interests. Write down some of the key features of this subculture that are different from the dominant culture.

Compare UK culture with the culture of a different country, perhaps the US or France. In what ways are our cultures similar and in what ways are they visibly very different. You might want to do a little research on this.

Watch this YouTube video. It brings together things about diversity in cultures with norms of behaviour and agents of social control. It's 17 minutes long but I think you'll find it really interesting.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oqkzp9C2VyI

Transition Material
Sociology A-level – Session 9

Final Activity

Use the table below to summarise what you have learned from the previous 8 sessions.

Key Term	Definition
Socialisation	
Primary Socialisation	
Feral Children	
Secondary Socialisation	

Formal Social Control	
Informal Social Control	
Identity	
Roles	
Social Status	
Diversity	