

## Sociology - Year 12 to 13 Summer Independent Learning 2023

### Introduction

One of the topics you study in A Level Sociology is “Theory and Methods”. This topic appears on both Papers 1 and 3 of your AQA Sociology exams in June 2024. In April/May, you learned about the “Methods” that sociologists use to do their research. In Sept/Oct we will be learning the “Theory” part. This builds on the knowledge you have already gained from learning about the theories in Family/Education, and also the Methods topic.

The specification detail – Theory and Methods:

#### 4.1.3 Theory and Methods

Students must examine the following areas:

- quantitative and qualitative methods of research; research design
- sources of data, including questionnaires, interviews, participant and non-participant observation, experiments, documents and official statistics
- the distinction between primary and secondary data, and between quantitative and qualitative data
- the relationship between positivism, interpretivism and sociological methods; the nature of ‘social facts’
- the theoretical, practical and ethical considerations influencing choice of topic, choice of method(s) and the conduct of research
- consensus, conflict, structural and social action theories
- the concepts of modernity and post-modernity in relation to sociological theory
- the nature of science and the extent to which Sociology can be regarded as scientific
- the relationship between theory and methods
- debates about subjectivity, objectivity and value freedom
- the relationship between Sociology and social policy.

Completed  
in Yr12

To complete  
in Yr13

The Theories and Methods booklets are collated in printed as one folded booklet. This is the booklet you have been using recently. Complete 1 - 6 T&M for your SIL. For each of the T&M booklets you need to:

- Read and annotate the section in the folded booklet
- Complete the relevant tasks in the work book.
- Bring all completed work and both booklets to your first lesson in September

Complete the following “Methods in Context” Essay Question

Read **Item B** below and answer the question that follows.

**Item B**

**Investigating pupils' decisions on future education and careers**

At various stages in school, all children are faced with decisions about their future. For example, some pupils may choose to go to university for a variety of reasons. Other pupils may consider options such as apprenticeships or going directly into a job.

Some sociologists may use structured interviews to study pupils' decisions on their future education and choice of career. They are conducted face to face in a formal way, as each interviewee is usually asked the same questions in the same order. However, structured interviews may be influenced by the assumptions of the researcher about how and why career choices are made.

Applying material from **Item B** and your knowledge of research methods, evaluate the strengths and limitations of using structured interviews to investigate pupils' decisions on their future education and careers.

**[20 marks]**