

Sociology KS5 - Statement of Intent

“My students often ask me, 'What is sociology?' And I tell them, 'It's the study of the way in which human beings are shaped by things that they don't see.’ (Sam Richards-award winning teacher and sociologist at Penn State University).

Sociologists study the construction of society and the social groups within it. They consider patterns of human behaviour, including how individuals interact and cooperate with one another. This highlights how society can be interpreted as either being in a state of harmony, where everyone shares common values and is equal, or is in a state of conflict, where individuals have different interpretations of the world and are thus unequal.

Sociologists also examine beliefs and routines, considering where they come from and if they derive from underlying social factors. Therefore, A-level Sociology addresses important questions that the majority of human beings are interested in. Are we born with certain norms and values, or are they always socially constructed?

Year 12

Substantive Knowledge

At All Saints Academy, our Year 12 students of Sociology will cover the following topics: families and households, education and research methods. The Families and Households unit of study considers different types of family, and how these change and develop over time to meet the needs of society as a whole, and the ever-growing economy. The Education unit is very popular with our students, as they can relate to the issues and debates studied. We focus on the role and function of education within society, and how it relates to the economy. Furthermore, our Year 12 students will study specific roles and relationships students have within educational institutions, and if and how these may have a positive or negative impact on their overall attainment. Finally, the Research Methods unit enables learners of sociology to understand how and why sociologists conduct their research.

Disciplinary Knowledge

Our Sociology course at All Saints Academy is only offered for Years 12 and 13. Therefore, the learners who join the course are those who can build upon the skills they have gained in KS4. These skills include unpicking theories and beliefs to construct rational and justified positions. Furthermore, students in Year 12 will be encouraged to use examples drawn from their own experience of small-scale research.

Year 13

Substantive Knowledge

Year 13 students of Sociology will cover the following topics; Education with Theory and Methods, Globalisation, and Crime and Deviance. The first unit of study builds upon students learning in Year 12, by applying sociological theories to the study of education, which include functionalism, Marxism, feminism, post-modernism and symbolic interactionism. Throughout the globalisation unit, students will consider how the world is developing and how this influences cultural, political and economic relationships within society. The final crime and deviance unit is one of the most popular and thoroughly enjoyed. Students will grapple with varying theories about the causes and influences of crime in society, and ways in which it can be reduced.

Disciplinary Knowledge

Students will enhance their ability to demonstrate their understanding of sociological theories, research methods and concepts. Additionally, learners will use the skills they gained from Year 12 Sociology, by applying the units of study to the specific topics of Globalisation, and Crime and Deviance. Finally, students will analyse and evaluate all of the above to be able to construct their own arguments and make rational judgments.