Bridging the gap for Year 12 Sociology

On the following pages, you will find a selection of articles and suggested activities to prepare you for Year 12 Sociology.

AQA Sociology (7192)

Specification: www.tinyurl.com/AQASociology

The topics that we currently offer are:

- Education
- Methods in Context
- Theory and Methods
- Crime and Deviance
- Family and Households
- Beliefs in Society

The textbooks that we use in school are:
- *Sociology for AQA. Vol 1. (ISBN: 978-0745691305)*
- *Sociology for AQA. Vol 2. (ISBN: 978-0745696942)*

Textbooks are **not** mandatory but may support you in your private study periods and at home. The department has several textbooks available for you to use at school.

If you choose to buy your own, please look around on several websites to save you money!

You can also get revision guides to assist your learning:

- *Sociology for AQA Revision Guide 1 (ISBN: 978-1509516216)*
- *Sociology for AQA Revision Guide 2 (ISBN: 978-1509516261)*

Subject Teachers:

Mrs Bainbridge – Teacher of Sociology

Miss Champion – Head of Social Science

YouTube **BBC iPlayer** **4OD on demand**
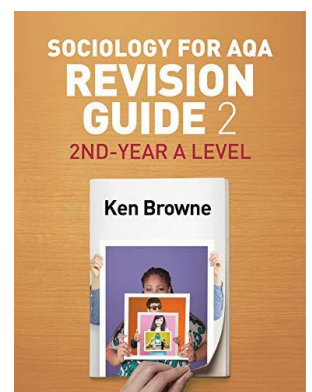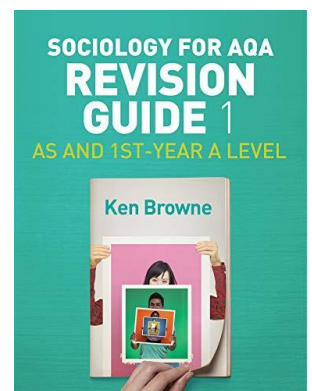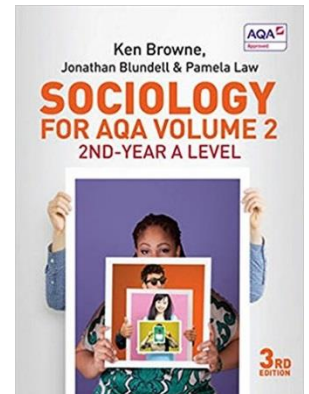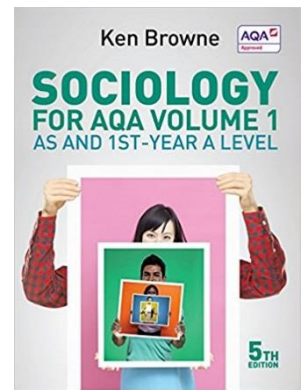
Sociology is everywhere, so you'll be able to see aspects of it in *all* forms of media. Try searching for the following titles and make notes on any videos you watch, try to keep it relevant to the topics taught in Sociology (see above).

- School Swap documentary
- Stacey Dooley documentaries (BBC iPlayer / Youtube)
- Black Mirror (Netflix)
- Louis Theroux documentaries
- Dispatches documentaries (4OD)
- Panorama documentaries (BBC iPlayer)

Make any notes from your video observations here:

Nation of shoplifters: the rise of supermarket self-checkout scams

Alex Moshakis. **Sun 20 May 2018**

A couple of Tuesdays ago, after a difficult day at work, a thing that happens to me more often than I'd usually care to admit happened once again. At a supermarket self-checkout machine a frozen pizza I tried to swipe wouldn't register, leaving me irked and full of spite. As a kind of reproach, I prepared to bag the item in any case, but a pang of weary guilt set in. Two choices sprung to mind. Carry on as though nothing untoward had happened, and knowingly steal. Or hail the cashier, who at the time was busy at another till, to fix the machine and right the wrong.

Some scams have names: 'the banana trick', 'the switcheroo', 'sweethearting'

I picked the second option, eventually. Though, to be honest, on another day I might have swayed the other way. Plenty of us do. Need proof? Look online, perhaps at a Reddit thread, and you'll find anecdotes of petty self-checkout theft delivered with something like a stick-it-to-the-man pride. Expensive grapes are scanned as inexpensive carrots. Prime steaks are swiped as potatoes. The barcodes of pricey objects – wine, beer, spirits, cosmetics – are deliberately obscured by stickers removed from significantly cheaper on-sale items. Some scams have names – "the banana trick" (steaks as potatoes), "the switcheroo" (cheap barcodes for pricey ones), "sweethearting" (when a checkout supervisor only pretends to scan an object before handing it to a loved one, gratis) – though there are so many techniques not all of them do. Everyone's at it

For an idea of how close to home the issue really is, try mentioning it to your friends, like I did. Several of mine confessed to pilfering something from a self-checkout machine at some point, though nearly all of those added a caveat: only small stuff. One recently got away with an umbrella. "Must have forgotten to swipe it through," she said. Another regularly declares chocolate croissants as bread rolls. And more than a few said they bagged items that failed to scan, half-shifting the blame on to a faulty machine. "A couple of times I tried exotic fruits as potatoes," a friend wrote in a text one morning. "But a checkout lady once caught me with mangoes, very embarrassing, and I didn't do it much after that." He ended the message with an Emoji of a face beneath a halo. "Now I'm a saint, although sometimes I'll take a five-pence bag if I've already paid and realise I need extra." In a WhatsApp message, one friend confessed to regularly placing a single banana on the scales while nabbing an entire bunch, though that wasn't all. Sometimes he fills the bagging area "so there's no room left for more shopping and I'm forced to put items on the floor," which circumvents the "unexpected item" message we all dread. "I really like the game," he said. "It's about being crafty, sneaky – and outwitting them."

When they turned up last decade, self-checkout machines were supposed to represent a new dawn in minimum-fuss shopping, though they'd been around since 1984. The till's inventor, David R Humble, had introduced the technology at an LA trade convention, describing it at the time as "a revolutionary product" that "will sweep all of retail". (To hammer home the point, he had an 11-year-old provide a demonstration. "Many marvelled," the *Los Angeles Times* reported.) When they reached stores, the machines offered customers unexpected levels of autonomy, and the opportunity to avoid long queues at traditional checkout tills. And though the machines were outwardly advertised as being strictly beneficial for the customer, they offered retailers perks, too, notably the freedom to slash labour costs. The more self-checkout machines a supermarket had, the fewer cashiers it required. There were savings to be made.

But any financial gains now appear to be marginal, at least in part due to unforeseen spikes in self-scanning theft. In a recent study a team at Voucher Codes Pro, a sales coupon website, quizzed 2,532 shoppers about their supermarket habits and found that close to a quarter had committed theft at a self-checkout machine at least once. (A figure from the same report suggested that the total cost of items stolen through self-checkout machines in 2017 came in at more than £3bn, up from £1.6bn in 2014, though the numbers are speculative.) Some steal by accident, the study found, perhaps on account of a scanning error – honest mistakes. But many perpetrators know exactly what they're doing.

In 2016, criminologists at the University of Leicester published a paper that reported on the impact of recent developments in mobile-scanning technology. The study was led by Adrian Beck, an emeritus professor of criminology, who has spent more than 25 years researching losses in the retail industry. In the report, he'd suggested that retailers who rely on self-scanning technology inadvertently create environments that encourage theft. In the self-checkout aisle, for example, human interaction is often pared back to a minimum, which reduces the perception of risk on the part of a potential perpetrator. "It's about the degree of opportunity it provides people who wouldn't normally do something deviant," explains Beck. "It presents them with opportunities they wouldn't normally have."

A couple of times I tried exotic fruits as potatoes, but a checkout lady caught me. Embarrassing

As Beck sees it, the customer who reaches the self-checkout machine and knowingly bags a frozen pizza after it fails to register isn't a typical thief. "This guy didn't get out of bed that morning and say, 'I can't wait to be a shoplifter today,'" Beck told me. "And he didn't walk down an aisle and put something in his pocket." In most cases, perpetrators are otherwise honest. They tend not to employ traditional shoplifting techniques, and are unlikely to steal in circumstances in which an opportunity is not presented to them. Psychologists call this Opportunity Theory – when an offender consciously decides to take advantage of an opportunity for crime that has appeared in his normal routine. But there is other psychology at play, too. Often, perpetrators will construct what they perceive as legitimate excuses for theft. Some feel justified in taking items when the checkout machine they're using doesn't operate smoothly (it's the machine's fault). Others consider the items they steal as a kind of payment for work they're completing on the supermarket's behalf.

Still more reach the self-checkout machine, look around, and see nothing but the inhuman trappings of a faceless corporation. Few would steal from an individual grocer. But from a multinational conglomerate? What difference does it make? "There's a mountain of good socio-cognitive criminological research that explains this under the heading of Neutralisation Theory," says Shadd Maruna, a criminology professor at the University of Manchester. I'd asked him to take me through the psychology of self-checkout theft, to help me get to grips with the "why". "Individuals can neutralise guilt they might otherwise feel when stealing by telling themselves that there are no victims of the crime, no human being is actually being hurt by this, only some mega-corporation that can surely afford the loss of a few quid. In fact, the corporation has saved so much money by laying off all its cashiers that it is almost morally necessary to steal from them."

Maruna offered a personal example to illustrate the point. "Twice in the past month I have handed back change to a cashier when I was given too much," he said. "I did this because I was worried that the individual, working for minimum wage, would have the money taken out of their own pocket if the cash till was short at the end of the workday. Had the same thing happened and a machine gave me the wrong change, there's no question I would have pocketed it." He finished with a flourish: "Screw them!"

Frictionless shopping

When I asked several supermarkets to comment on this story, they all declined. Later, when I visited a few of my local stores and asked cashiers about their experiences, most seemed initially open to revealing all before loyalty (or self-preservation) led them to pass the request up the chain to

their shift managers, who each delivered a variant of the same message: "Ask head office." <u>Supermarkets</u>, it seems, would prefer not to spill the beans.

Which isn't unwise. The subject is fraught with uncertainty. Often it is difficult for retailers to discern between malicious actions and honest mistakes – was the customer absent-minded or consciously fraudulent? – and proving intent can be perilous. Charge an honest shopper with theft and lose their business. Let a perpetrator off the hook and suffer a reduction in profit. Beck describes the scenario as "a legal and customer relations minefield".

Shift managers I asked all said the same thing: 'Ask head office'

Still, supermarkets are persevering with self-checkouts. According to a <u>BBC report</u>, by 2021 there will be 468,000 around the world, up from some 240,000 in 2016. And retailers aren't stopping there. Amazon is pursuing plans to create stores in which checkouts are eradicated entirely. Computer vision and artificial intelligence will align to keep track of the items in a shopper's basket, allow them to walk in and out of the store without any human interaction, and later email them a receipt and charge their account. Chinese retailers aren't far behind.

Soon, supermarkets might be entirely human-free – what they refer to in the industry as "frictionless".

Where will that leave us? Customer convenience will rise. The conflicts we sometimes face on a shopping run will reduce to faded memories, and long till queues will be vanquished. So, too, will staff. Cashiers will be diverted to different sections of our stores, ostensibly to better help customers mid-shop, until they will disappear altogether, along with human interaction, the one thing that seems to keep us on the straight and narrow.

> **Would you consider this a crime? Is this deviant behaviour? How could this impact society and the economy?**

The seven apps every woman should own

Back in 2014, Apple released HealthKit, an app that let people keep track of a vast array of health and fitness data – everything from blood alcohol levels and sodium intake to body temperature. What you couldn't track, however, was your period. Not one person at Apple had stopped to think a period tracker might be useful. And that's because Apple, like most tech companies, is dominated by myopic men.

Four years later, female engineers are still very much a minority in Silicon Valley. However, progress is slowly being made and the future of tech is looking decidedly more female-friendly. Take the dating app Bumble, for example, which was started by Tinder co-founder Whitney Wolfe Herd and has been designed with a women-centric interface. When two users of the opposite sex match on Bumble, the woman must send the first message, bucking the convention that men make the first move. Focusing on women has paid off; Bumble had a stellar 2017 and is valued at more than $1bn ($710m). And Bumble is just one of a growing number of apps designed with women in mind. From pedicure-scheduling to confidence-boosting to pill-planning, when it comes to a female need, there's now often an app for that. Here, Guardian writers recommend some of their favourites.

myPill (*iOS*, *Android*)

Even if you're lucky enough not to be emotionally debilitated by the hormonal surges of the contraceptive pill, you still have to contend with the waves of panic that come with forgetting to pop it. iPhone reminders and alarms can too easily be swiped away into the ether, or become a source of office-disrupting embarrassment. But myPill not only fires off silent reminders, it continues to show notifications after you've dismissed them. The virtual packet allows you to mark off the pills you've taken, meaning you can check whether you really did take "Monday" or simply imagined it (it happens), as well as being able to visualise the month ahead.

Clementine (*iOS*)

Most of the time, my anxiety is a low-level background noise – I can usually ignore it. But on particularly stressful days, my anxious thoughts can seem deafening, which is where the hypnotherapy app Clementine comes in. It is pitched as a fix "for the modern woman"; it is by no means a cure-all, but the "confidence boost" session can work a charm. It asks you to imagine what success would look like and prompts you to work towards it, rather than getting bogged down thinking about what could go wrong. At just five minutes long, this session is also easy to integrate into everyday life. Similarly, the "take a breather" session has prevented many potentially regrettable decisions being made in a frenzy of stress; I just click play and within five minutes, I am feeling level-headed again.

Workout for Women (*iOS*, *Android*)

Many women felt more angry than usual last year, and I was no different. I cast about for a physical outlet and found an app called Workout for Women. It offers a mixture of cardio and body-weight exercises, with the added benefit that you can hide away at home as you puff through your press-ups.

You can donkey kick and squat while a voice from your smartphone keeps you from lying down and wheezing. Since using it, my endurance for these horrible exercises has shot up – ignore the slightly dubious "bikini body" title of one challenge and it's pleasingly tough. Of course, you could do these moves without an app, but I am part sheep and need the bossy orders and digital encouragement. I feel stronger and it's addictive.

Clue (*iOS, Android*)

As with a lot of my friends, my period used to take me by surprise every month. Despite 20 years of menstrual bleeding, I never had any idea when mine was due. But the period-tracking app Clue has changed my life. Over the course of a few months, it gets to know your cycle – you input which dates you are bleeding – and predicts when your next period is due. It can track your energy level, appetite, skin, digestion – and it can tell you when you're most fertile. I've planned holidays around it.

Treatwell (*iOS, Android*)

"Meeting cancelled, manicure scheduled," reads one of Treatwell's many taglines – and while this hair-and-beauty booking app isn't exclusively for women, the marketing and design is skewed that way. Aside from the ability to make appointments quickly and (thankfully) discreetly, the app also encourages user reviews – creating the recommendations that women have relied on other women to provide since time immemorial. Through it, I have found exceptional threading artists, discounted LED facials and waxers who don't double-dip (all essential and not always easy to come by), usually within walking distance of wherever I happen to be. **Hormone Horoscope (*iOS*, *Android*)**

Do you use horoscopes for clues on whom to snog and when? Does your period dictate when your next tantrum is due? This is me. This is how I discovered Hormone Horoscope. The app tracks where you are in your menstrual cycle and offers information and advice based on the body's hormone levels. Day eight? More oestrogen. Beware: you're probably going to buy something you can't afford. Day 23? Bound to be feeling volatile. I'm not sure I'd plan my life by it (that's reserved for astrology), but it does provide context to the highs and the lows, and it has helped me to understand my body better.

Skin Matters (*iOS*)
There's a lot of buzz around the idea of elimination in beauty – parabens and sulphates being the main betes noires – but it's hard to know where to begin. This nerdy app is designed by facialist Joanne Evans and explains which ingredients to look out for, which to avoid and why. All you do is give your age, gender and skin type. It's pretty basic, doesn't allow for other factors (such as your heritage or family history) and directs you towards Evans' products. But there are more than 2,000 ingredients listed, most of which I hadn't heard of, and the explainers are pretty comprehensive, making it a decent beginner's guide to what's what if you're trawling through the small print in Boots. Plus, you can change your profile depending on how your skin feels at any given time.

How would a radical and a liberal feminist respond to this article?

Marriage between heterosexual couples is at the lowest level on record

New research has revealed that marriage between heterosexual couples is at the lowest level on record.

The new study by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) revealed that 239,020 between heterosexual couples took place in England and Wales in 2015, a 3.4 decrease on the year before.

Between 1972 and 2009, a gradual long-term decline in the number of marriages was gradually noticed, before the trend was eventually bucked between 2010 and 2012. But in 2015, The number of marriages was 0.8% lower than the record low of 2013, representing the lowest number of marriages in a calendar year since 2009. The data also shows a steep decline in tradition, with only 0.7 percent of same sex marriages being performed at a religious ceremony. Despite the overall decline, it also appears that heterosexual couples are getting married later in life, with the the average age for men marrying in 2015 being 37.5 years, while for women it was 35.1 years.

It reflects an increase compared with 2014 (37.0 years for men and 34.6 years for women) and continues the overall rise which has been recorded since the 1970s. For the first time ever, the date also reflected same sex marriages – with 6,493 being performed in 2015. Of these, 44% (2,860) were between male couples and 56% (3,633) were between female couples. Statistician Nicola Haines said: 'Marriage rates for opposite-sex couples are now at their lowest level on record following a gradual long-term decline since the early 1970s. The number of marriages between opposite-sex couples decreased by 3.4% in 2015, compared with 2014.

'Despite this overall decline, marriages at older ages rose; the number of weddings increased for men aged 50 and over and women aged 35 to 39 years and 45 and over. 'This is the first full year for which marriages were available for same-sex couples and they accounted for 2.6% of all marriages.'

Suggest why marriages are declining in British society.

As few as one in 20 born in poorest areas go to university

14 August 2017

Only one in 20 pupils in some of the country's poorest postcodes progress to higher education, according to new analysis by Teach First.

The charity has called for the government to improve entry rates by writing off student debt to get better teachers into challenging schools. It has also called on universities to start offering university access programmes at primary level.

According to Teach First's research, on average only one in five young people born in the country's poorest postcodes progress to university, while half of those born in the wealthiest postcodes do so. However, the gap is even more stark between some areas.

For example, in some parts of Derbyshire, as few as one in twenty students go to university, while in parts of Buckinghamshire it is more than 80 per cent. This means that those born in some of the richest areas are up to 18 times more likely to attend university than those in some of the poorest areas. Teach First also found big differences between the choices made by disadvantaged young people when it came to university compared to their more privileged peers.

A ComRes poll of 18-25 year olds found that 41 per cent of the most advantaged students said they chose their university because it was the best for what they wanted to study, compared to only 31 per cent of the least advantaged. Similarly, the reputation of a university was important to 53 per cent of the most advantaged students, but it only was for 46 per cent of the most disadvantaged. Disadvantaged students are also more likely to choose an institution close to where they live, with 29 per cent saying they chose their university on this basis, compared to 24 per cent of the most advantaged. Of the most disadvantaged pupils who did not go to university, only 12 per cent said this was because their grades weren't good enough.

To ensure students were able to make more informed choices when it came to university, Teach First said there should be a trained careers middle leader in every school to develop and lead a careers strategy. It suggested this could be paid for out of money councils and academies are required to set aside for the apprenticeship levy.

Teach First says the government should offer student loan forgiveness to attract the best possible graduates into teaching, where they can help young people from deprived communities achieve their potential.

It suggests 20 per cent of student debt could be cleared for those working for two years, increasing to 50 per cent for those who remain in certain geographic or subject areas for five years. The charity also says that universities' access work is coming too late, with programmes frequently aimed at pupils aged 16-18 "by which point much of the effects of disadvantage have already played out". Instead, it argues that access work should start at primary school to give pupils "the best possible opportunity to make informed and supported decisions about their futures at an earlier age".

Brett Wigdortz, Teach First's chief executive and founder, said "there are still far too few disadvantaged pupils getting to university". "They're simply not given the same chance to reach their full potential, with less access to brilliant teaching and less guidance on how they can turn their aspirations into reality. "

He added: "More must be done by the government, universities and society as a whole to break down the barriers to social mobility that are preventing too many of our young people reaching as far as their potential allows".

What is meritocracy?
Does this article suggest we live in a meritocracy?
Why is it important that 'poor' students go to university?