Sociology

It's easy to join us

Moving to Cambridge OCR's A Level in Sociology from AQA

Are you currently teaching AQA's A Level in Sociology?

This short guide will take a look at our new A Level in Sociology and show you how it compares to the AQA A Level and how you can easily move to teaching our specification.

We collaborate with teachers, employers and Higher Education representatives to develop qualifications which are relevant and meet the needs of students.

Our A Level in Sociology has lots of key benefits for teachers, including:

- an improved assessment model that ensures complete consistency in question and paper structure
- an updated, inclusive curriculum with an emphasis on exciting modern sociological studies
- a unique mandatory unit: 'globalisation and the digital social world' (H583/03)
- optional units that allow teachers to choose topics best suited to student needs (H583/01; H583/03)
- clearly laid out content with breadth of knowledge exemplified
- a range of support services to help you at every stage, from preparation to delivery.

We listen. The decisions we make when we develop our specification are based on teacher and student feedback. To tell us more about your experiences of teaching Cambridge OCR, join our teacher panel and help shape the future of our assessments.

Your students will develop:

- a lifelong passion for understanding social issues
- a deep understanding of how critical thinking, global citizenship, democracy and equality can be promoted; the course has also received an extensive equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging (EDIB) independent verification with a range of external stakeholders including the British Sociological Association
- essential knowledge on the role and impact of digital technology and social media on individuals and society
- a deep understanding of how globalisation impacts on crime, education and religious beliefs
- key knowledge and understanding of social inequalities in the UK linked to social class, gender and ethnicity
- transferable skills such as critical evaluation, planning, presentation/delivery and the practical application of research skills
- valuable communication skills that are extremely attractive in the modern workplace including: the police, civil service, marketing, community work, consultancy, public relations and much more.

Follow our Subject Advisor Tom Genillard on LinkedIn

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About our A Level in Sociology

We believe in developing specifications that are engaging and contemporary, equipping students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in their studies and beyond.

Informed by research and extensive engagement with the teaching community, we've created specifications that aim to enthuse and inspire students of all backgrounds and abilities, helping you to help them achieve their full potential.

We offer a range of support services to help you at every stage, from preparation to delivery:

- expert Subject Advisors who are part of their subject communities and here to support you with advice, updates on resources, and information about training and networking opportunities
- detailed assessment guides, practice materials and examiners' reports to help you navigate the specification and its content
- comprehensive curriculum planners and schemes of work to support with planning and delivery
- textbooks and teaching and learning resources from leading third parties and publishers
- ExamBuilder: our free question-building platform that helps you to build your own tests as our bank of past live-series questions grows
- Active Results: our free results analysis service to help you review the performance of individual students or whole school
- an extensive range of professional development courses, covering everything from Starting to Teach to Exam Review, where you'll have the opportunity to speak directly to Subject Advisors and assessment experts.

To find out more about all of our support services, please visit Teach Cambridge.

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At a glance specification comparison

	Cambridge OCR Sociology	AQA Sociology
Structure	There are three mandatory components which are all externally assessed. There are optional units in Components 01 and 03.	There are three mandatory components which are all externally assessed. There are optional units in Paper 2.
Grading	The qualification is graded on the scale: A*, A, B, C, D, E, where A* is the highest. Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for E will be Unclassified.	The qualification is graded on the scale: A*, A, B, C, D, E, where A* is the highest. Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for E will be Unclassified.
Assessment	**H583/01** 1 hour 30 min exam worth 70 marks Optional units in Theme 2 Cambridge OCR set and marked **H583/02** 1 hour 30 min exam worth 70 marks Cambridge OCR set and marked **H583/03** 1 hour 30 min exam worth 70 marks Optional units in Theme 5 Cambridge OCR set and marked	**Paper 1** 2 hour exam worth 80 marks Externally assessed **Paper 2** 2 hour exam worth 80 marks Optional units Externally assessed **Paper 3** 2 hour exam worth 80 marks Externally assessed

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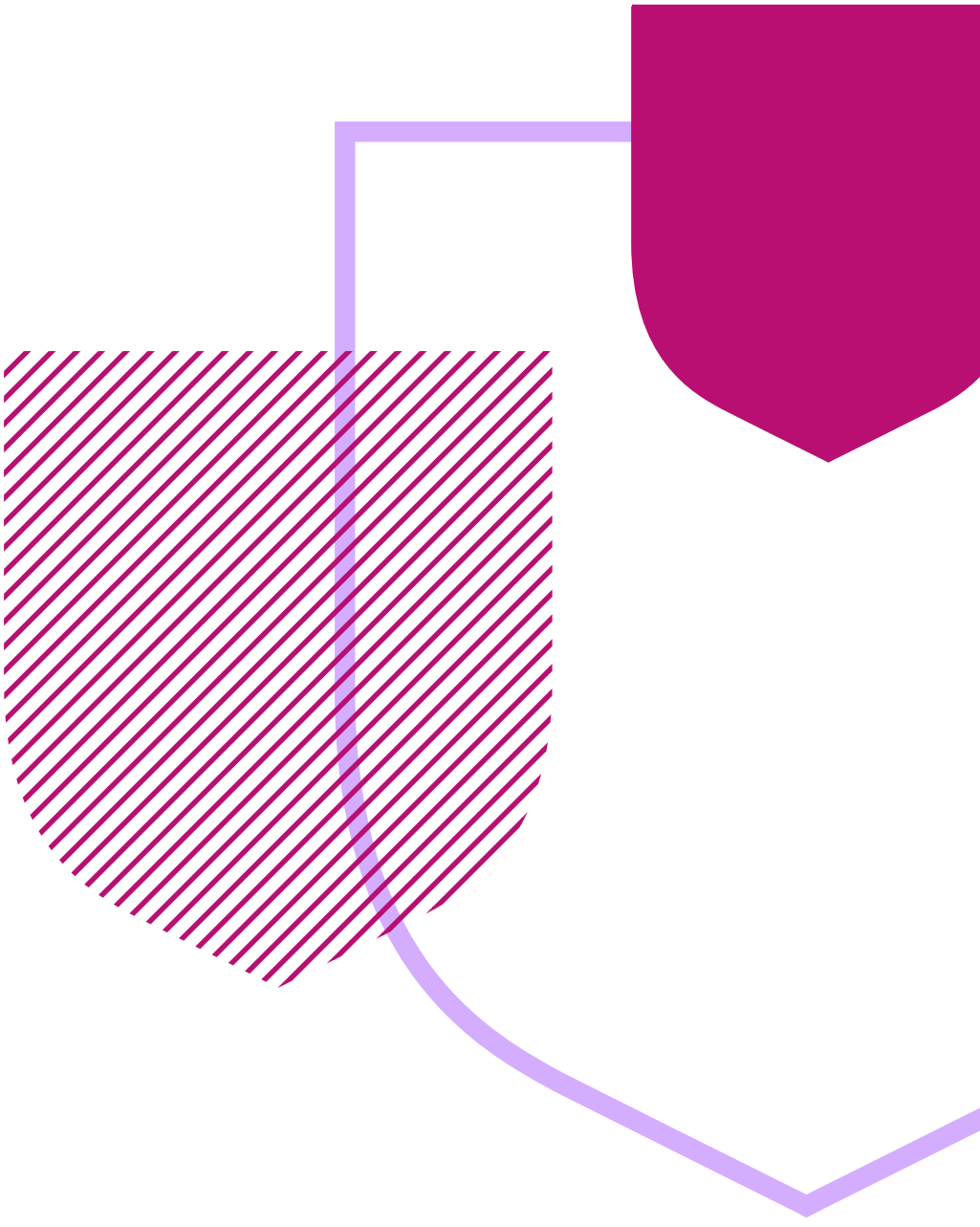
Comparing assessment models

Cambridge OCR Sociology	AQA Sociology
A Level Component 01 (H583/01) **Socialisation, culture and identity** 33.3% of A Level Written paper 1 hour 30 min 70 marks Theme 1: Short, medium and extended response questions 35 marks Theme 2: Choose 1 of 3 options. Short, medium and extended response questions 35 marks	**A Level Paper 1** **Education with Theory and Methods** 33.3% of A Level Written paper 2 hours 80 marks Education: Short answer and extended writing. 50 marks. Methods in Context: Extended writing. 20 marks Theory and Methods: Extended writing. 10 marks
A Level Component 02 (H583/02) **Researching and understanding social inequalities** 33.3% of A Level Written paper 1 hour 30 min 70 marks Theme 3: Short, medium and extended response questions 40 marks Theme 3: Medium and extended response questions 30 marks	**A Level Paper 2** **Topics in Sociology** 33.3% of A Level Written paper 2 hours 80 marks Section A: Extended writing. 40 marks Section B: Extended writing. 40 marks
A Level Component 03 (H583/03) **Debates in contemporary society** 33.3% of A Level Written paper 1 hour 30 min 70 marks Theme 4: Short, medium and extended response questions 35 marks Theme 5: Choose 1 of 3 options. Short, medium and extended response questions 35 marks	**A Level Paper 3** **Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods** 33.3% of A Level Written paper 2 hours 80 marks Crime and Deviance: Short answer and extended writing. 50 marks Theory and Methods: Extended writing. 30 marks

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It’s easy to switch

- If you’re a Cambridge OCR-approved centre, all you need to do is download the specification and start teaching.
- Fill in an Intention to Teach form to receive information and teaching support.
- Be kept up-to-date with the latest news including professional development and Teacher Networks.



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And finally...

Comparison of units

Component 01: Socialisation, culture and identity

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Theme 1 Introducing socialisation, culture and identity	
Key question	**Content area**
1. What is culture?	Definitions of culture, norms and values and their relative nature. Types of culture.
2. What is socialisation?	Definitions of primary and secondary socialisation and how they link to agencies of socialisation.
3. What is identity?	Aspects of identity and the associated cultural characteristics and values. Hybrid identities and how identity can be fluid.

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Paper number	Compulsory or optional content
2 Culture and Identity	O
2 Culture and Identity	O
2 Culture and Identity	O

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Theme 2 Option 1: Families and relationships	
Key question	**Content area**
1. How are family life and relationships changing?	The diversity of family and household types in contemporary UK society. Understanding of key demographic changes and the reasons. The role of the family and the desirability of the nuclear family in contemporary UK society.
2. To what extent are roles and relationships within families and households changing?	Roles and relationships in the family and how they are changing, including the application of theoretical explanations.

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Paper number	Compulsory or optional content
2 Families and Households	O
2 Families and Households	O

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Theme 2 Option 2: Youth subcultures	
Key question	**Content area**
1. How are youth cultures and subcultures formed? Why do they develop?	Youth culture and subcultures and how and why they are formed. Theoretical views. Subcultures and their norms and values relating to social class, gender, ethnicity and hybridity.
2. Why do some young people participate in deviant subcultures?	Deviant youth subcultures and patterns and trends in sociological research and official statistics. Theoretical explanations.

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Paper number	Compulsory or optional content
3 Crime and Deviance	C
2 Culture and Identity	O
2 Beliefs in Society	O
2 The Media	O
1 Education	O
2 Culture and Identity	O
2 Beliefs in Society	O
2 The Media	O

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Theme 2 Option 3: Media	
Key question	**Content area**
1. How are different social groups represented in the media?	Evidence and explanations for the representation and effects of misrepresentations on a range of different social groups. How and why views on media representation are formed and change.
2. What effect do the media have on audiences?	Theoretical views of media effects including the role of new media and social media. The role and impact of the media. Patterns and trends in sociological research and official statistics.

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Paper number	Compulsory or optional content
2 The Media; Culture and Identity	O
3 Crime and Deviance	C
2 The Media; Culture and Identity	O
3 Crime and Deviance	C

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Component 02: Researching and understanding social inequalities

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Theme 3 Research methods and researching social inequalities	
Key question	**Content area**
1. What is the relationship between theory and methods?	How social research is guided by theory: Positivism and Interpretivism. Key research concepts.
2. What are the main stages of the research process?	Key concepts in the research process / research design, including sampling techniques. The relationship between sociology and contemporary social policy.
3. Which research methods are used in sociological research?	Research methods in the context of social inequalities and the advantages and disadvantages of each.

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Paper number	Compulsory or optional content
1 Education: Theory and Methods; 3 Crime and Deviance: Theory and Methods	C
1 Education: Theory and Methods; 3 Crime and Deviance: Theory and Methods	C
1 Education: Theory and Methods; 3 Crime and Deviance: Theory and Methods	C

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Theme 3 Understanding social inequalities	
Key question	**Content area**
1. What are the main patterns and trends in social inequality and difference?	Evidence of social inequality and difference in a range of areas of social life and how these may impact the life chances of individuals in relation to cultural characteristics.
2. How can patterns and trends in social inequality and difference be explained?	The main sociological and theoretical explanations of social inequality and difference.

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Paper number	Compulsory or optional content
2 Health; Work, Poverty and Welfare; Stratification and Differentiation	O
2 Health; Work, Poverty and Welfare; Stratification and Differentiation	O

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Component 03:
Debates in contemporary society

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Theme 4 Globalisation and the digital social world	
Key question	**Content area**
1. What is the relationship between globalisation and digital forms of communication?	Definitions of globalisation and problems with this including social, economic and political factors. Developments in digital forms of communication in a global society and how they are related to social capital and access. Theoretical views.
2. What is the impact of digital forms of communication in a global context?	The impact of digital forms of communication on people's identity, relationships and values. Positive and negative impacts of digital communication.

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Paper number	Compulsory or optional content
1 Education	C
2 Work, Poverty and Welfare; Beliefs in Society; Global Development; The Media; Stratification and Differentiation; Culture and Identity; Families and Households; Health	O
3 Crime and Deviance	C
1 Education	C
2 Work, Poverty and Welfare; Beliefs in Society; Global Development; The Media; Stratification and Differentiation; Culture and Identity; Families and Households; Health	O
3 Crime and Deviance	C

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Theme 5 Option 1: Crime and deviance	
Key question	**Content area**
1. How are crime and deviance defined and measured and what are the patterns and trends of crime in the UK and beyond?	Defining crime. Measuring crime including the advantages and disadvantages of each way of measuring crime. The social distribution of offending and victimisation including a global context. Patterns of crime in a global context.
2. How can crime and deviance be explained?	Explanations of crime and the patterns and trends of offending. Theoretical views.
3. How can crime and deviance be reduced?	Contemporary policies relating to crime prevention, punishment and social control policies in maintaining and restoring social order.

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Paper number	Compulsory or optional content
3 Crime and Deviance	C
3 Crime and Deviance	C
3 Crime and Deviance	C

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Theme 5 Option 2: Education	
Key question	**Content area**
1. What is the role of education in society?	Theoretical views on the role of education and the relationship between education and work.
2. What are the patterns and trends of educational inequalities and how can differential educational attainment and experiences be explained?	Patterns and trends of educational attainment. The different educational provision around the world. Differential educational attainment and experience. Theoretical views.
3. How has the UK education system changed?	The diversity of educational provision including changes over time. Government policies from 1988 onwards. Ideological values and influences on governmental policy. The impact of contemporary educational policies.

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Paper number	Compulsory or optional content
1 Education	C
1 Education	C
1 Education	C

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Theme 5 Option 3: Religion, belief and faith	
Key question	**Content area**
1. How are religion, belief and faith defined and measured and what are the patterns and trends?	Defining religion, faith and belief; including how religion, faith and belief is measured. Patterns and trends of religion, belief and faith. Religion, belief and faith in a global context.
2. What is the role of religion, belief and faith in contemporary society?	The role of religion, belief and faith for the individual and for society, and the relationship between religion and social change. Theoretical views. Sociological views on the growth of fundamentalist groups.
3. Is secularisation occurring?	Debates on the extent of secularisation. The impact of contemporary UK government policy/direction on religion.

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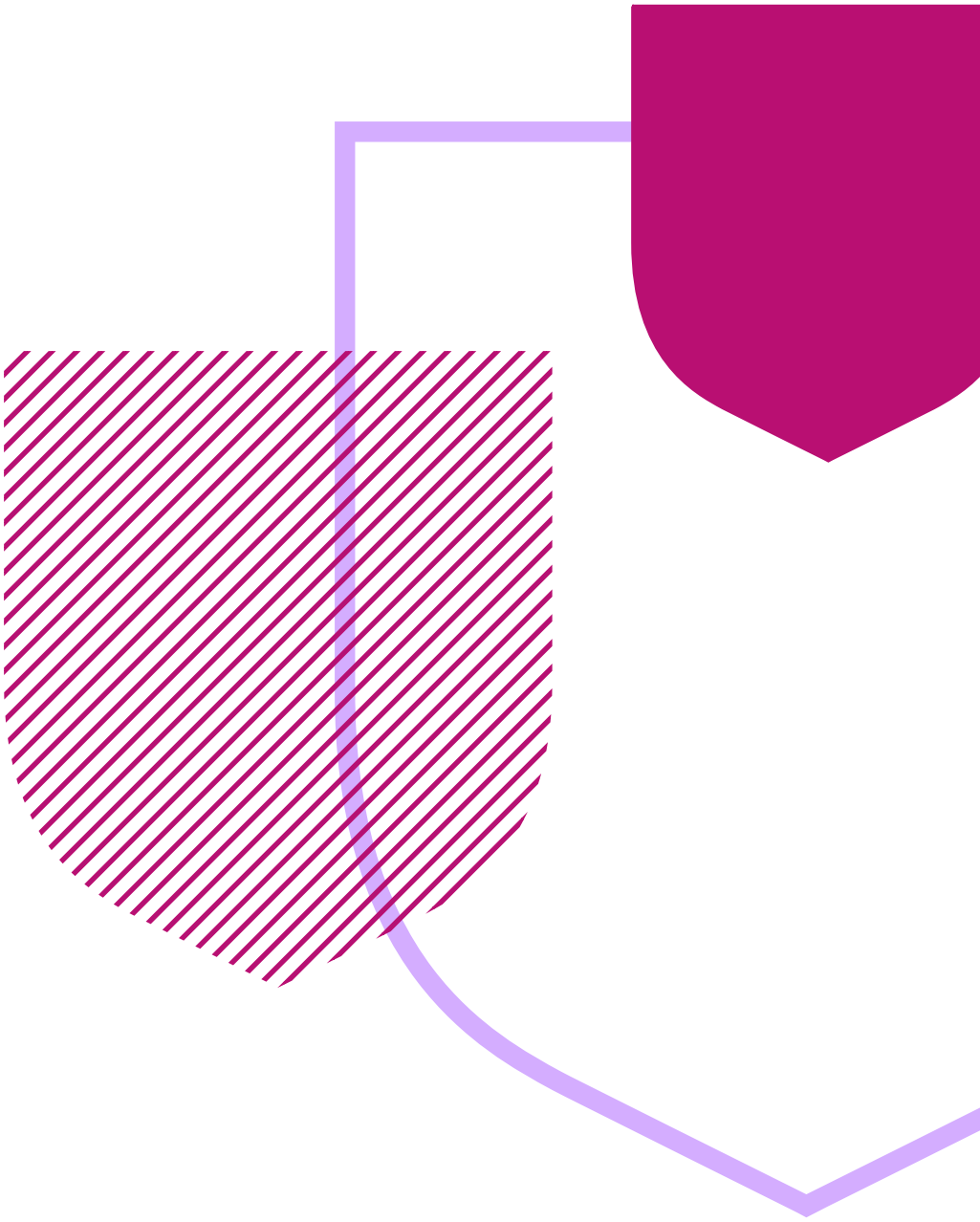
Paper number	Compulsory or optional content
2 Beliefs in Society	O
2 Beliefs in Society	O
2 Beliefs in Society	O

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Summary of updates

This table outlines updates made in various versions of this resource. For the latest version of our resources, please visit Teach Cambridge.

Section	Change	Version	Date
All	Original content	1.0	November 2026



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Designing and testing in collaboration with teachers and students



Helping young people develop an ethical view of the world



Equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging (EDIB) are part of everything we do

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