

WHAT IS SOCIOLOGY?

Sociology is the study of the behaviour of people in their daily lives in places such as education, the workplace, and family. Sociologists seek to understand how people think and behave, and what factors affect their actions.

'Sociology may be defined as the study of society – the web of human interactions and relationships.'
Ginsberg (1939)

'Sociology is the study of individuals in a social setting.'
Ritzer (1970)

'Sociology is the study of human social life, groups and societies. It is a dazzling and compelling enterprise, having as its subject matter our own behaviour as social beings.'
Giddens (1997)



DEFINITION OF SOCIOLOGY

WHAT DO SOCIOLOGISTS DO?

Similar to scientists, sociologists carry out research in various ways either to describe the way in which something occurs or to explain why it happens.

Sociologists often start with a hypothesis, which they then attempt to falsify, modify or prove.

Think: If sociology were common sense, then things would not change over time and each society would do things in the same way.

IS SOCIOLOGY SIMPLY COMMON SENSE?

Many people believe they have an understanding of society based on what they know about topics such as education, the media and crime. This may lead them to assume that sociology is simply common sense. **BIG MISTAKE!** Sociological research has falsified many of society's ideas, assumptions and beliefs, such as:

- x Poverty no longer exists. The poor are poor because they are lazy.
- x Women are naturally inferior to men.
- x Some ethnic groups are superior to others.

COMPARING SOCIOLOGICAL AND BIOLOGICAL APPROACHES: NATURE VS NURTURE

NURTURE ARGUMENT

- Some sociologists argue that socialisation has a stronger impact than nature.
- Comparisons of different societies show that their norms, values and sanctions vary widely.
- Human behaviour is learnt and not instinctive. Therefore agents of socialisation such as family, education and mass media will have a huge amount of social control.

NATURE ARGUMENT

- Some biologists and psychologists explain behaviour in way that assumes our actions are due to our biological characteristics.
- They argue that men are more aggressive than women because of genetic differences.
- Human behaviour is instinctive and natural.

FERAL CHILDREN

The existence of feral (wild) children supports the nurture argument, as these children have been raised away from society and missed important stages of human development. Therefore, they do not display many characteristics that we would consider human.

Amala and Kamala: Two Indian sisters were alleged to have been brought up by a wolf family in the 1920s.

Oxana: Because of parental neglect, a Ukrainian schoolgirl was brought up by dogs that likely saved her life by keeping her sheltered.

WHAT DO SOCIOLOGISTS STUDY?



WHY IS SOCIOLOGY USEFUL TO YOUR FUTURE?

Sociologists work within many different fields, such as law enforcement, law, politics and social work. They also play a big role in shaping social policy by exposing and examining areas of inequality in society related to, for example, racism or ageism.



- Define the following key terms using the file introducing Sociology

10. Status

Questions: Think about the following aspects of people's lives; food, relationships, rules/deviance, entertainment, dress and work.

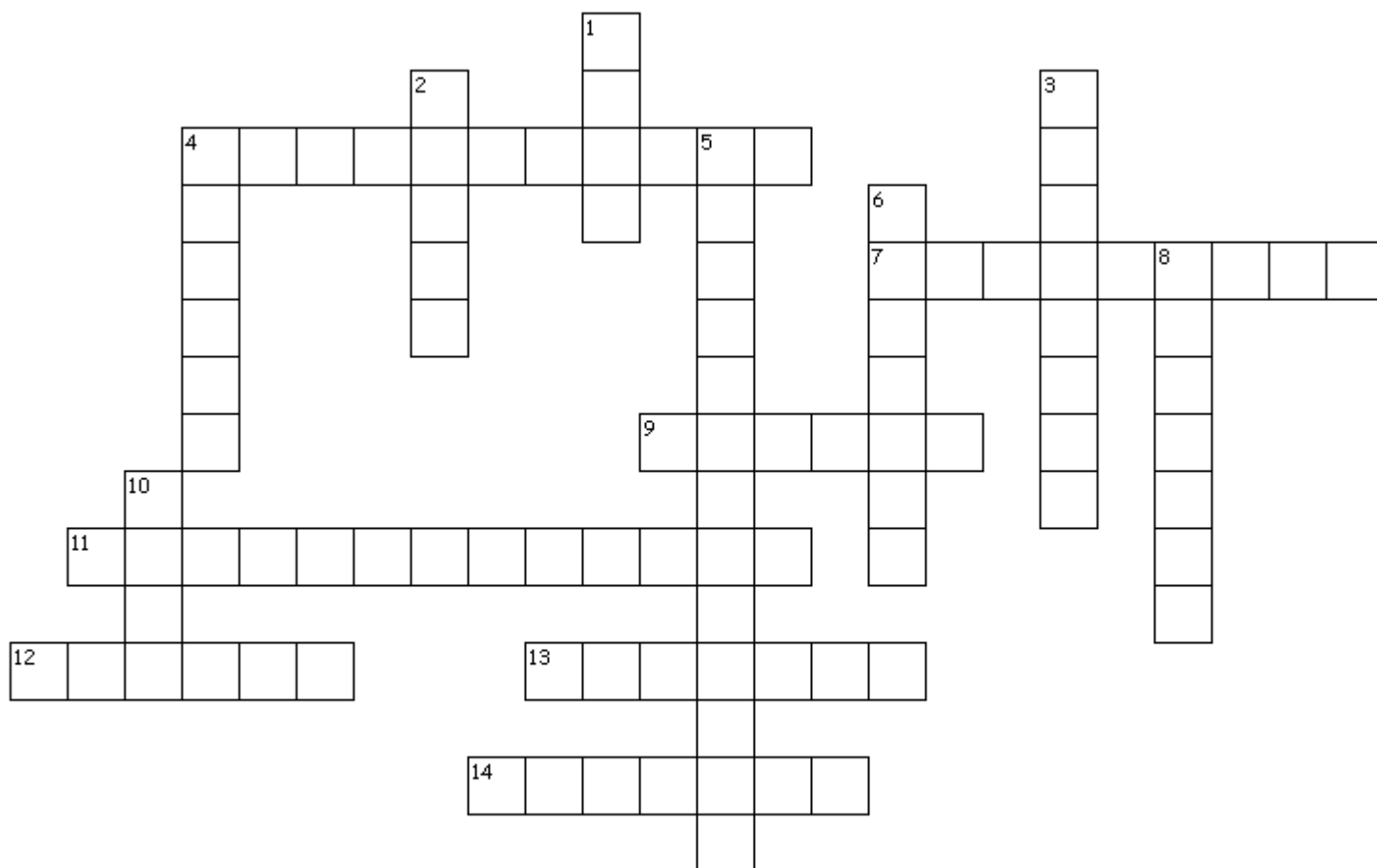
1. Name two values that you follow
2. Name two norms that you follow
3. Name two roles that you play in society?
4. How have you achieved your status?
5. What has socially controlled your actions this year? How
6. Name and describe two ways that you have been socialised as a child



What is Sociology?

Now watch the documentary Tribal wives The Hamar and consider how different this society is to our own.

1. Name two values that you they follow
2. Name two norms that they follow
3. Name 3 roles that people play this society?
4. How do people achieve their status?
5. What examples do you see of social control? How does it work?
6. What are the main similarities and differences between your way of life and people living in the Hamar tribe? To what extent has globalisation changed the culture of the Hamar tribe?



Across

4. A way of dividing people up based on their income / wealth
7. When a group of people share a culture
9. When a culture has spread around the world
11. The process of learning society's culture
12. cultural differences between females and males
13. Behaviour is a result of this when it is caused by the way a person has been brought up
14. Norms that have existed a long time

Down

1. A part that we play in society such as sister or brother
2. A general guideline for behaviour
3. How we see and define ourselves
4. Way of ranking people in society, it can usually be either ascribed or achieved
5. Different methods used to encourage people to follow society's value and norms
6. Name for acts that go against society's values and norms
8. A way of life of a particular society
10. A specific rule on how to behave



RESEARCH METHODS

How do sociologists uncover knowledge and understanding about societies?

What sources of information do you think sociologists would find useful?

1. People
2. Books

Define each of the methods below and if you can add classify them as using primary or secondary data and whether they produce qualitative or quantitative results.

Method	Definition/description	Classification
Interviews		
Experiments		
Observations		
Comparing official statistics		
Case studies		
Content analysis		

Task

Pick one methods that you could use to find out about young people's experiences of self-isolation during the Covid-19 pandemic, and write a plan for how you would go about it, and how you could record your results.

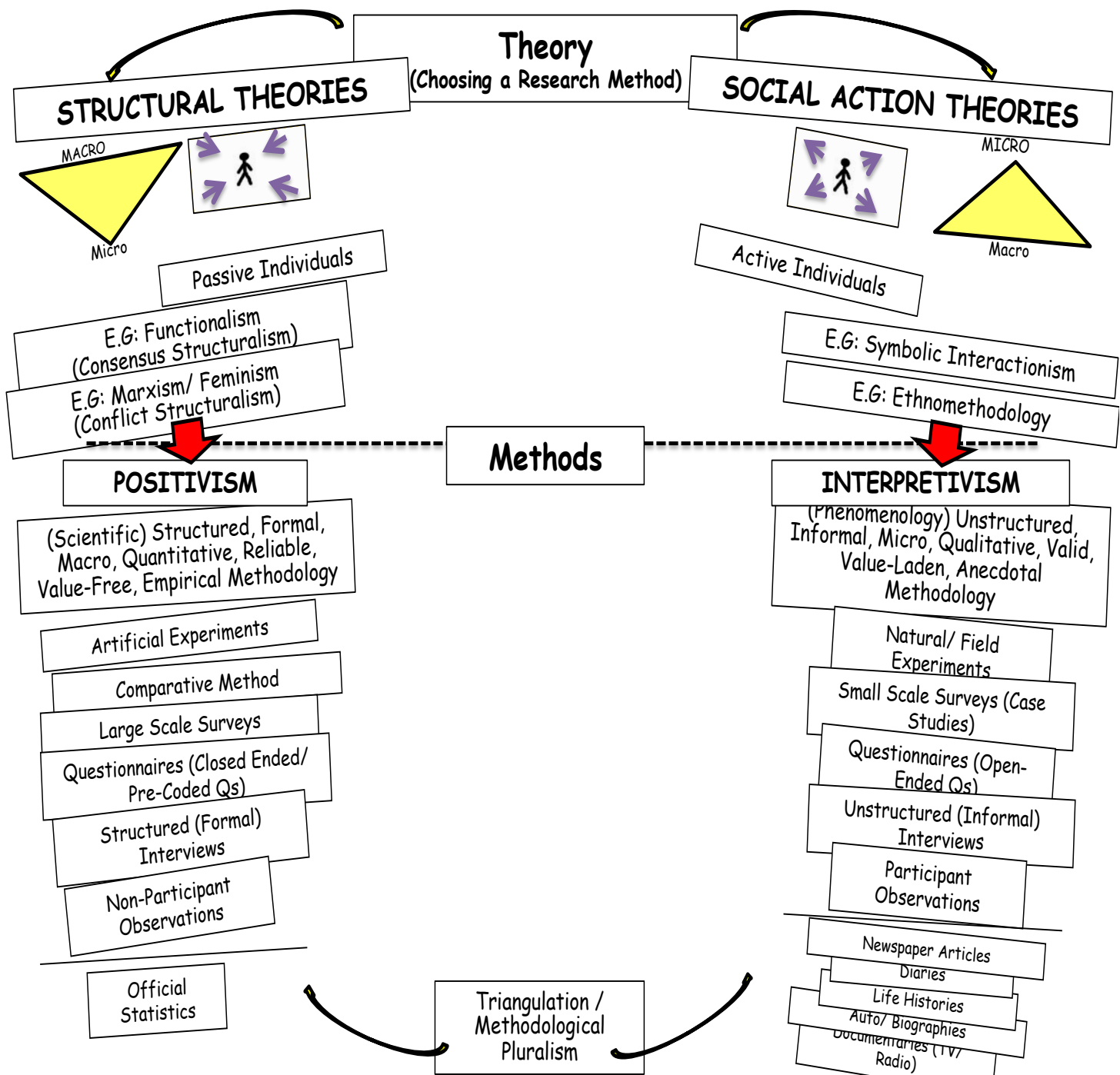
[illegible]

3. SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Sociology is the **systematic study of human groups and social life**. Its primary concern is **SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS** - the various social arrangements of society. These 'social institutions' joined together constitute a '**SOCIAL STRUCTURE**' - i.e. society. It is the aim of a Sociologist to examine these 'social institutions' - Sociologists attempt to understand how they operate and how they relate to another to form modern society.

C. Wright Mills (1959) suggests Sociologists adopt a '**SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION**' he suggested: "*Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both.*"

Sociology: An Overview



SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

A perspective is a way of looking at something; a **sociological perspective** is a way of looking at society. Each sociological perspective offers their own viewpoint on how sociologists should examine society - each has a slightly different explanation and emphasis. However, **all perspectives centre on the theme of freedom and control**: to what extent does society influence the actions of its members?



Structural Sociology

- Structural sociology or Structuralism is concerned with the overall structure of society.
- Structural sociology examines the way in societal institutions act as a **constraint, limit or control** on human behaviour. Thus, they are seen as 'determinist'.
- Structural sociology argues an individual's **social action** (behaviour) is **constrained/limited/controlled** by a number of **social forces** that act externally to them. These forces are the process of **socialization** & **societal institutions** e.g. **family and education**.
- Structural sociologists sees human like **puppets** whose strings are pulled by society forcing them to act in a particular way.
- Structural sociology adopts a **MACRO APPROACH**. It examines society at large, focusing upon the investigation of **societal institutions** and the links between them e.g. the family and education, the economy and education.

Action Sociology

- Action sociology or Interpretivist sociology can be seen as contrasting to structural sociology. Action sociology focuses on discovering and understanding the **interactions** between individuals and small groups.
- Action sociology argues an individual's **social action** (behaviour) is controlled by them; individual's are '**free**' and have '**free will**'. Their behaviour is driven by the **meanings** they give to situations or the way they **see** things.
- Action sociology adopts a **MICRO APPROACH**. It examines individuals and attempts to study, uncover and interpret meanings individual's give to their behaviour.



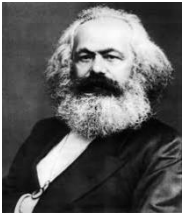
Which type of sociologist are you?

1. The defining characteristic of human behaviour is
 - a) their gender/sex
 - b) the social class
 - c) their race
 - d) their integration into society
 - e) their culture
2. We have the freedom to choose in behaviour
 - a) yes
 - b) no depends
 - c) it doesn't matter
 - d) what is freedom?
3. What are your views on the family
 - a) family is oppressive to women and teachers is to conform to gender roles
 - b) family is a tool of the ruling class teaching us to obey authority
 - c) family is a vital part of socialisation the teachers as norms and values
 - d) family is what you make it, everyone has a different view on it
 - e) family-what is a family? You can't define it
4. When it comes to inequality
 - a) gender is the most serious issue
 - b) money and power is the most important thing is the rich exploit poor
 - c) inequality is a normal part of society
 - d) inequality is a label that has different meanings to people
 - e) you make your own reality up
5. When it comes to crime
 - a) the criminal justice system is more lenient on women
 - b) criminal law protects the rich and the powerful
 - c) crime is good for society as it reminds of the rules
 - d) crimes are actions labelled as wrong to influence our behaviour
 - e) crime, what is a crime? Can we really define what a crime is?
6. When it comes to religion
 - a) religion oppresses and controls women-telling us to cover up and be obedient
 - b) religion is a tool used by those with power to control us
 - c) religion is useful situation which unites people who share a common set of beliefs
 - d) religion means different things to different people
 - e) religion is just another metanarrative (big story) for people to use to explain reality



Mostly A – Our Feminist

You are most likely to turn into our Feminist Sue Sharpe. Feminism looks at how society is structured in a way that benefits men while oppressing women – this is known as patriarchy (male domination.). The theory is often a misunderstood as stereotypes and misconceptions about it exists. Many people do not realise that there are several types of feminism such as black, radical feminism and liberal.



Mostly B – Our Marxist

You are most likely to turn into Karl Marx. Marxism looks at how society is constructed is a way that produces class conflict with the rich having all the power and control whilst the poor are oppressed. Marx argues that the root cause of class inequality is down to capitalism as it encourages people to be greedy and materialistic. Just as capitalism replaced feudalism, Marx argues that capitalism will one day be replaced with communism



Mostly C- Our Functionalist

You are most likely to turn into Emile Durkheim. Functionalism is theory which argues that members of society are united together by a shared set of idea and beliefs called 'norms' (normal behaviour.) These norms are accepted by all members in society and are enforced by structures such as family and education. They see society like a human body – with all parts needed in order for it to 'function' and work effectively.



Mostly D- Our interactionist

You are most likely to turn into Becker/ Mead. Interactionism looks at how people create meaning during social interactions, how they present and construct the self (or identity) as well as how they define situations. One of the perspectives key ideas is that people act the way they do because of how they define situations. Becker uses the example of nudity to illustrate how timing, place and audience can influence how people see an action or idea.



Mostly E – Our post-modernist

You are most likely to turn into Foucault. Post-modernism is a more recent Sociological theory which seeks to question and de-construct existing structures and understandings of reality. Post modernism rejects the idea that one theory such as functionalism, Utilitarianism, religion or even science can explain reality!

4. EDUCATION

Using the clips from the PowerPoint describe how education has changed over time in the UK.



Buildings and classrooms

.....

.....

Teachers and teaching styles

.....

.....

.....

.....

Subjects available

.....

.....

Discipline / Pupil attitudes and behaviours

.....

.....

.....

.....

Role/purpose of education

.....

.....

Review: **Educating Rita**

What does it tell us about social class, gender roles and education? What did you think of the key characters, Rita, Frank and Rita's husband Denny? How do their social backgrounds influence their behaviour?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

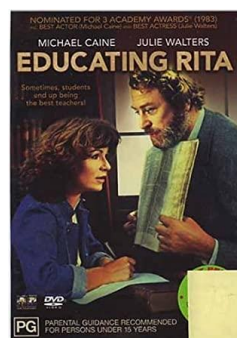
.....

.....

.....

.....

.....




[illegible]

Describe the trends in achievement between a) The sexes, b) Ethnic Groups c) Disadvantaged and Advantaged students. Challenge: Discuss do these differences matter? Why?

[illegible]

The Lost Boys	
Internal Factors	External Factors



5. Families and Households

A Complete the table listing similarities and differences between family life in the 1980s and the present day

Similarities	Differences

Causes?

.....

.....

.....

.....

How are the different groups represented in these adverts?



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



.....

B Alice and her 6 Dad's

What does this program suggest about what makes a family?

.....

.....

What are the advantages and disadvantages of having 6 people she considers to have been Dad.

.....

.....

.....

.....

What makes a person a Dad? Why is it important for Alice to find her biological dad?

.....

.....

.....

.....

C Rich House Poor House

Similarities	Differences

Challenge how might a child growing up in one of these families be affected by their experiences growing up?

.....

.....

.....

.....

How accurately do you think this documentary reflects these families lives? Why?

.....

.....

.....

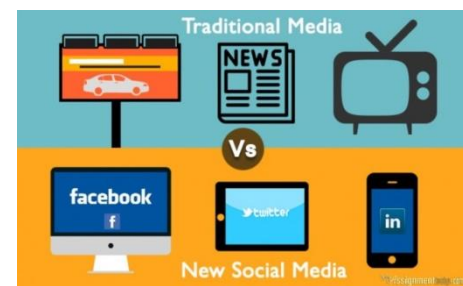
.....

.....

.....

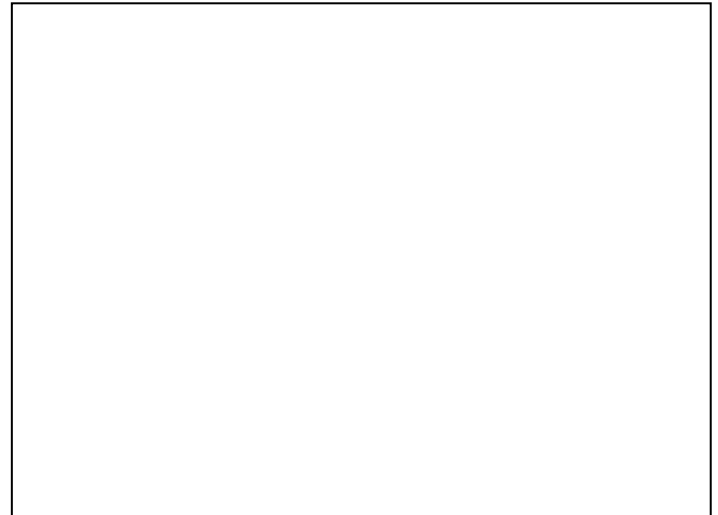
6. THE MEDIA

Media: Any type of mass communication. Something which emits its' message to large number of people at the same time.



Put the following examples of media in chronological order, starting with the oldest.
Challenge, add approximate dates.

1. Blogs
2. Radio
3. Analog Television Broadcasts
4. Newspapers
5. Internet Websites
6. Digital Television Broadcasts
7. Films
8. Social Media Sites
9. Computer Games
10. Printed Books



How has the media changed over time?

.....

.....

.....

.....

What makes the news?

News can be found in papers, on TV shows and on Internet and social media sites There are differing views on why some stories make it into the news headlines or into the news all and others do not. They include;

1. Public interest: if the public shown interest and demand a certain type of story editors of news products will put more of these into their products.
2. Owner interest: the people who own big media companies put in stories which match their own viewpoint and interests
3. Profit-making: exciting, controversial or shocking stories are picked to go into the news so that more people buy the product or watch it and make the media companies more money as a result.
4. Norm setting: stories are chosen to go into the news that remind us of the correct way to behave and the consequences of not following society's rules

5. News values: news stories have to meet objective criteria, that ensures all news stories are valuable and important to people in society.
6. Social control: stories are chosen distract them from the real problems in society and therefore stop people acting in their own interests. They may also make people fearful of trying to change and improve society.

Annotate this story: Why do you think it made the news?

Terrifying moment 'gunman' fires shots from balcony in Kent while rapping to Tupac's 'Hit 'Em Up' sending panicked shoppers fleeing before armed police move in and arrest him



Armed officers and a helicopter from Kent Police raced to Chatham Docksides this morning where a man (left) was seen shooting from his balcony as people shopped in the streets below. Shoppers and pedestrians fled for cover as the man patrolled his balcony appearing to hold a machine gun, rifle and handgun. Police have arrested a man in his 30s on suspicion of firearms offences and four suspected imitation firearms have been found.

Challenge: Pick a story that is currently in the news, summarise and using the 6 sociological points explain why you think it made the news.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Representation: in this topic we study how different groups in society are betrayed in the media they include heterosexual and homosexuals, able-bodied and disabled people, males and females, different ethnic groups, different age groups in different social classes. Your task is to watch one current film of your choice (within the last 10 years) and one soap or drama show on TV now and complete the tally on the number of main speaking characters that fit into each category.

Group	Film	TV	Group	Film	TV
Homosexual			Heterosexual		
Able-bodied			Disabled		
Females			Males		
Ethnic minorities			White British		
Working class/ disadvantaged			Upper-class /wealthy		
Adults			Children		
Older adults/those in old age			Teenagers		

If you were watching Hollyoaks and Steve Hay appeared you would put a tally in the homosexual box, the males box, the white British box and the adults. You do this for every main character and then add up at the totals at the end.



Questions

What trends can identify? Which groups have the most representatives and which ones the least?

.....
.....

2. When you represent a group you also stand-in for other people from that group. Did you notice any trends in how the different groups are represented? Are some shown positively and others negatively?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

3. *Challenge why does it matter whether people are represented in the media? Why does it matter if they are represented positively or negatively?*

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

CRIME AND DEVIANCE

According to the Collins English dictionary a crime is “an illegal action or activity for which a person can be punished by law.” Whereas deviance is “behaviour or thinking that is different from what people normally consider to be acceptable.”



Shade the acts in the box below one colour for deviant, one colour for crimes and one colour for both. What does this tell us about crime deviancy?

Stuttering	Being naked in the street	Mugging someone
Paying a child's price on the bus when aged 18	Driving at 75 mph on a motorway	Swearing at your mother was walking to school
Helping someone who is terminally ill take their own life	Burping loudly in public	charging a customer for a product and not providing it
Claiming 50 miles worth of petrol money when you only drove 30	Not paying tax on money you have heard from working	Paying for goods with a forged banknote

The meaning of crime Open University:

Crime statistics are socially constructed; created by people's actions and social institutions in society. For most of us, most of the time, crime is something other people do. So why not check that against personal experience? Have a go at the questionnaire below. Estimate the total fines and prison sentences you might have under gone had you been caught, charged and convicted of these offences.

Table 1

	Incident	Offence	Maximum Penalty
1	Have you ever bought goods knowing or believing they may have been stolen?	Handling stolen property	£5,000 and/or 6 months imprisonment
2	Have you taken stationery or anything else from your office/work?	Theft	£5,000 and/or 6 months imprisonment
3	Have you ever used the firm's telephone for personal calls?	Dishonestly abstracting electricity	£5,000 and/or 6 months imprisonment
4	Have you ever kept money if you received too much in change?	Theft	£5,000 and/or 6 months imprisonment
5	Have you kept money found in the street?	Theft	£5,000 and/or 6 months imprisonment
6	Have you taken 'souvenirs' from a pub/hotel?	Theft	£5,000 and/or 6 months imprisonment
7	Have you ever left a shop without paying in full for your purchases?	Making off without payment	£5,000 and/or 6 months imprisonment
8	Have you used a television without buying a licence?	Using a television without a licence	£1,000 fine
9	Have you ever fiddled your expenses?	Theft	£5,000 and/or 6 months imprisonment
10	Have you ever been in possession of cannabis?	Misuse of drugs	£2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment
Total			Fine = Prison Sentence =

(Source: Muncie and McLaughlin, 1996, p. 37)

Not only the meaning of crime, but also the transformation of a potentially criminal act into conviction and imprisonment, is an irreducibly social process.

Next is a flow diagram of actions that take place between a potentially criminal act occurring and that act resulting in a conviction and imprisonment. It has been broken down into a series of sequential steps.

Follow the diagram once to get a sense of it. Then imagine the chain of events that might occur through the diagram if you replace the abstract event in the first box with a concrete example.

Note down any reasons you can think of that might explain the act not resulting in conviction and imprisonment.

Try one of the following:

- Two youths stealing a car stereo.
- An illegal discharge of chemicals from an oil refinery into a river.

The path from act to conviction is shaped by, amongst other things, the knowledge of potential observers, their own definitions of crime, and police practice and resources. Just as the meaning of crime is socially constructed, the official recognition and pursuit of crimes is socially constructed. It is created by human actions and choices.

What does this task illustrate about what makes something a crime and how accurate statistics can be?

.....

.....

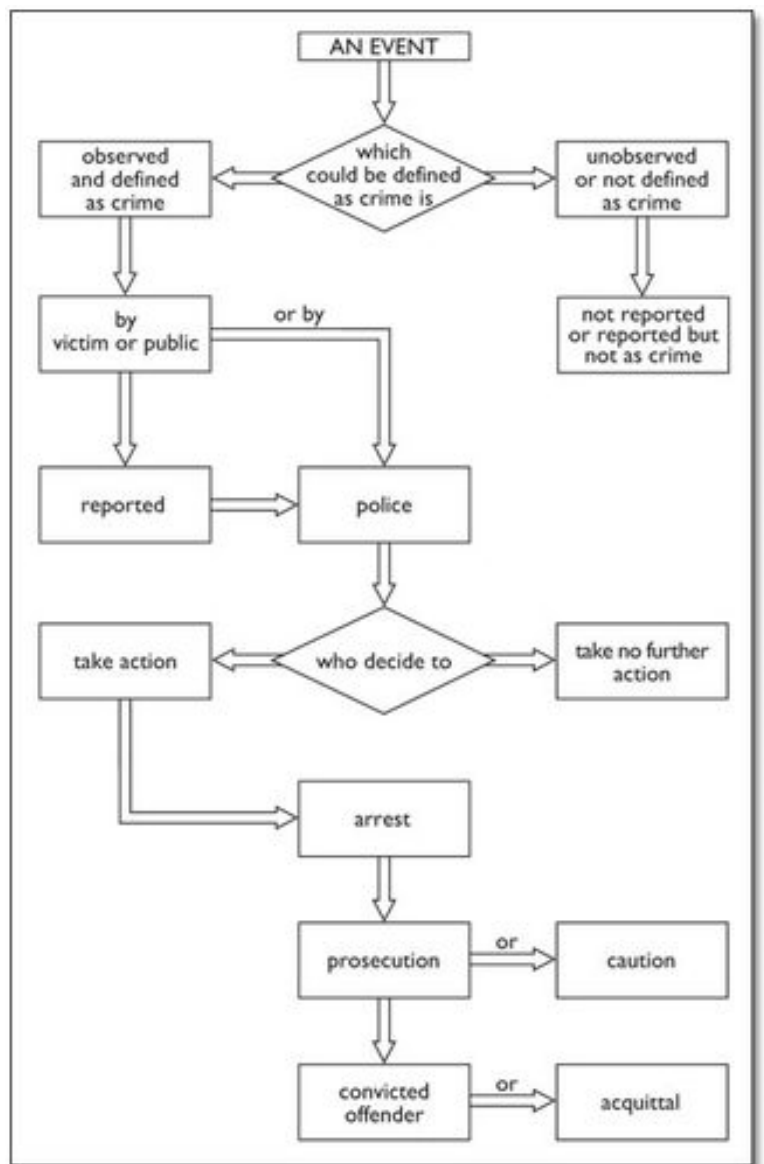
.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



Crime control, prevention and punishment. How can we reduce crime? Why will they be successful?

There are lots of things we cannot agree on or understand about crime and deviancy. Almost all societies share a desire to reduce crime deviancy in society.



Crime Reduction and Punishment: Prisons

Watch the documentary and complete the following tasks.

Pick 2 inmates. Explain why you think they are serving prison sentences



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

What are the main strengths and weaknesses of using prisons as a method of reducing crime and deviancy in society?

Strengths: how do prisons help to reduce crime and deviancy in society?	Weaknesses: why might prisons not be effective in reducing crime deviancy in society?

Completion task

After completing this project your final task is to use your sociological imagination to produce a piece of work that demonstrates what you have learnt about sociology. You can choose whichever medium will best show off your knowledge and understanding. It should be something that you can email or present to Mrs Burton. Suggestions include:

1. Presentation
2. College
3. Poster
4. Essay
5. Painting
6. Sculpture
7. Play