



# Syllabus

## Cambridge O Level Sociology 2251

Use this syllabus for exams in 2023 and 2024.  
Exams are available in the June and November series.



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## Why choose Cambridge International?

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Cambridge International prepares school students for life, helping them develop an informed curiosity and a lasting passion for learning. We are part of the University of Cambridge.

Our Cambridge Pathway gives students a clear path for educational success from age 5 to 19. Schools can shape the curriculum around how they want students to learn – with a wide range of subjects and flexible ways to offer them. It helps students discover new abilities and a wider world, and gives them the skills they need for life, so they can achieve at school, university and work.

Our programmes and qualifications set the global standard for international education. They are created by subject experts, rooted in academic rigour and reflect the latest educational research. They provide a strong platform for learners to progress from one stage to the next, and are well supported by teaching and learning resources.

Our mission is to provide educational benefit through provision of international programmes and qualifications for school education and to be the world leader in this field. Together with schools, we develop Cambridge learners who are confident, responsible, reflective, innovative and engaged – equipped for success in the modern world.

Every year, nearly a million Cambridge students from 10 000 schools in 160 countries prepare for their future with the Cambridge Pathway.

**'We think the Cambridge curriculum is superb preparation for university.'**

**Christoph Guttentag**, Dean of Undergraduate Admissions, Duke University, USA

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Cambridge International is committed to providing exceptional quality. In line with this commitment, our quality management system for the provision of international qualifications and education programmes for students aged 5 to 19 is independently certified as meeting the internationally recognised standard, ISO 9001:2015. Learn more at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/ISO9001](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/ISO9001)

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## **Important: Changes to this syllabus**



**For information about changes to this syllabus for 2023 and 2024, go to page 24.**

The latest syllabus is version 1, published September 2020. There are no significant changes which affect teaching.

Any textbooks endorsed to support the syllabus for examination from 2016 are still suitable for use with this syllabus.

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# 1 Why choose this syllabus?

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## Key benefits

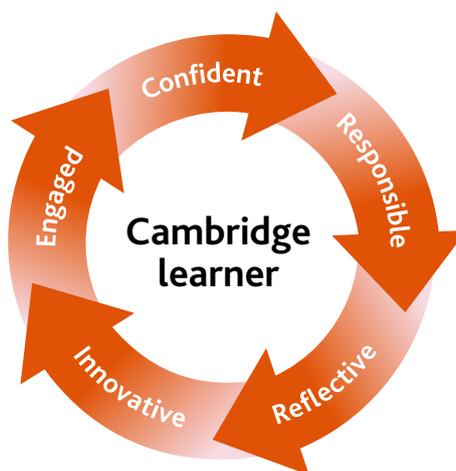
Cambridge O Level is typically for 14 to 16 year olds and is an internationally recognised qualification. It has been designed especially for an international market and is sensitive to the needs of different countries. Cambridge O Level is designed for learners whose first language may not be English, and this is acknowledged throughout the examination process.

Our programmes balance a thorough knowledge and understanding of a subject and help to develop the skills learners need for their next steps in education or employment.

**Cambridge O Level Sociology** is accepted by schools, universities and employers as proof of knowledge and understanding. Successful Cambridge O Level Sociology candidates gain lifelong skills, including:

- a better understanding of how we become who we are
- the ability to analyse human behaviour within their own society, between different cultures and across different periods of time
- an appreciation of the effects that choice of methodology can have on social science investigations
- the ability to use sociological evidence and ideas to challenge their own beliefs and the beliefs of other people about issues such as equality, education, the family and crime.

Our approach in Cambridge O Level Sociology encourages learners to be:



**'Cambridge O Level has helped me develop thinking and analytical skills which will go a long way in helping me with advanced studies.'**

**Kamal Khan Virk**, former student at Beaconhouse Garden Town Secondary School, Pakistan, who went on to study Actuarial Science at the London School of Economics

## International recognition and acceptance

Our expertise in curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessment is the basis for the recognition of our programmes and qualifications around the world. The combination of knowledge and skills in Cambridge O Level Sociology gives learners a solid foundation for further study. Candidates who achieve grades A\* to C are well prepared to follow a wide range of courses including Cambridge International AS & A Level Sociology.

Cambridge O Levels are accepted and valued by leading universities and employers around the world as evidence of academic achievement. Many universities require a combination of Cambridge International AS & A Levels and Cambridge O Levels or equivalent to meet their entry requirements.

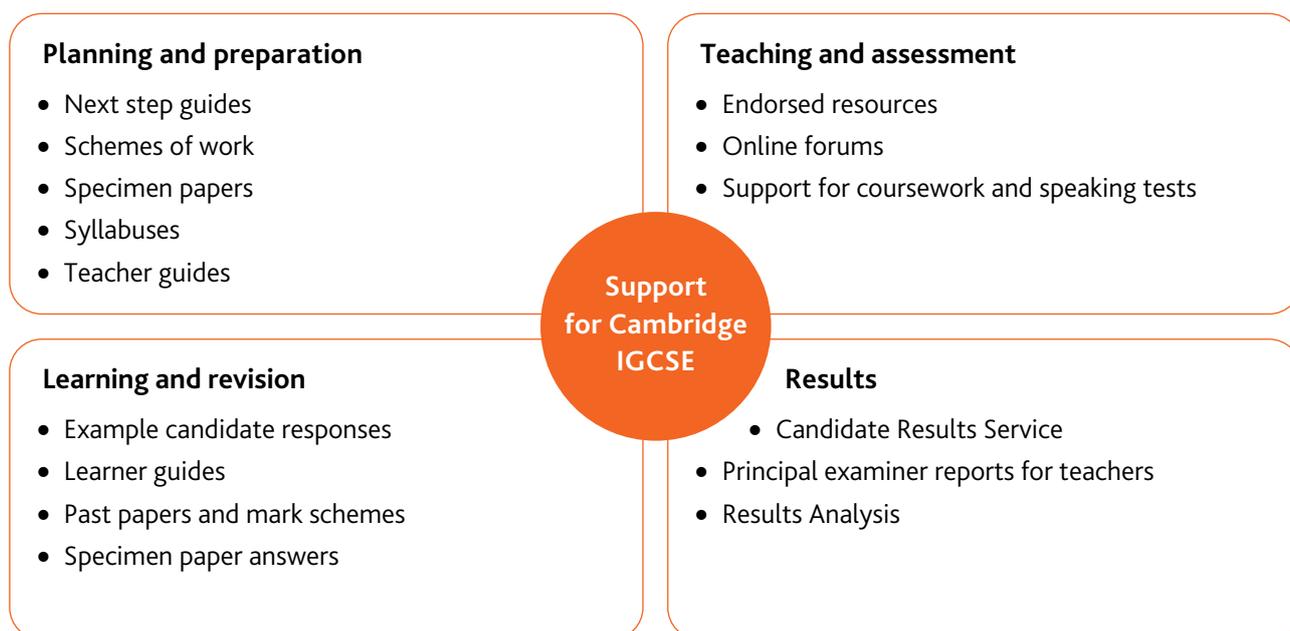
Learn more at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition)

## Supporting teachers

We provide a wide range of resources, detailed guidance and innovative training and professional development so that you can give your students the best possible preparation for Cambridge O Level. To find out which resources are available for each syllabus go to our School Support Hub.

The School Support Hub is our secure online site for Cambridge teachers where you can find the resources you need to deliver our programmes. You can also keep up to date with your subject and the global Cambridge community through our online discussion forums.

Find out more at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/support](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/support)



Sign up for email notifications about changes to syllabuses, including new and revised products and services at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/syllabusupdates](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/syllabusupdates)

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- Introductory Training – face-to-face or online
- Extension Training – face-to-face or online
- Enrichment Professional Development – face-to-face or online

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## Supporting exams officers

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## 2 Syllabus overview

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### Aims

The aims describe the purposes of a course based on this syllabus.

The aims are to:

- promote candidates' awareness, knowledge and understanding of human societies
- develop candidates' understanding of sociological methods, including the collection, analysis and interpretation of data
- provide an introduction to sociological concepts, theories and research findings
- stimulate awareness of the range and limitations of sociological theory and research
- promote candidates' understanding of continuity and change in social life
- encourage a critical awareness of social, economic and political processes, and their effects
- develop the capacity for critical evaluation of different forms of information and evidence
- promote an appreciation and understanding of individual, social and cultural diversity
- enhance candidates' ability to apply sociological knowledge and understanding to their own lives and their participation within society.

Cambridge Assessment International Education is an education organisation and politically neutral. The contents of this syllabus, examination papers and associated materials do not endorse any political view. We endeavour to treat all aspects of the exam process neutrally.



## Content overview

The content is organised into seven study units, which explore the nature of social relationships, processes and structures.

Paper 1		
Unit 1:	Theory and methods	How do different sociologists interpret society? How do sociologists study society? What types of information and data do sociologists use?
Unit 2:	Culture, identity and socialisation	What is the relationship between the individual and society? How do we learn to be human?
Unit 3:	Social inequality	What is social stratification? What are the main features of social inequality and how are these created?
Paper 2		
Unit 4:	Family	What are the different types of family? How are family roles changing? What are the changes affecting the family?
Unit 5:	Education	What is the function of education? What factors help to explain differences in educational achievement?
Unit 6:	Crime, deviance and social control	What are crime, deviance and social control? What are the patterns of crime? What are the explanations of crime?
Unit 7:	Media	Who controls the media? What is the influence of the media?

This O Level syllabus shares content with other sociology syllabuses. For further support see the School Support Hub for IGCSE Sociology. Textbooks endorsed to support IGCSE Sociology are suitable for use with this syllabus.



## Assessment overview

All candidates take two components. Candidates will be eligible for grades A\* to E.

### All candidates take:

**Paper 1** 2 hours  
(including 15 minutes' reading time)  
54%

80 marks

Candidates answer one compulsory data response question and one optional structured question from a choice of two.

This paper test content from Units 1, 2 and 3.

Externally assessed

### and:

**Paper 2** 1 hour 45 minutes  
(including 15 minutes' reading time)  
46%

70 marks

Candidates answer two optional structured questions from a choice of four.

This paper test content from Units 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Externally assessed

Information on availability is in the **Before you start** section.

## Assessment objectives

The assessment objectives (AOs) are:

### AO1 Knowledge and understanding

Candidates should be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of appropriate sociological topics
- understand the theoretical and practical considerations influencing the design and application of sociological enquiry
- understand and apply sociological terminology and concepts.

### AO2 Interpretation of evidence

Candidates should be able to:

- demonstrate an awareness of the main methods of sociological enquiry and their uses
- interpret and apply relevant evidence and data
- show an awareness of different types and sources of evidence.

### AO3 Analysis and evaluation

Candidates should be able to:

- evaluate the strengths and limitations of particular sociological studies and methods
- recognise limitations and bias in evidence and distinguish between fact, opinion and values
- reach conclusions based on a reasoned consideration of available evidence
- organise and present sociological evidence and arguments in a coherent and purposeful form.

## Weighting for assessment objectives

The approximate weightings allocated to each of the assessment objectives (AOs) are summarised below.

### Assessment objectives as a percentage of the qualification

Assessment objective	Weighting in O Level %
AO1 Knowledge and understanding	35–40
AO2 Interpretation of evidence	30–35
AO3 Analysis and evaluation	25–30
Total	100

### Assessment objectives as a percentage of each component

Assessment objective	Weighting in components %	
	Paper 1	Paper 2
AO1 Knowledge and understanding	38–44	35–43
AO2 Interpretation of evidence	31–38	28–35
AO3 Analysis and evaluation	26–31	22–28
Total	100	100

## 3 Subject content

This syllabus gives you the flexibility to design a course that will interest, challenge and engage your learners. Where appropriate you are responsible for selecting topics, subject contexts, resources and examples to support your learners' study. These should be appropriate for the learners' age, cultural background and learning context as well as complying with your school policies and local legal requirements.

### Paper 1

The content is organised into seven study units, which explore the nature of social relationships, processes and structures. The first unit provides a foundation for the other units of the syllabus by considering the methods and procedures employed in sociological research. Promoting candidates' understanding of research methods and their limitations is a key component of the syllabus and this underpins each of the other study units.

Teachers should emphasise how different levels of social life (macro and micro) are interconnected and encourage candidates' awareness of the interrelated nature of the social structure. Candidates will also be expected to recognise the significance of class, gender, ethnic and age differences within societies. Cross-cultural and historical comparisons, analysis and use of examples are encouraged.

**The Cambridge O Level Sociology syllabus has been designed so that teachers in any society can apply candidates' own experiences, local case studies and sociological work relating to their own way of life to an understanding of the central ideas and themes of sociology in modern industrial societies.**

Paper 1 comprises three units, all of which are fundamental to the study of sociology and provide a foundation for studying the units in Paper 2. Candidates should study all three units in Paper 1

#### Unit 1: Theory and methods

This first unit provides a foundation for the other parts of the syllabus by considering the approaches and procedures used in sociological research. This provides a basis for understanding the uniquely sociological way of looking at society. It underpins and provides an understanding of each of the other study units.

##### (a) How do different sociologists interpret society?

- Structuralist and interpretivist approaches; the individual, identity and society.
- How different views (Functionalist, Marxist, feminist) on conflict and consensus create alternative perspectives.

##### (b) How do sociologists study society?

- The distinction between positivist and interpretivist approaches to research methods.
- The main steps in devising and implementing a research strategy: research aims, selection of topic, hypothesis setting and revision, pilot studies, sampling.
- Difficulties in implementing a research strategy.
- Ethical issues affecting the choice and implementation of a research strategy.
- The main methods used in sociological investigation: questionnaires/social surveys, interviews, experiments, case studies, longitudinal studies, participant and non-participant observation, content analysis and triangulation. Coverage should include the strengths and limitations of each method, assessment of their usefulness in sociological research and awareness of the types of evidence produced.
- The importance of analysing and evaluating research with reference to issues of validity, reliability, generalisability, representativeness and research/researcher bias.

**(c) What types of information and data do sociologists use?**

- The difference between primary and secondary data; the uses, strengths and limitations and value of each type of data.
- Qualitative and quantitative data. The strengths and limitations of qualitative sources including historical and personal documents, diaries and media content. The ability to interpret and evaluate evidence from short qualitative sources. The strengths and limitations of quantitative sources including official statistics. The ability to interpret data from diagrams, charts, graphs and tables.

**Key terms**

- |                                  |                                    |  |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| • Bias                           | • Interviewer effect               | • Representativeness                                   |
| • Case study                     | • Laboratory experiments           | • Respondent   |
| • Causation                      | • Longitudinal survey              | • Response rate  |
| • Comparative study              | • Macro/micro approaches           | • Sampling methods/random/snowballing/quota/stratified |
| • Conflict                       | • Non-participant observation      | • Sampling frame                                       |
| • Consensus                      | • Objectivity                      | • Secondary data                                       |
| • Content analysis               | • Official/non-official statistics | • Self-completion questionnaires                       |
| • Correlation                    | • Open/closed/pre-coded questions  | • Semi-structured interview                            |
| • Covert participant observation | • Overt participant observation    | • Social survey  |
| • Ethical issues                 | • Perspectives                     | • Structuralism  |
| • Field experiments              | • Pilot study                      | • Structured interview                                 |
| • Focus group                    | • Positivism                       | • Subjectivity   |
| • Generalisability               | • Postal questionnaires            | • Survey population                                    |
| • Group interview                | • Primary data                     | • Telephone questionnaires                             |
| • Hawthorne/Observer Effect      | • Qualitative data/research        | • Trend  |
| • Historical documents           | • Quantitative data/research       | • Triangulation  |
| • Hypothesis                     | • Questionnaires                   | • Unstructured interview                               |
| • Identity                       | • Reliability                      | • Validity   |
| • Interpretivism                 |                                    |  |
| • Interviewer bias               |                                    |  |

## Unit 2: Culture, identity and socialisation

This unit considers the relationship between the individual and society and how far humans are shaped by social processes by comparison with alternative influences, such as biological and psychological factors. Questions may also draw on knowledge from Unit 1.

### (a) What is the relationship between the individual and society?

- Culture, norms, values, roles, status and beliefs as social constructions and how these influence human behaviour; relativity.
- Conformity and non-conformity; the agencies and processes of social control. Examples of rewards and sanctions applied in different societies and organisations (e.g. schools, the workplace). The formation and existence of sub-cultures (e.g. youth sub-cultures, religious sub-cultures) in society and how these impact on consensus and conflict.
- Diversity and cultural variation in human behaviour and issues related to cultural relativism/multiculturalism. The debate about whether globalisation is creating a global culture.
- Age/age group as an example of social construction.

### (b) How do we learn to be human?

- Primary and secondary socialisation.
- Processes through which children learn social expectations (e.g. manipulation, hidden curriculum).
- Main agencies of socialisation (e.g. family, education, media) and their impact on the individual, including the consequences of inadequate socialisation.
- The nature/nurture debate.
- Role, age, gender, ethnic group and class as influences on social identity.

#### Key terms

- |                             |                                |                                      |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • Adolescence               | • Globalisation/global culture | • Secondary socialisation            |
| • Adulthood                 | • Hidden curriculum            | • Social class                       |
| • Age/age groups            | • Imitation                    | • Social conformity                  |
| • Agencies of socialisation | • Inadequate socialisation     | • Social construction                |
| • Belief                    | • Law                          | • Social control/formal and informal |
| • Child-centred             | • Lifestyle                    | • Social identity                    |
| • Childhood                 | • Manipulation/canalisation    | • Social institutions                |
| • Coercion                  | • Multicultural society        | • Social interaction                 |
| • Cultural relativism       | • Nature/nurture               | • Social order                       |
| • Culture                   | • Norms/values                 | • Status (achieved/ascribed)         |
| • Customs                   | • Ostracism                    | • Stereotype                         |
| • Diversity                 | • Peer group                   | • Sub-culture                        |
| • Elderly                   | • Peer pressure                | • Value consensus                    |
| • Ethnic minority           | • Primary socialisation        | • Youth sub-culture                  |
| • Ethnicity/race            | • Rewards/sanctions            |                                      |
| • Femininity/masculinity    | • Role                         |                                      |
| • Feral children            | • Role conflict                |                                      |
| • Gender/sex                | • Role modelling               |                                      |

### Unit 3: Social inequality

This unit explores the way in which social processes stratify society in all parts of the world, the reasons why inequalities exist, as well as how they are created and perpetuated. Questions may also draw on knowledge from Unit 1.

#### (a) What is social stratification?

- Forms of social stratification in modern industrial societies: class, age, ethnicity and gender.
- Open and closed societies.
- Ascribed and achieved status.
- Life chances and why these differ between and within stratified groups.

#### (b) What are the main features of social inequality and how are these created?

- Wealth and income: the evidence and reasons for the distribution of wealth and income in different societies and the impact of welfare states and other government measures to reduce inequality, including equal opportunities legislation. The problems of defining wealth and poverty. The causes of poverty and the consequences of being rich or poor in a global context.
- Ethnicity: examples of racial prejudice and discrimination in education, employment and housing. Scapegoating and the consequences of racism for ethnic groups.
- Gender: effect of gender on the life chances of males and females, with particular reference to gender discrimination in employment. The changing roles of men and women in modern industrial societies and explanations of gender discrimination.
- Social class: ways of defining and measuring social class. The changing nature and role of different classes and class cultures. The nature, extent and significance of social mobility.

Key terms:

- |   |                                     |                                       |
|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • Absolute poverty                                | • Feminism                          | • Power                               |
| • Achieved status                                 | • Gendered division of labour       | • Prejudice                           |
| • Age/Ageism                                      | • Glass ceiling                     | • Privileged groups                   |
| • Apartheid                                       | • Immediate/deferred gratification  | • Professions/professional worker     |
| • Ascribed status                                 | • Income                            | • Racism                              |
| • Blue collar worker/white collar worker          | • Industrial societies              | • Relative poverty                    |
| • Bourgeoisie                                     | • Institutional racism              | • Reserve army of labour              |
| • Capitalism                                      | • Intergenerational social mobility | • Scapegoating                        |
| • Caste   | • Intragenerational social mobility | • Skilled worker/unskilled worker     |
| • Civil rights/human rights                       | • Life chances                      | • Slavery                             |
| • Closed society                                  | • Lifestyle                         | • Social class                        |
| • Culture of poverty                              | • Market situation                  | • Social exclusion                    |
| • Cycle of poverty                                | • Marxism                           | • Social inequality                   |
| • Dependency culture                              | • Meritocracy                       | • Social mobility                     |
| • Disability                                      | • Middle class                      | • Social stratification               |
| • Discrimination                                  | • Minority ethnic groups            | • Status                              |
| • Distribution of wealth/redistribution of wealth | • Minority groups                   | • Traditional societies               |
| • Domestic labour                                 | • Occupational structure            | • Underclass                          |
| • Elite   | • Open society                      | • Upper class                         |
| • Embourgeoisement/proletarianisation             | • Patriarchy                        | • Vertical and horizontal segregation |
| • Equal opportunities                             | • Poverty line                      | • Wealth                              |
| • Fatalism  | • Poverty trap                      | • Welfare state                       |
|   |                                     | • Working class/new working class     |

## Paper 2

### Unit 4: Family

This unit offers candidates the opportunity to explore the sociology of the family, including definitions, structure, variations and alternatives, and changing roles and relationships within the family. Questions may also draw on knowledge from Unit 1.

#### (a) What are the different types of family?

- The nuclear and extended family, reconstituted/step-family and single-parent family. If appropriate to the local context and not restricted by law or regulation, other family types may also be taught, such as polygamous family and same-sex family.
- The influence of social stratification and ethnicity on family diversity.
- The functions of the family and the 'loss of functions' debate.
- Alternatives to the family, including other types of households (e.g. one-person household, shared household) and communes.
- Cross-cultural comparisons and variations in marriage including monogamy and serial monogamy. Alternatives to marriage, such as cohabitation. Explanations of changing trends in marriage and divorce. If appropriate to the local context and not restricted by law or regulation, civil partnerships, polygamy and polyandry may also be taught.

#### (b) How are family roles changing?

- Conjugal roles, maternal and paternal roles, roles of children and members of the wider family, including grandparents.
- Changes in family relationships and conjugal roles, including symmetrical family debate and issues relating to patriarchy and gender equality within the family.
- Variations in family relationships reflecting the influences of social stratification and ethnicity.
- The negative aspects of family life, including domestic violence, gender inequality, child abuse and neglect.

#### (c) What are the changes affecting the family?

- Industrialisation, urbanisation and family change.
- Demographic trends: family size and birth rates; death rates and life expectancy.
- The consequences for the family of an ageing population.

**(c) What are the changes affecting the family? continued**

Key terms:

- Arranged marriage
- Beanpole family
- Boomerang family
- Birth rate
- Cereal packet family
- Child-centeredness
- Cohabitation
- Commune
- Conjugal roles
- Dark side of the family
- Death rate
- Demographic trends
- Divorce
- Divorce rate
- Domestic division of labour
- Domestic violence
- Dual burden
- Dual worker families
- Dysfunctional family
- Empty-nest families
- Empty-shell marriage
- Extended family
- Family diversity
- Family functions
- Family roles
- Feminism
- Fertility rate
- Gender
- Gender equality
- Household unit
- Industrialisation
- Joint conjugal roles
- Kinship
- Marital breakdown
- Marriage
- Matriarchy
- Matrifocal
- Modern industrial societies
- Monogamy
- Nuclear family
- One-parent/single-parent family
- One-person household
- Patriarchy
- Primary socialisation
- Reconstituted family
- Secularisation
- Segregated conjugal roles
- Serial monogamy
- Step-child
- Step-parent
- Symmetrical family
- Traditional conjugal roles
- Traditional societies
- Urbanisation

## Unit 5: Education

This unit considers the influence of education on the individual and on society. This includes the role of education, the main changes in education, patterns of educational achievement. Questions may also draw on knowledge from Unit 1.

### (a) What is the function of education?

- Informal and formal education.
- Education as an agency of socialisation and social control.
- The relationship between education and social mobility.
- Different types of schools, including state, comprehensive, private, single-sex and faith schools.

### (b) What factors help to explain differences in educational achievement?

- Patterns in educational achievement and experience in relation to gender, ethnicity and social class.
- Material, cultural and linguistic influences of family background on educational achievement.
- The influence of school, teachers, pupil sub-cultures and the peer group on educational achievement.
- Measuring intelligence, selection and its relationship to educational achievement.
- The roles of the official curriculum and the hidden curriculum.

Key terms:

- |   |                                    |                                |
|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Anti-school sub-culture                                       | • Immediate/deferred gratification | • Selective education          |
| • Comprehensive system  | • Informal education               | • Self-fulfilling prophecy     |
| • Cultural capital  | • Intelligence                     | • Setting                      |
| • Cultural deprivation  | • IQ tests                         | • Single-sex schools           |
| • Culture of masculinity  | • Labelling                        | • Socialisation                |
| • Discrimination  | • Life chances                     | • Social conformity/conformity |
| • Educational achievement                                       | • Material deprivation             | • Social control               |
| • Educational inequality (based on class, gender and ethnicity) | • Meritocracy                      | • Social expectations          |
| • Elaborated code   | • Official curriculum              | • Social factors               |
| • Ethnocentrism   | • Positive discrimination          | • Social mobility              |
| • Equality of opportunity                                       | • Post-compulsory education        | • Social stratification        |
| • Faith schools   | • Private school                   | • State schools                |
| • Formal education  | • Restricted code                  | • Streaming                    |
| • Functions of education  | • Rewards                          | • Vocationalism                |
| • Hidden curriculum   | • Sanctions                        |                                |
| • Home factors  | • School factors                   |                                |
|   | • Secondary socialisation          |                                |

## Unit 6: Crime, deviance and social control

This unit considers the nature of criminal, deviant and normal behaviour in different social contexts. This includes definitions and explanations of crime and deviance and patterns of crime. Questions may also draw on knowledge from Unit 1.

### (a) What are crime, deviance and social control?

- The difference between crime and deviance, including how definitions of these terms may vary between societies and across time, relativity of crime and deviance.
- Formal and informal social control, including agencies of social control such as the media, religion, the police, courts and the penal system.

### (b) What are the patterns of crime?

- Measurements of crime and their strengths and limitations: official statistics, self-report studies and victim surveys.
- Patterns and explanations of crime by age, class, gender and ethnicity.
- Policing and law enforcement, including policing strategies, e.g. targeting, surveillance, crime prevention.
- Crime related to new technologies (e.g. the internet).
- Dealing with crime: community sentencing, punishment, prison, rehabilitation, other deterrents.

### (c) What are the explanations of crime and deviance?

- Sociological explanations of deviant and criminal behaviour: Labelling theory, Marxist theory, Functionalist theory, socialisation (e.g. family and peer groups), lack of opportunity, relative deprivation, masculinity, status frustration.
- The role of law enforcement agencies and the media in defining crime and deviance, stereotyping, labelling and deviancy amplification.
- The development of sub-cultures and links to crime and deviance, with particular reference to youth.

Key terms:

- |                              |                             |                                       |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • Agencies of social control | • Inadequate socialisation  | • Relative deprivation                |
| • Anomie                     | • Informal social control   | • Rewards                             |
| • Community sentencing       | • Internet crime            | • Sanctions                           |
| • Conformity                 | • Judicial system           | • Self-report studies                 |
| • Corporate crime            | • Juvenile delinquency      | • Socialisation                       |
| • Crime                      | • Labelling                 | • Sociological explanation            |
| • Crime rates                | • Law enforcement agencies  | • Status frustration                  |
| • Crime prevention           | • Masculinity               | • Stereotyping                        |
| • Cybercrime                 | • Master status             | • Stigma                              |
| • Dark figure                | • Material deprivation      | • Sub-culture                         |
| • Deterrent                  | • Moral panic               | • Surveillance                        |
| • Deviance                   | • Official crime statistics | • Targeting                           |
| • Deviancy amplification     | • Peer group                | • Urban crime                         |
| • Deviant career             | • Penal system              | • Victim surveys                      |
| • Dominant values            | • Policing                  | • White-collar crime                  |
| • Exile/Ostracism            | • Prison                    | • Youth culture/<br>Youth sub-culture |
| • Formal social control      | • Rehabilitation            |                                       |

## Unit 7: Media

This unit examines contemporary culture and communication through reference to the influence of the media. Key areas include: the nature and content of the media, the influence of the media, development of the new media. Questions may also draw on knowledge from Unit 1.

### (a) Who controls the media?

- The various forms of the media, (e.g. television, radio, newspapers, books, films, Internet, including social media).
- Role of advertising.
- Ownership and control of the media.
- Freedom and censorship in the media.
- Pluralist, Marxist and postmodernist perspectives on the nature and role of the media.
- Patterns of media use, (e.g. by gender, age, social class and ethnicity).
- Media representation of ethnicity, gender, age, class and disability

### (b) What is the influence of the media?

- The role of the traditional/new media in shaping values, attitudes and behaviour, with particular reference to television and violence; political beliefs and voting; patterns of consumption; gender stereotyping; traditional stereotyping the influence of the Internet in areas such as social networking.
- Agenda setting, gate-keeping and stereotyping through the selection and presentation of the news.
- Explanations of the influence of the media: hypodermic-syringe model, audience selection, cultural effects approach, uses and gratifications model.
- Bias and distortion in the media, including propaganda and moral panics.
- Developments in the media including changes in ownership, globalisation, interactivity, the digital divide, diversification and convergence within the media.
- Influence of media representations on the audience.

**(b) What is the influence of the media? continued**

Key terms:

- Advertising
- Agenda setting
- Audience selection
- Bias
- Broadcasting
- Censorship
- Citizen journalism
- Convergence
- Cultural effects approach
- Democracy
- Digital divide
- Distortion
- Diversification
- Dominant values
- Exaggeration
- Folk devils
- Gate-keeping
- Globalisation
- Hypodermic-syringe model
- Imitation
- Indoctrination
- Interactivity
- Invisibility
- Labelling
- Lifestyle
- Marxist
- Mass communication
- Media content
- Media culture
- Media representation: ethnicity/gender/age/class/disability
- Moral panic
- Narrowcasting
- New media
- News values
- Newsworthiness
- Norm-setting
- Opinion polls
- Pluralist
- Postmodern/postmodernist
- Propaganda
- Public/private funding
- Public service broadcasting
- Role models
- Scapegoats
- Sensationalism
- Social control
- Social media
- Socialisation
- Stereotyping (e.g. gender/traditional)
- The press
- Traditional media
- Uses and gratification model

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## 4 Details of the assessment

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All candidates take Papers 1 and 2.

### Paper 1

Written paper, 2 hours (including 15 minutes' reading time), 80 marks

Candidates answer two questions from a choice of three: **one** compulsory data response question from Section A and **one** optional structured question from either Section B or Section C. The duration of 2 hours includes 15 minutes' reading time.

The compulsory question in Section A is based on source material. The question carries 45 of the 80 marks for the paper. Candidates should spend approximately one hour answering this question. Section A tests Syllabus Unit 1 (Theory and methods).

Sections B and C consist of structured questions based on stimulus material. The stimulus will take the form of a short quotation or statement. Section B tests Syllabus Unit 2 (Culture, identity and socialisation) and Section C will test Unit 3 (Social inequality). Questions for Unit 2 and Unit 3 have five parts, focusing on understanding, practical interpretation, enquiry and analytical skills. There will be one question related to each of these units. Candidates are expected to have studied both units.

### Paper 2

Written paper, 1 hour 45 minutes (including 15 minutes' reading time), 70 marks

Candidates answer **two** optional questions from a choice of four (Sections A to D). The duration of 1 hour 45 minutes includes 15 minutes' reading time.

Each question carries 35 of the 70 marks for the paper. Candidates should spend approximately 45 minutes answering each of the two questions.

Paper 2 consists of structured questions based on stimulus material. The stimulus will take the form of a short quotation or statement from a sociological source. Paper 2 tests Syllabus Unit 4 (Family), Unit 5 (Education), Unit 6 (Crime, deviance and social control) and Unit 7 (Media). Questions for Units 4 to 7 have five parts, focusing on understanding, practical interpretation, enquiry and analytical skills. There will be one question related to each of these units. Questions may also draw on knowledge from Unit 1.

Some subject content for Paper 2 Unit 4 (Family) may be taught if appropriate to the local context. Teachers should decide whether to teach this content, taking into account learners' ages, cultural backgrounds, learning contexts, school policies and local legal requirements. This content will not be assessed, but may be used by candidates to support their responses where relevant.

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## 5 What else you need to know

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This section is an overview of other information you need to know about this syllabus. It will help to share the administrative information with your exams officer so they know when you will need their support. Find more information about our administrative processes at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide)

### Before you start

#### Previous study

We do not expect learners starting this course to have previously studied Sociology.

#### Guided learning hours

We design Cambridge O Level syllabuses based on learners having about 130 guided learning hours for each subject during the course but this is for guidance only. The number of hours a learner needs to achieve the qualification may vary according to local practice and their previous experience of the subject.

#### Availability and timetables

All Cambridge schools are allocated to one of six administrative zones. Each zone has a specific timetable. This syllabus is not available in all administrative zones. To find out about availability check the syllabus page at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/2251](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/2251)

You can view the timetable for your administrative zone at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables)

You can enter candidates in the June and November exam series.

Check you are using the syllabus for the year the candidate is taking the exam.

Private candidates can enter for this syllabus. For more information, please refer to the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*.

#### Combining with other syllabuses

Candidates can take this syllabus alongside other Cambridge International syllabuses in a single exam series. The only exceptions are:

- Cambridge IGCSE Sociology (0495)
- syllabuses with the same title at the same level.

Cambridge O Level, Cambridge IGCSE and Cambridge IGCSE (9–1) syllabuses are at the same level.

## Making entries

Exams officers are responsible for submitting entries to Cambridge International. We encourage them to work closely with you to make sure they enter the right number of candidates for the right combination of syllabus components. Entry option codes and instructions for submitting entries are in the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*. Your exams officer has a copy of this guide.

### Exam administration

To keep our exams secure, we produce question papers for different areas of the world, known as administrative zones. We allocate all Cambridge schools to one administrative zone determined by their location. Each zone has a specific timetable. Some of our syllabuses offer candidates different assessment options. An entry option code is used to identify the components the candidate will take relevant to the administrative zone and the available assessment options.

### Support for exams officers

We know how important exams officers are to the successful running of exams. We provide them with the support they need to make your entries on time. Your exams officer will find this support, and guidance for all other phases of the Cambridge Exams Cycle, at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide)

### Retakes

Candidates can retake the whole qualification as many times as they want to. Information on retake entries is at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/entries](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/entries)

### Equality and inclusion

We have taken great care to avoid bias of any kind in the preparation of this syllabus and related assessment materials. In our effort to comply with the UK Equality Act (2010) we have taken all reasonable steps to avoid any direct and indirect discrimination.

The standard assessment arrangements may present barriers for candidates with impairments. Where a candidate is eligible, we may be able to make arrangements to enable that candidate to access assessments and receive recognition of their attainment. We do not agree access arrangements if they give candidates an unfair advantage over others or if they compromise the standards being assessed.

Candidates who cannot access the assessment of any component may be able to receive an award based on the parts of the assessment they have completed.

Information on access arrangements is in the *Cambridge Handbook* at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide)

### Language

This syllabus and the related assessment materials are available in English only.

## After the exam

### Grading and reporting

Grades A\*, A, B, C, D or E indicate the standard a candidate achieved at Cambridge O Level.

A\* is the highest and E is the lowest. 'Ungraded' means that the candidate's performance did not meet the standard required for grade E. 'Ungraded' is reported on the statement of results but not on the certificate.

In specific circumstances your candidates may see one of the following letters on their statement of results:

- Q (PENDING)
- X (NO RESULT).

These letters do not appear on the certificate.

On the statement of results and certificates, Cambridge O Level is shown as GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION (GCE O LEVEL).

## How students and teachers can use the grades

Assessment at Cambridge O Level has two purposes:

- to measure learning and achievement

The assessment:

- confirms achievement and performance in relation to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the syllabus, to the levels described in the grade descriptions.

- to show likely future success

The outcomes:

- help predict which students are well prepared for a particular course or career and/or which students are more likely to be successful
- help students choose the most suitable course or career.

## Grade descriptions

Grade descriptions are provided to give an indication of the standards of achievement candidates awarded particular grades are likely to show. Weakness in one aspect of the examination may be balanced by a better performance in some other aspect.

Grade descriptions for Cambridge O Level Sociology will be published after the first assessment of the syllabus in 2020. Find more information at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/2251](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/2251)

## Changes to this syllabus for 2023 and 2024

This is version 2, published June 2023.

**You must read the whole syllabus before planning your teaching programme.**

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<b>Changes to syllabus content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Subject content, Paper 2, unit 4 Family – guidance has been added to indicate that family and household forms such as polygamous families and same-sex families may be taught if appropriate to the local context and not restricted by law or regulation. Civil partnerships, polyandry, polygamy, polygyny and same-sex family have been removed from the list of key terms for unit 4.</li></ul>
<b>Changes to assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Details of the assessment, Paper 2 – guidance has been added to indicate the optional content for unit 4 Family will not be assessed, but may be used by candidates to support their responses.</li></ul>
<b>Changes to availability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The front cover and the availability section on page 21 have been updated.</li></ul>
<b>Other changes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The 'Combining with other syllabuses' section on page 21 has been updated to correct the syllabus code for Cambridge IGCSE Sociology (0495)</li></ul>

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We have not updated the specimen materials for this syllabus.

Any textbooks endorsed to support the syllabus for examination from 2016 are still suitable for use with this syllabus.



'While studying Cambridge IGCSE and Cambridge International A Levels, students broaden their horizons through a global perspective and develop a lasting passion for learning.'

**Zhai Xiaoning**, Deputy Principal, The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China

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