

A Level Bridging Work

Sociology

This research-based project is designed to give you an ideal grounding for A Level study.

Research and complete at **least 2** of the tasks to give you a good idea of what to expect on a Sociology course. If you wish to do more or all of them, this is also fine.

Present the tasks in any format you like – this could be a power point or a poster, or a leaflet, or on A4. The project will be due in your first lesson of sociology in September.

We follow the AQA specification in Sociology

(<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/sociology/as-and-a-level/sociology-7191-7192>)

Task 1, Topic: Families and Households: Childhood

Childhood is a time when children should be protected and supported in their development. However some argue that childhood is disappearing.

With increased technology use, more pressure to perform in schools and the use of social media, many suggest that childhood is disappearing or that it is becoming 'toxic'.

However others argue that in today's society children are much safer than ever before, unparalleled medical care, more awareness and a society focused on children means that they have never had it better than they do today. And that others who disagree are looking nostalgically to a time which never really existed.

Your tasks are:

- 1) What is childhood, how is it described and defined?
- 2) How is childhood different today?
- 3) What is meant by the term 'toxic childhood' (Sue Palmer)
- 4) Why does Neil Postman believe childhood is disappearing?
- 5) What do you think? Explain your reasoning.

Use the following to help you:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izU-trJATdo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5HkO1-aeiz8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0fK2Ma7QLVU>

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2006/sep/14/children.familyandrelationships>

<https://www.unicef.org/sowc05/english/childhooddefined.html>

Task 2, Topic: Education: The Selective Education Debate

The Conservatives announced they would be expanding the number of grammar schools in the UK.

There has been an extremely fierce debate over the fairness of grammar schools (selecting by ability) since their conception in 1944, with some arguing that grammar schools unfairly benefit the middle-classes, while others argue that it gives working-class children a chance that they otherwise wouldn't have had.

In 1960s it was decided that schools should not be selective and everyone should have an equal access to all schools. However the current government has said that they want to expand the grammar school system.

Your task is...

- 1) Research both sides of the debate.
- 2) What are Grammar schools, why were they introduced, how do these differ from comprehensive schools.
- 2) What position does each of the other political parties take on this issue?
- 3) What do you think? Explain your reasoning.

Use the following to help you:

<http://theconversation.com/grammar-schools-debate-four-key-questions-answered-74274>

<http://hitchensblog.mailonsunday.co.uk/grammar-schools>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4990862/Theresa-backs-grammar-school-expansion.html>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b0b57yst/grammar-schools-who-will-get-in-series-1-episode-1#>

Task 3, Topic: Beliefs in Society- What Causes Fundamental Beliefs?

Fundamentalism refers to “black-and-white” thinking that opposes modernism, or progressive thinking about religion and other social topics. **Fundamentalist** groups tend to oppose anything that challenges their religious group's interpretations and opinions.

Fundamentalist can come from a wide variety of religious and non- religious beliefs.

We would like you to investigate Christian fundamentalism in America.

Your task...

- 1) Define Christian fundamentalism

- 2) Find out about different groups that are fundamentalist Christians in America.
- 3) What are their beliefs? How do they interact with wider society?
- 4) Why do they choose to believe these things?
- 5) What does Steve Bruce say about fundamentalism in the west? Why does it exist?

Watch and read the following to support your understanding

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bVV2Zk88beY>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0Nkv_wUiOU

<http://iasc-culture.org/THR/archives/AfterSecularization/8.12EBruce.pdf>

Task 4, Topic: Crime: Youth Crime- Why Knife Crime is on the Rise

In 2017 there was a 22% increase in knife crime and an 11% rise in gun crime, according to offences recorded by the police. These crimes don't occur very often, but they do attract a lot of media attention.

The rise in crimes involving knives can also be seen in hospitals. In the five years to March 2017, the number of admissions for stab wounds increased by 13% in England and 17% in London.

Last year, 39 children and teenagers were killed by knives in the UK and more than half of those were in the capital. Reports indicate there were more than 50 homicides in London in the first 100 days of 2018.

Your task is...

- 1) Research knife crime in England and Wales, find out the statistics. What is happening?
- 2) Research the reasons for the increase in knife crime; watch YouTube videos and read accounts in news articles. Give reasons for the rise in knife crime from different perspectives, for example, what do the young people say – is there any reason to disbelieve their account? What did people from local communities (where the knife crime is happening) say were the causes, what is the government saying are the reasons? State problems/strengths of these reasons as you discuss them.
- 3) In your own personal opinion, what was the main reason why knife crime has increased?

Use the following to help you:

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/apr/27/why-are-knife-and-gun-offences-on-the-rise-and-who-is-most-at-risk>

<http://www.croydonguardian.co.uk/news/knifecrime/>