

EDU004 Workbook: Human capital and the economy

Explain human capital theory and evaluate whether qualifications measure skill, selection or social advantage.

Connect & Check

Before you begin, write one remembered idea from Families and one question about how education connects to opportunity. Then define the key concept in your own words.

Prompt	Your notes	Prompt	Your notes
Prior concept		How it might link to this lesson	
Question		Evidence needed	

Theory and concept reset

human capital: define it, add one example, and explain why it matters for educational inequality.

functionalism: define it, add one example, and explain why it matters for educational inequality.

skills investment: define it, add one example, and explain why it matters for educational inequality.

credentialism: define it, add one example, and explain why it matters for educational inequality.

selection: define it, add one example, and explain why it matters for educational inequality.

labour-market inequality: define it, add one example, and explain why it matters for educational inequality.

Study → finding → mechanism → evaluation

Sociological material	Finding/claim	Mechanism	Evaluation
Human capital theory: education as investment in productive skills	What claim is being made?	How does the mechanism work?	What limitation changes the judgement?
Credentialist critique: certificates can operate as social closure	What claim is being made?	How does the mechanism work?	What limitation changes the judgement?
Functionalist role allocation: education links talent and training to work	What claim is being made?	How does the mechanism work?	What limitation changes the judgement?

Learner routes

Route	Task
ACCESS	Use the vocabulary bank and complete the first two columns of the study table.
SCAFFOLD	Complete the table and use the sentence frames to build one developed paragraph.
CORE	Write two connected paragraphs applying theory to the lesson question.
STRETCH	Add a counter-argument and decide how far it changes your judgement.

Apply

Use idea → evidence → mechanism → application → evaluation → judgement. Do not simply list names or concepts.

Step	Your response	Step	Your response	Step	Your response	Step	Your response	Step	Your response
Idea		Evidence		Mechanism		Evaluation		Judgement	

Recall & Review

WWW: Identify the strongest sociological mechanism in your work. EBI: Identify one place where your evaluation needs to explain why the criticism matters.