

EDU013 — Pupil subcultures and identities

Knowledge Organiser

Objective: Explain different pupil responses to schooling and evaluate how subcultures may reproduce, resist or transform educational inequality.

Core concepts

pro-school subculture: define it, connect it to a mechanism and prepare one example for a 10-mark or 30-mark response.

anti-school subculture: define it, connect it to a mechanism and prepare one example for a 10-mark or 30-mark response.

negotiated identity: define it, connect it to a mechanism and prepare one example for a 10-mark or 30-mark response.

labelling: define it, connect it to a mechanism and prepare one example for a 10-mark or 30-mark response.

self-fulfilling prophecy: define it, connect it to a mechanism and prepare one example for a 10-mark or 30-mark response.

resistance: define it, connect it to a mechanism and prepare one example for a 10-mark or 30-mark response.

agency and structure: define it, connect it to a mechanism and prepare one example for a 10-mark or 30-mark response.

Theory and evidence map

Hargreaves

Idea: Teachers may classify pupils, and pupils can respond collectively to that classification. This helps learners see subcultures as patterned social responses rather than individual personality defects.

Evaluation: Evaluate by asking whether teacher classification is the cause, a response to prior differences, or one element in a wider process.

Lacey

Idea: Differentiation and polarisation explain how ranked positions inside school can encourage different pupil identities.

Evaluation: Evaluate by considering setting criteria, peer status, teacher expectations and evidence needed to show causality.

Willis

Idea: Resistance can have short-term meaning for pupils while reproducing long-term class inequality.

Evaluation: Evaluate sample, context, masculinity and labour-market change; use Willis to avoid simplistic blame.

Fuller

Idea: Some pupils resist negative labels while still pursuing success.

Evaluation: Use this to challenge deterministic accounts and to show how agency varies across social groups.

Common misconceptions

A social pattern is not automatically a causal explanation.

A named sociologist is not evidence unless the finding and mechanism are explained.

Evaluation must change the judgement, not merely add a “however” sentence.

Averages can hide differences within groups.

Assessment success criteria

AO1: knowledge	AO2: application	AO3: analysis/evaluation
Use accurate concepts, studies and theorists.	Apply directly to the item, question wording and educational context.	Explain mechanisms, compare explanations and evaluate evidence.
Do not name-drop: explain the idea and mechanism.	Do not write a generic essay that could fit any question.	Do not bolt on “however”; show why the criticism changes the judgement.
High grade: precise and selective knowledge.	High grade: item use integrated into the paragraph.	High grade: qualified judgement about strength and limits.