

Knowledge Organiser: What is Sociology?

AQA A Level Sociology 7192 • L001

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The big idea

Sociology studies patterned social life. It asks how relationships, culture, institutions, inequality and expectations shape experiences and choices, while recognising agency.

Term	Remember
Society	Networks of social relationships and institutions.
Culture	Shared meanings, values, practices and ways of life.
Norm	An expectation about appropriate behaviour.
Value	An idea about what is desirable or worthwhile.
Status	A recognised social position.
Role	Expected behaviour linked to a social position.
Structure	Patterns/institutions creating opportunities and constraints.
Agency	Capacity to act, interpret and choose.
Socialisation	Learning culture and participation in social life.

Think like a sociologist

PATTERN → QUESTION → EVIDENCE

Do not stop at 'Why did this person do that?' Ask whether there is a wider pattern and what social influences might help explain it.

Common misconception

Sociology does not require you to believe society completely controls people. Structure and agency can operate together.