

Knowledge organiser

AQA A Level Sociology 7192 • Families & Households • L003 • v1.0

CONNECT & CHECK | SHARE | PRESENT | APPLY | RECALL & REVIEW

How do sociologists explain society differently?

Concept	Meaning
Perspective	A framework that directs attention to particular questions and explanations.
Theory	A connected explanation using concepts; it can be examined against evidence.
Consensus	Broad agreement about values or rules. It does not mean everyone agrees on everything.
Conflict	Competing interests and unequal power; conflict can exist without open fighting.
Structure	Patterned arrangements, institutions and inequalities that shape opportunities.
Agency	People's capacity to interpret, act and negotiate within social conditions.
Functionalism	A structural consensus approach asking how institutions contribute to social order.
Function	A contribution an activity or institution makes to a wider social arrangement.

Power, meaning and evaluation

Concept	Meaning
Marxism	A conflict tradition centred on class, ownership and the organisation of production.
Capitalism	An economic system in which productive assets are mainly privately owned and production is organised for profit.
Feminism	Diverse approaches examining gendered power and inequality, including within families.
Patriarchy	Social arrangements in which men, as a group, hold disproportionate power.
Social action	Approaches that begin with meanings and actions through which social life is produced.
Interactionism	A social-action approach examining how meanings develop through interaction.
Macro / micro	Broad social patterns / detailed interactions. The two levels can be connected.
Evaluation	A reasoned judgement about how well an explanation works, using evidence and limits.

One routine, different questions

Unpaid care may support members (function), connect to unequal resources (class), be organised through gendered expectations (feminism), and involve negotiated meanings of fairness (interactionism). Each claim requires relevant evidence.

Avoid these confusions

Consensus does not mean perfect harmony; conflict does not require violence; feminism is internally diverse; interactionism does not deny all structural constraints. Describing an arrangement's function does not establish that it is fair or inevitable.

Retrieve later

Tomorrow: define four terms without notes. In one week: compare two perspectives using one care routine, then identify evidence that could challenge your explanation.