An aerial photograph of a large, paved plaza made of light-colored stone tiles. The plaza is divided into several rectangular sections by darker stone borders. In the center of each section, there is a decorative geometric pattern. Numerous people are walking across the plaza, and their long, dark shadows are cast across the tiles, indicating it is either early morning or late afternoon. The overall scene is busy and captures a moment of daily life in a public space.

AS and A-level Sociology: Where could it take you?

Student guide

Why choose sociology?

Studying sociology offers insights into social and cultural issues. It helps you develop a multi-perspective and critical approach to understanding issues around culture, identity, religion, crime, families and social power. More than once during the course you're bound to ask yourself the question, "why has society developed like this? With poverty, ignorance, crime and injustice."

What will I study?

Whether you're studying for the AS or the A-level, the first year of study will be the same. You'll study:

- **Education and methods in context:** You'll consider the role of education in society. For example as part of your studies you'll look into gender and ethnicity differences in school achievement. You'll also learn how to apply your own sociology research methods to the study of education.
- **Research methods:** You'll learn how to conduct your own sociological research, from interviews to reviewing documents and official statistics.

“Studying sociology gave me a good foundation from which to improve and undertake further learning in my training to be a Probation Officer. Understanding how individuals have become involved in crime, as well as how systems and society as a whole respond to individuals who fail to abide by the law, has helped me to tailor my methods of working with offenders in order to successfully rehabilitate and reintegrate them into society.”

Kirsty
Probation Officer

You'll also study one of the following optional topics:

- culture and identity
- families and households
- health
- work, poverty and welfare.

In the second year of the A-level you'll broaden your understanding of society. You'll study:

- **Crime and deviance with theory and methods:** You'll learn about criminal and deviant behaviour, including factors that might lead a person to follow this path in life and how the media portrays them
- **Theory and methods:** you'll expand on your knowledge of research methods and study theory and methods.

You'll also study one of the following optional topics:

- beliefs in society
- global development
- the media
- stratification and differentiation.

How will I be assessed?

There are two exams at AS each worth 50% of your AS qualification. Each exam lasts for 1 hour 30 minutes and is worth 60 marks. The exams consist of short answer and extended writing questions.

At A-level there are three exams, each account for one third of your A-level grade. The three exams last 2 hours and are worth 80 marks each. The exams consist of a mixture of short answer and extended writing questions.


Where will AS and A-level Sociology take you?

Sociology is a great choice of subject for people who want a career in social work, nursing or medicine. But the subject is also useful in a number of other careers, like marketing, advertising, PR, journalism, law or teaching.

Possible degree options

According to bestcourse4me.com, the top six degree courses taken by students who have an A-level in sociology are:

- Sociology
- Psychology
- English studies
- Business studies
- Law
- Teaching.



“Sociology examines a wide variety of topics which can be taken forward and applied in a number of different careers. I found the subject of society and work to be really interesting and decided I wanted to pursue an HR related career.

My background in sociology has given me transferable skills, particularly with the analysis of information. This helps me understand the requirements of a diverse range of businesses and to be creative in finding solutions for their staffing needs.”

Alex, Senior Project Manager working for a recruitment solutions provider

“Looking back at my decision to study sociology, I wanted a subject which would allow me some freedom and give me a broad range of careers options. I also wanted to explore a subject which encourages debate and focuses on the study of society and people.

Since graduating I’ve been working in market research. The research methods we studied provided a great foundation for understanding different methodologies involved in market research.”

Charlotte W, Senior Project Manager working in market research

What skills will I learn?

Our AS and A-level Sociology will help you develop a range of skills that will benefit you, whether you decide to go on to further study or the working world, including:

- the use of evidence to support your arguments
- how to investigate facts and use deduction
- critical thinking
- making reasoned arguments
- developing opinions and new ideas on societal issues
- the ability to analyse and better understand societal issues.

How will it fit in with my other subjects?

There's no limit to the other subjects that you can take alongside sociology. There's such breadth to the subject that it will complement just about anything. Students who study sociology often also study psychology, English and media studies. But students, who want a career in any of the caring services, or in marketing or business, will find an understanding of sociology useful.

Can't wait to get started?

Your teacher and career adviser will be the best people to help you decide whether this course is the right choice for you. They'll be as passionate as you to find the best subjects to develop your talents.

For more information visit
aqa.org.uk/sociology