

Summer Preparation for Year 12 Sociology

On the following pages, you will find a selection of articles and suggested activities to prepare you for Year 12 Sociology.

The topics that we currently offer are:

- Education
- Families and Households
- Theory and Methods
- Crime and Deviance
- Beliefs in Society

The textbooks that we use in school are:

- AQA A Level Sociology, Book One (Webb, Westergaard, Trobe and Townend)
- AQA A Level Sociology, Book Two (Webb, Westergaard, Trobe and Townend)

These textbooks **are** mandatory as these will support you in your lessons, in free periods and at home.



Sociology is everywhere, so you'll be able to see aspects of it in all forms of media. Try searching for the following titles and make notes on any videos you watch, try to keep it relevant to the topics taught in sociology (see above):

- Poor kids (BBC)
- Educating Yorkshire/etc. (Ch4)
- Stacey Dooley investigates... (BBC)
- The most hated woman in America (Netflix)
- Louis Theroux Documentaries (BBC/Netflix)
- Panorama Documentaries (BBC)
- Dispatches Documentaries (Ch4)

Make any notes from your video observations here:

The seven apps every woman should own

Back in 2014, Apple released HealthKit, an app that lets people keep track of a vast array of health and fitness data – everything from blood alcohol levels and sodium intake to body temperature. What you couldn't track, however, was your period. Not one person at Apple had stopped to think a period tracker might be useful. And that's because Apple, like most tech companies, is dominated by myopic men.

Four years later, female engineers are still very much a minority in Silicon Valley. However, progress is slowly being made and the future of tech is looking decidedly more female-friendly. Take the dating app Bumble, for example, which was started by Tinder co-founder Whitney Wolfe Herd and has been designed with a women-centric interface. When two users of the opposite sex match on Bumble, the woman must send the first message, bucking the convention that men have to make the first move. Focussing on women has paid off; Bumble had a stellar 2017 and is valued at more than \$1bn. And Bumble is just one of a growing number of apps designed with women in mind. From pedicure-scheduling to confidence-boosting to pill-planning, when it comes to a female need, there's now often an app for that. Here, Guardian writers recommend some of their favourites.

myPill

Even if you're lucky enough not to be emotionally debilitated by the hormonal surges of the contraceptive pill, you still have to contend with the waves of panic that come with forgetting to pop it. iPhone reminders and alarms can too easily be swiped into the ether, or become a source of office-disrupting embarrassment. But myPill not only fires off silent reminders, it continues to show notifications after you've dismissed them. The virtual packet allows you to mark off the pills you've taken, meaning you can check whether you really did take 'Monday' or simply imagined it (it happens), as well as being able to visualise the month ahead.

Clementine

Most of the time, my anxiety is a low-level background noise – I can usually ignore it. But on particularly stressful days, my anxious thoughts can seem deafening, which is where the hypnotherapy app Clementine comes in. It is pitched as a fix 'for the modern women'; it is by no means a cure-all, but the 'confidence boost' session can work a charm. It asks you to imagine what success would look like and prompts you to work towards it, rather than getting bogged down thinking about what could go wrong. At just five minutes long, this session is also easy to integrate into everyday life. Similarly, the 'take a breather' session has prevented many potentially regrettable decisions being made in a frenzy of stress; I just click play and within five minutes, I am feeling level-headed again.

Workout for Women

Many women felt more angry than usual last year, and I was no different. I cast about for a physical outlet and found an app called Workout for Women. It offers a mixture of cardio and body-weight exercises, with the added benefit that you can hide away at home as you puff through your press-ups. You can donkey kick and squat while a voice from your smartphone keeps you from lying down and wheezing. Since using it, my endurance for these horrible exercises has shot up – ignore the slightly dubious "bikini body" title of one challenge and it's pleasingly tough. Of course, you could do these moves without an app,

but I am part sheep and need the bossy orders and digital encouragement. I feel stronger and it's addictive.

Clue

As with a lot of my friends, my period used to take me by surprise every month. Despite 20 years of menstrual bleeding, I never had any idea when mine was due. But the period-tracking app Clue has changed my life. Over the course of a few months, it gets to know your cycle – you input which dates you are bleeding – and predicts when your next period is due. It can track your energy level, appetite, skin, digestion – and it can tell you when you're most fertile. I've planned holidays around it.

Treatwell

"Meeting cancelled, manicure scheduled," reads one of Treatwell's many taglines – and while this hair-and-beauty booking app isn't exclusively for women, the marketing and design is skewed that way. Aside from the ability to make appointments quickly and (thankfully) discreetly, the app also encourages user reviews – creating the recommendations that women have relied on other women to provide since time immemorial. Through it, I have found exceptional threading artists, discounted LED facials and waxers who don't double-dip (all essential and not always easy to come by), usually within walking distance of wherever I happen to be.

Hormone Horoscope

Do you use horoscopes for clues on whom to snog and when? Does your period dictate when your next tantrum is due? This is me. This is how I discovered Hormone Horoscope. The app tracks where you are in your menstrual cycle and offers information and advice based on the body's hormone levels. Day eight? More oestrogen. Beware: you're probably going to buy something you can't afford. Day 23? Bound to be feeling volatile. I'm not sure I'd plan my life by it (that's reserved for astrology), but it does provide context to the highs and the lows, and it has helped me to understand my body better.

Skin Matters

There's a lot of buzz around the idea of elimination in beauty – parabens and sulphates being the main betes noires – but it's hard to know where to begin. This nerdy app is designed by facialist Joanne Evans and explains which ingredients to look out for, which to avoid and why. All you do is give your age, gender and skin type. It's pretty basic, doesn't allow for other factors (such as your heritage or family history) and directs you towards Evans' products. But there are more than 2,000 ingredients listed, most of which I hadn't heard of, and the explainers are pretty comprehensive, making it a decent beginner's guide to what's what if you're trawling through the small print in Boots. Plus, you can change your profile depending on how your skin feels at any given time.

How would a radical and liberal feminist respond to this article?

Marriage between heterosexual couples is at the lowest level on record

New research has revealed that marriage between heterosexual couples is at the lowest level on record.

The new study by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) revealed that 239,020 between heterosexual couples took place in England and Wales in 2015, a 3.4 decrease on the year before.

Between 1972 and 2009, a gradual long-term decline in the number of marriages was gradually noticed, before the trend was eventually bucked between 2010 and 2012. But in 2015, the number of marriages was 0.8% lower than the record low of 2013, representing the lowest number of marriages in a calendar year since 2009. The data also shows a steep decline in tradition, with only 0.7 percent of same sex marriages being performed at a religious ceremony. Despite the overall decline, it also appears that heterosexual couples are getting married later in life, with the average age for men marrying in 2015 being 37.5 years, while for women it was 35.1 years.

It reflects an increase compared with 2014 (37.0 years for men and 34.6 years for women) and continues the overall rise which has been recorded since the 1970s. For the first time ever, the date also reflected same sex marriages – with 6,493 being performed in 2015. Of these, 44% (2,860) were between male couples and 56% (3,633) were between female couples. Statistician Nicola Haines said: 'Marriage rates for opposite-sex couples are now at their lowest level on record following a gradual long-term decline since the early 1970s. The number of marriages between opposite-sex couples decreased by 3.4% in 2015, compared with 2014.

'Despite this overall decline, marriages at older ages rose; the number of weddings increased for men aged 50 and over and women aged 35 to 39 years and 45 and over. This is the first full year for which marriages were available for same-sex couples and they accounted for 2.6% of all marriages.'

Suggest why marriages are declining in British society.

As few as one in 20 born in poorest areas go to university

Only one in 20 pupils in some of the country's poorest postcodes progress to higher education, according to new analysis by Teach First.

The charity has called for the government to improve entry rates by writing off student debt to get better teachers into challenging schools. It has also called on universities to start offering university access programmes at primary level.

According to Teach First's research, on average only one in five young people born in the country's poorest postcodes progress to university, while half of those born in the wealthiest postcodes do so.

However, the gap is even more stark between some areas.

Big differences

For example, in some parts of Derbyshire, as few as one in twenty students go to university, while in parts of Buckinghamshire it is more than 80 per cent. This means that those born in some of the richest areas are up to 18 times more likely to attend university than those in some of the poorest areas.

Teach First also found big differences between the choices made by disadvantaged young people when it came to university compared to their more privileged peers.

A ComRes poll of 18-25 year olds found that 41 per cent of the most advantaged students said they chose their university because it was the best for what they wanted to study, compared to only 31 per cent of the least advantaged.

Similarly, the reputation of a university was important to 53 per cent of the most advantaged students, but it only was for 46 per cent of the most disadvantaged.

Disadvantaged students are also more likely to choose an institution close to where they live, with 29 per cent saying they chose their university on this basis, compared to 24 per cent of the most advantaged.

Of the most disadvantaged pupils who did not go to university, only 12 per cent said this was because their grades weren't good enough.

'More must be done'

To ensure students were able to make more informed choices when it came to university, Teach First said there should be a trained careers middle leader in every school to develop and lead a careers strategy. It suggested this could be paid for out of money councils and academies are required to set aside for the apprenticeship levy.

Teach First says the government should offer student loan forgiveness to attract the best possible graduates into teaching, where they can help young people from deprived communities achieve their potential.

It suggests 20 per cent of student debt could be cleared for those working for two years, increasing to 50 per cent for those who remain in certain geographic or subject areas for five years.

The charity also says that universities' access work is coming too late, with programmes frequently aimed at pupils aged 16-18 "by which point much of the effects of disadvantage have already played out".

Instead, it argues that access work should start at primary school to give pupils "the best possible opportunity to make informed and supported decisions about their futures at an earlier age".

Brett Wigdortz, Teach First's chief executive and founder, said "there are still far too few disadvantaged pupils getting to university".

"They're simply not given the same chance to reach their full potential, with less access to brilliant teaching and less guidance on how they can turn their aspirations into reality. "

He added: "More must be done by the government, universities and society as a whole to break down the barriers to social mobility that are preventing too many of our young people reaching as far as their potential allows".

What is meritocracy?

Does this article suggest we live in a meritocracy?

Why is it important that 'poor' students go to university?