

GCSE SOCIOLOGY

The sociology
of family

How To Use This Workbook...



Welcome! This workbook will support your learning in GCSE Sociology outside of lessons.

After completing your initial progress-check and the Personal Learning Checklist (PLC) you should work your way through the activities. Each one should take roughly one hour: your teacher will give you a timeframe for completing the workbook.

The Sociology of Family

The Big Questions

- What is the function of the family in terms of wider society?
- How does society shape the way that families are structured?
- What different forms can families take?
- How has the nature of family life changed over time?
- To what extent have changes in family life been a good thing?
- How has the dynamic between generations changed?
- To what extent is there a domestic division of labour?
- What is the impact of divorce on wider society?
- What role do families play in maintaining the status quo?
- In what ways is the structure of families problematic?
- What problems stem from the nature of family life?



Get the most out of this booklet by...

- Using your own initiative as much as possible
- Using the internet for research and developing your independent learning skills
- Returning to the Personal Learning Checklist to check progress regularly
- Pushing yourself further by completing the extension tasks at the end

Evaluate Your Progress So Far...

As an independent learner, it's essential that you learn to monitor and evaluate your own progress. That way you can regulate your learning effectively: building on strengths and compensating for weaknesses. Complete the reflection tasks below, then complete the personal learning checklist for this unit.



| | Agree | Disagree |
|--|-------|----------|
| So far I have made good progress in this unit | | |
| I need to learn to motivate myself more effectively outside of lessons | | |
| I am genuinely interested in this topic | | |
| I have weak independent research skills: I need to develop them | | |
| I like to watch videos and documentaries online that are relevant to this unit | | |
| I tend to learn a lot in lessons, but I am too dependent on the teacher | | |
| Most of what we have studied so far I have found easy to understand | | |
| I need to remind myself of what will be expected of me in the exams | | |
| I think sociology is an important subject: I'm highly motivated to succeed | | |
| I am good at evaluating my own work: my self-assessments are usually accurate | | |
| I know a number of good websites for researching sociological theories | | |
| There are some topics I need to revisit: my understanding of them is unclear | | |
| I understand the four main sociological perspectives (Marxism, Feminism, etc.) | | |
| I know how to improve in this subject and have a clear grasp of my targets | | |
| Whilst I understand my targets, I don't know how to actually reach them | | |
| I'm a reflective learner: I reflect on how to improve and learn more effectively | | |

For each factor give yourself a score out of ten...

Attitude to Learning

Effort

Subject Knowledge

Exam Technique

Clarity of Targets

Motivation

Interest in Subject

Ability to Self-Assess

Research Skills

Quality of Work

Clarity of Understanding

Overall Confidence

To improve my work in Sociology I need to...

To improve my rate of progress in Sociology I need to...

This is a checklist of every topic you need to know about for the 'Family' section of your exam.
For each topic indicate your level of understanding in both columns.

| Topic/Ability | Shade RED/AMBER/ GREEN | Confidence Rating 1-10 |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Differing views of the functions of families | | |
| I can identify, describe and explain the functions of families (sexual, reproductive, economic and educational) | | |
| Parsons functionalist perspective on primary socialisation and the stabilisation of adult personalities. | | |
| I can describe, compare and contrast a variety of sociological perspectives on the functions of families (functionalist, feminist, Marxist and New Right) | | |
| How family forms differ in the UK and within a global context | | |
| I can identify, describe and explain various family forms (nuclear, extended, reconstituted, lone parent, single sex). | | |
| The work of the Rapoport on family diversity. | | |
| Different views of conjugal role relationships | | |
| I can identify, describe and explain joint and segregated conjugal roles | | |
| I can describe and explain the domestic division of labour in both traditional and contemporary families | | |
| I can demonstrate their understanding of issues that impact on conjugal role relationships within the contemporary family including decision making, money management, dual career families, child rearing and leisure activities | | |
| I can describe, compare and contrast a variety of sociological perspectives on the functions of families (functionalist, feminist, Marxist and New Right). | | |
| The feminist perspective of Oakley on the idea of the conventional family. | | |
| Changing relationships within families & how relationships within families have changed over time | | |
| I can identify, describe and explain how relationships within families have changed over time (preindustrial, industrial and contemporary/modern) | | |
| I can identify, describe and explain contemporary family related issues, the quality of parenting, the relationships between teenagers and adults, care of the disabled/elderly and arranged marriage | | |
| I can describe, compare and contrast a variety of sociological perspectives on changing relationships within families (functionalist, feminist, Marxist and New Right) | | |
| The theory of the symmetrical family and the principle of stratified diffusion developed from the functionalist perspective of Willmott and Young | | |
| Different criticisms of families (isolation and unrealistic idealisation, loss of traditional functions, lack of contact with wider kinship networks, the status and role of women within families, marital breakdown, dysfunctional families). | | |
| I can identify, describe and explain different criticisms of families | | |
| I can describe, compare and contrast a variety of sociological perspectives on these issues (functionalist, feminist, Marxist and New Right) | | |

1

Create a Mind-Map Overview of the Unit

Date:



Using the learning checklist as a guide, create a mind-map overview of this unit. Mind-maps help to organise ideas try to include: central debates and relevant points, your own research, potential exam questions. Indicate areas of strength and weakness in terms of your confidence and subject knowledge.

Functionalist sociologists claim that stable and healthy families are 'functional prerequisites' for stable and healthy societies: without functioning families there can be no society. Functionalists claim that the existence of families serves a number of vital roles in relation to society: Parsons, for example, argues that families are essential in the primary socialisation of children and the stabilisation of adult personalities.

In the 1940s Murdock (a functionalist) examined 250 societies in different cultures. He concluded the family is universal and inevitable as no society had a substitute for the family. He concluded the 'nuclear family' is the ideal model and this model achieves four distinct functions:

- Sexual - the family provides stable sexual relationships for adults and controls the sexual habits of its members
- Reproduction - helps provide new members of society
- Socialisation - teaches children the norms and values of society to keep society going
- Economic - pools resources for all family members to share

Roughly 70 years after Murdock's work: Britain has seen dramatic changes in the nature of family life. Changing laws, values and norms saw a massive increase in rates of divorce during the 70s, a rise of single-parent households, and a decline in marriage rates. Since the 70s the average age of first-marriage has gradually increased: it is currently about 34 for men and about 31 for women (ONS, 2020). Moreover, family sizes have decreased: people tend to have fewer children, people choose to have children later in life, and an increasing number of people choose not to have children at all.

The concept of a 'nuclear family' (two parents and their children) has given way to an increasing plurality of family forms. Family diversity is the term used to describe the numerous family structures which exist outside the traditional family structure. Rapoport and Rapoport (1982) identify five types of family diversity: **Organisational diversity** - which is due to different patterns of work outside and inside the home, and to changing marital trends. This category includes 'reconstituted families' as a result of divorce and remarriage, and dual career families, some of which have resulted in a greater democratisation of domestic labour. **Cultural diversity** - which accounts for much family diversity from the indigenous population to migrant households from diverse regions such as Western Europe, Southern Europe, Middle Eastern and many groups from East and Southeast Asia bring with them aspects of family and household composition. **Social class diversity** - which is demonstrated in the material resources of families, the relationships between couples and between parents and their children, and the socialisation and education of children. **Life cycle diversity** - which exists between families whose members are from different historical periods. The impact of the Depression and the experience of war were defining influences for many Australian parents of the baby boomer generation. Baby boomers, in their turn, have tended to rear their children differently because of the greater economic prosperity and rapidly changing social mores of the 1960s and 1970s. **Family life course diversity** - which refers to the difference that occurs when a family has a baby, when the children reach their teens, and finally when (or, increasingly, if) they leave home.

Read the text above and reflect deeply on its meaning. Answer the questions about the text using full sentences on the opposite page.

One important sociological question raised by this text is...



1. According to Parsons, what are the main functions of the family?

2. According to Murray's theory: what would happen if people stopped living in families?

3. How has family life changed in the UK in the last 70 years?

4. Based on the text: why do you think divorce rates are now declining in Britain?

5. Why did 'Baby Boomers' have different approaches to child-rearing than their parents?

6. The text mentions 'reconstituted families' - what are they? [Research!]

• Which topics from the personal learning checklist can you connect this text to?



Match the key-words with the correct definitions and explanations!
Use a pencil and, if you're stuck, use the internet to research & check your answers...

1 Conjugal Roles

2 Crisis of Masculinity

3 Double-Shift

4 Matriarchal Family

5 Nuclear Family

6 Polygyny

7 Polyandry

8 Dysfunctional Families

9 Empty Shell Families

10 Kinship

A

When a woman has multiple husbands. This is the norm in some cultures.

B

Where women earn money but are also expected to do unpaid work at home. Also known as double-burden.

C

A family with two parents and children. Contrasted with single-parent or extended families.

D

Families featuring regular conflict, misbehaviour, and often child neglect or abuse on the part of individual parents.

E

Families where power is centred on a woman (a matriarch). The opposite of a patriarchal family.

F

The separation of roles within a marriage based on the individual's gender

G

Where couples have no more sexual and emotional ties while they are still living together with their children

H

The challenge men face due to rapidly shifting ideas about masculinity: identity, work, relationships & sexuality.

I

When people are related by blood

J

When a man has multiple wives. This is the norm in some cultures.

Complete the lists, adding as many ideas as you can...

Different Forms of The Family

The Functions of the Family

Changes in Family Life in Britain

Differences in Conjugal Roles (between male and female)

Agents of Socialisation

Criticisms of The Family

Possible essay questions for this unit in the exam...

Discuss how far sociologists agree that _____

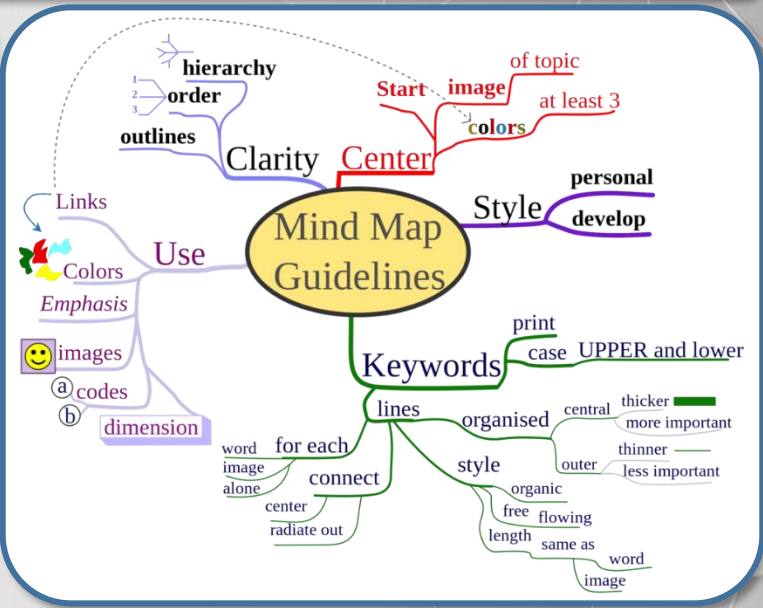
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D.H.F.S.A.T. _____

D.H.F.S.A.T. _____

D.H.F.S.A.T. _____

Using the internet for research, create a detailed mind-map answering each rubric!
 Be ready to explain your mind-map to the class or your teacher in case you are asked to do so...



The work of the Rapoport on family diversity.



Willmott and Young's ideas about the family



Marxist critiques of family life and the family's role in sustaining capitalism



1 What is an example of a modern matriarchal society or culture?

2 A study which revisits a family over a long period of time is a _____ study.

3 What is an example of a modern day polygamous society or culture?

4 What is an example of a modern day polyandrous society or culture?

5 In which country are arranged marriages the most common?

6 Some claim that a glass _____ prevents women from succeeding in work

7 What term describes a form of collective living popular in Israel?

8 In which year was divorce for ordinary people legalised in the UK?

9 From which year were same-sex couples allowed to marry in the UK?

10 Which country has the lowest marriage rates in the world?

11 What is the current trend in divorce rates in the UK?

12 Roughly what % of families in the UK are single-parent households?

13 What term describes the decline of religion in society?

14 What is the opposite of urban?

15 What criminal offense involves marrying more than one person? (UK)

Answer each of the above questions with a single word!
You will need to use the internet to research the correct answers!!

What was the single most important thing you learned in your research?

Topics I need to research further...



The standard model of family-life in Britain is the nuclear-family (two parents and their children). Some thinkers claim that this model is inherently problematic and leads to dysfunctional situations that harm those involved. Some critics claim that family-life is subject to unrealistic and idealised expectations: media-representations hide the suffering, dysfunctions and problems that is often involved. Since nuclear-families are still the social norm and since family-life brings benefits to society: criticisms of family-life are 'taboo' (meaning open discussion of them is discouraged) and failing to conform to 'the life script' (mortgage, marriage, children) is still viewed by many as deviant behaviour.

Overly-positive narratives around family life often hide a number of problems ranging from domestic abuse, child abuse, loss of independence and freedom, social isolation, marital breakdown, and 'empty shell marriages' where couples feel trapped together even though they no longer love one another or have a satisfying sexual relationship.

According to the Office of National Statistics (2019), who polled 2,000 married people: about 2.4% of married couples claimed to be unhappy and 15% 'neither happy nor unhappy with their marriage', 1 in 4 married people nationally has had or would consider having an affair and in some areas (the North East) 20% of married people have had at least one affair. The research suggested women are less happy with their marriages than men: this is reflected in divorce statistics - 62% of divorces are initiated by women. 31% of husbands have had or would consider an affair compared to just 19% of wives. The social-isolation of nuclear-family life sometimes fails to protect children from domestic abuse and neglect: according to Women's Aid (2010) over 160,000 children witness violence in the home each year and, according to the NSPCC (2020) an average of 70 children each year die from abuse or neglect at home.

Some feminist sociologists have criticised the nature of modern family life. Christine Delphy and Diana Leonard (1992) argued that the inequalities between partners in the home are a result of the fact that most of the heads of households are men. This implies that men have more decision-making power, consume more of whatever the family has, retain control over finances (even when they are unemployed and it is the women who earn the money) and benefit from women's domestic work and emotional support. Women, on the other hand, are expected to carry out free domestic work, even when they are in paid employment, cater to the needs of their husband (emotional, sexual, physical) and spend their time in raising the children at whatever cost to their own paid work or other activities and projects.

Difference feminists, such as Linda Nicholson (1997) and Cheshire Calhoun (1997), have criticised the other types of feminists for neglecting to take into consideration the fact that women in different types of households experience family life differently. They argue that it is not possible to say that all women are exploited in the same way in all types of families. Difference feminists assert that many factors shape the experience that women have of family life. Such factors are social class, race, sexual orientation (lesbian or heterosexual couples) and family structure (nuclear family, extended family, single-parent families and so on).

Read the text above and reflect deeply on its meaning. Answer the questions about the text using full sentences on the opposite page.

One important sociological question raised by this text is...



1. What do you think are the most powerful criticisms of family life?

2. Based on the text: how could family-life be improved?

4. What evidence suggests that women find family life more problematic than men?

4. How can the nature of family life sometimes negatively impact children in the UK?

5. What are the main criticisms of family-life from Feminist sociologists?

6. What views about the family are espoused by 'Difference Feminists'?

• Which topics from the personal learning checklist can you connect this text to?



Add arguments, evidence and reasons **for (supporting)** and **against (opposing)** each of the claims! Add at least two good arguments on both sides and then write your considered final conclusion.



FOR

"There are better alternative to the nuclear family"

AGAINST



Moreover _____

Furthermore _____

In conclusion _____



FOR

"Without families there can be no society"

AGAINST



Moreover _____

Furthermore _____

In conclusion _____



FOR

"Most people marry for the sake of the children"

AGAINST



Four horizontal lines for writing.

Moreover

Four horizontal lines for writing.

Four horizontal lines for writing.

Furthermore

Four horizontal lines for writing.

In conclusion

Two horizontal lines for writing.



FOR

"Changes in family life in the UK have been for the best"

AGAINST



Four horizontal lines for writing.

Moreover

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Four horizontal lines for writing.

Furthermore

Four horizontal lines for writing.

In conclusion

Two horizontal lines for writing.

Create a list of statements that represent some of the other central debates of this unit...

Four horizontal lines for writing.



In the space below, create a poster design about one of the following topics:

- *Feminist criticisms of the family*
- *Functionalist views of the family*
- *Different Forms of Family Around The World*

You may download, print and glue images below in order to enhance your design.

A large, empty white rectangular area with rounded corners, intended for creating a poster design.

9th March 1945

the CITY of the NEWS

Since 1678

Only Fastest. Only Latest.

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RECIPES & RATINGS

{ DETAILS ABOUT THE LIFE OF THE PRESIDENT }

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I KNOW WHAT you're thinking

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We SPECIALISE IN COLLECTING IRON
Details About
The Life Of The President

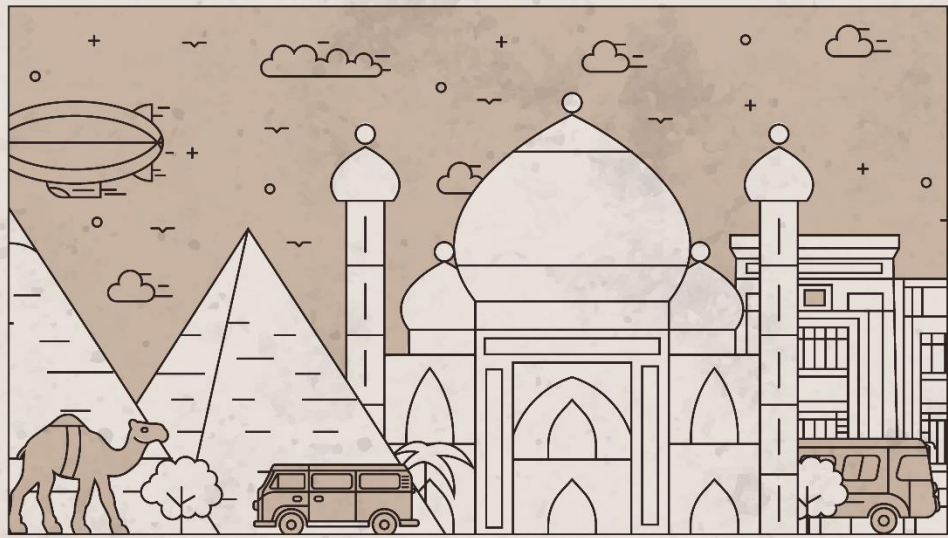
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For SALE or RENT BUY YOUR HOMELAND

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Write short newspaper articles relevant to this unit of study in sociology in the blank spaces. You may wish to research relevant topics online and put articles into your own words or write original articles based on statistics and research you have found. Make sure to include a pithy headline!

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SATISFACTION ON MONDAY

Only Fastest. Only Latest.



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EXCITEMENTS ON STREETS

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TIP OF THE DAY

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VOTE?

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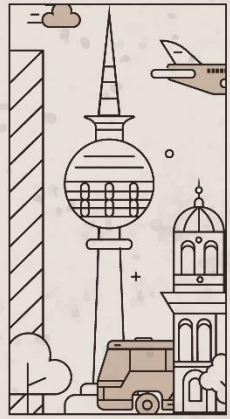
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NEWS

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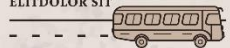


WE KNOW WHAT you're need

white & color PAPER

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TOWELS

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g. T. Vail & Co

88 X 88

EST. 1732

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MAGIC IS NOW

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RaBBiT

For Everyone Kid

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DOORS OF CONVENTION WITH AXES



AIRSHIP

THEME of the DAY

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STEREO PTIC

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TRAVEL with OUR STEEL AIR PLANES

HIGH SPIRITS

selections

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NOTICE! EVERY WOMEN & CHILDREN USED OUR GOODS EVERYDAY

SMASH DOORS OF CONVENTION WITH AXES

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BURT & FULLER

NO.5 CENTRE BLOCK

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RECIPES & RATINGS

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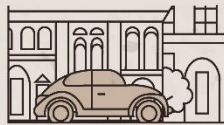
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METRO SPACE tickets WITH DISCOUNTS

5% 10% 15%

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WIND & SUN BEAUTY MILLS FOR FARMERS

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FREE CONCERT IN THE CENTER OF THE CITY

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WELL TO TELL YOU THE TRURH, I FORGOT MYSELF IN ALL THIS

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Author: Duis Aute Irure. Date 10/22/1547

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IPSUM DOLOR SIT AMET, CONSECUTUR ADIPISCING ELIT



TIP OF THE DAY

enjoy

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Author: Duis Aute Irure. Date 10/22/1547

Marxist sociologists are interested in: how the nature and form of families is affected by the demands of the capitalist economy, the ways in which the interests of the capitalist elite are served by the nature of the family, the effects of poverty, wealth, and inequality on the functioning of family units and how family life, and gender roles, changes to suit the needs of capitalist elites (e.g. women entering the workplace has disrupted family life, and benefits the ruling classes (as they have a larger, devalued, workforce).


Marxists argue that the nuclear family performs ideological functions for Capitalism - the family acts as a unit of consumption and teaches passive acceptance of hierarchy. The nuclear family emerged because of the needs of the Capitalist system: it serves to prepare people for their lives as capitalist workers. Moreover, the family is also the institution through which the wealthy pass down their private property to their children, thus reproducing class inequality and reducing social-mobility.

The modern nuclear family functions to promote values that ensure the reproduction and maintenance of capitalism. The family is described as an ideological apparatus - this means it socialises people to think in a way that justifies inequality and encourages people to accept the capitalist system as fair, natural and unchangeable. According to Kollontai (1920), "the family deprives the worker of revolutionary consciousness" and helps to pacify the working-classes: preventing revolution and change.

Althusser (1971) a French Marxist, argued that in order for capitalism to survive people must be taught how to think and behave, and the family (as well as schools and the mass media) was the best mechanism for doing this.

According to Engels, the monogamous nuclear family only emerged with Capitalism. Before Capitalism, traditional, tribal societies were classless and they practised a form of 'primitive communism' in which there was no private property. In such societies, property was collectively owned, and the family structure reflected this - there were no families as such, but tribal groups existed in a kind of 'promiscuous horde' in which there were no restrictions on sexual relationships.

However, with the emergence of Capitalism in the 18th Century, society and the family changed. Capitalism is based on a system of private ownership - The bourgeois use their own personal wealth to personally invest in businesses in order to make a profit, they don't invest for the benefit of everyone else. Eventually the Bourgeois started to look for ways to pass on their wealth to the next generation, rather than having it shared out amongst the masses, and this is where the monogamous nuclear family comes from. It is the best way of guaranteeing that you are passing on your property to your son, because in a monogamous relationship you have a clear idea of who your own children are. Ultimately what this arrangement does is to reproduce inequality - The children of the rich grow up into wealth, while the children of the poor remain poor. Thus the nuclear family benefits the Bourgeois more than the proletariat.



Read the text above and reflect deeply on its meaning. Answer the questions about the text using full sentences on the opposite page.

One important sociological question raised by this text is...

1. What aspects of family-life are the greatest concern for Marxist sociologists?

2. How might the nature of family-life reduce social-mobility & maintain the class-system?

3. Summarise Engels' views about how family life has changed in your own words...

4. In your own life: has family life "deprived you of revolutionary consciousness"? How so?

5. How would you argue against some of the views proposed by Marxist sociologists?

6. To what extent is the Marxist critique of family-life stronger than the feminist one?

• Which topics from the personal learning checklist can you connect this text to?

Discuss how far sociologists agree that marriage is a patriarchal institution



Discuss how far sociologists agree that the nuclear family is an out-dated idea that will inevitably give way to more diverse forms of family



Discuss how far sociologists agree that family life in Britain has significantly changed in the last one hundred years



Discuss how far sociologists agree that the nature of the family is, basically, quite similar around the world and the cultural variations in family-life are merely superficial



A blank sheet of white lined paper with a dark blue border. The paper has horizontal ruling lines spaced evenly down its length. The corners of the paper are rounded. The background behind the paper is a dark blue color with a pattern of white dots and thin white lines, resembling a network or molecular structure. There are several white circular accents, some of which appear to be fasteners or punch holes, located at the corners and along the edges of the paper.

This image shows a blank sheet of white lined paper with horizontal ruling lines. The paper is set against a dark blue background that features a network of white lines and circular nodes, resembling a digital or scientific theme. The paper has rounded corners and is positioned centrally, leaving a consistent margin around it. There are no markings, text, or drawings on the paper itself.

Complete this workbook: adding as much detail as you can to all sections and activities.

Update the Personal Learning Checklist so as to show the progress you have made on this unit

Create a ten question quiz about topics from this unit: exchange your quiz with your peers

Create a comprehensive list of potential essay-questions that might arise in the exams

Looking at your list of potential essay-questions: rank each question from easiest to most difficult

Choose the most difficult potential essay-question: create a leaflet or poster than answers it

Use your internet research skills to find a copy of the exam specification online

Referring to this unit in the specification as a guide: create a glossary of key-words

Choose on big debate from this unit: design a large poster exploring both sides of the debate

Write ten haikus: each one should refer to a different component of the Personal Learning Checklist

Write a paragraph for each of the Sociologists referred to in this unit: summarise their main ideas

Create a free website (e.g. using Wordpress or Wix) all about this topic

YouTube has lots of useful videos on this topic: find the best one and send it to your peers

Use social media to start (and try to win) a relevant sociological debate about a topic from this unit

Create a revision plan: it should precisely outline the steps you need to take to reach your target

Using key-words and an online crossword maker to create a puzzle: exchange it with your peers

**Congratulations on reaching the
end of your workbook!**

**Use separate paper to work your way
through the extension tasks above...**





Find more *GCSE Sociology Teaching Resources* at [gcsesociology.com](https://www.gcsesociology.com)

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