

BELIEFS IN SOCIETY CHECKLIST

This checklist highlights the key concepts, ideas and suggested research studies that students should consider in their revision of the AQA A level Sociology Paper 2 optional topic of Beliefs in Society. The material identified is based upon a range of concepts, ideas and research available in a range of publications for AQA A Level Sociology. This is not an exhaustive or compulsory list for students to follow, rather a range of concepts that they may come across throughout the period of studying this optional topic area.

The Paper 2 exam has 40 marks worth of questions on Beliefs in Society. The questions styles are outlined below.

PAPER 2 QUESTION 13: OUTLINE AND EXPLAIN TWO... (10 MARKS)

This question looks for students to apply their knowledge of one area of the specification to another. Often these two areas will be from different specification points. For example, the question may ask students to outline and explain two ways that secularisation has led to changes in gender differences in religiosity. Students are required to link the two concepts by showing the skills of application and analysis - being able to create a logical explanation of how A causes a change in B.

To get into the higher mark bands on this question, student need to give two well developed responses that explicitly link the two concept or ideas together.

PAPER 2 QUESTION 14: APPLYING MATERIAL FROM ITEM I, ANALYSE TWO...(10 MARKS)

As with Q3 on both paper 1 and 3, this question requires students to use two hooks that are in the item that is presented alongside this question. This question is testing all of the skills you need in A level Sociology, but largely the skill of application. You MUST reference the item in your response to make sure that you do not get your mark capped in the lower mark bands. In analysing the two ways, students should look to explain how the 'hook' in the item links the different elements of the question. To get into the top band on this question, students should have two well-developed points that contain analysis and/or an evaluation of the point made - this is a judgement on how effective the argument is.

PAPER 2 QUESTION 15: USING MATERIAL FROM ITEM J AND YOUR KNOWLEDGE EVALUATE... (20 MARKS)

As with all essays, this question is testing the full range of your skills. Once again, material can be drawn from right across the Beliefs in Society specification and so students should look to demonstrate their synoptic knowledge of full topic area when answering this question.

Application of knowledge comes through selecting relevant material to answer the question, whilst analysis comes from developing your responses to show a deeper understanding of the sociological concepts. To get into the higher mark bands, you need to be able to explicitly evaluate the points that you have made in the main body of the essay.

You will be presented with an item for this question that gives some hooks that you will be able to develop, but you should look to go beyond the item and add in other material in order to develop the range and depth required to get into the top bands.



EXAM GOLD

The ability to draw conclusions on the different arguments made is essential to getting into the top bands. The second paragraph of the item will usually suggest ways in which students may be able to make a judgement on the arguments presented in the main body. This might be through opposing perspectives or through offering a different view on a key debate. You may wish to use this as part of your conclusion.



BELIEFS IN SOCIETY

TOPIC AREA	KEY CONCEPTS	SUGGESTED SOCIOLOGISTS	
Science, religion and Ideology	Key concepts and ideas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social construction of science • Open and closed belief systems • Paradigm shifts • CUDOS norms • Ideology • Nationalism and civil religion • Utopia • Substantive definitions of religion • Functional definitions of religion • Constructionist definitions of religion 	Durkheim Comte Merton Weber Popper Kuhn Mannheim Aldridge Sayer Woolgar	
Functionalist views of religion	Key concepts and ideas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sacred and profane • Collective conscience • Social solidarity • Totemism • Psychological functions • Value consensus • Civil religion 	Durkheim Parsons Malinowski Bellah	
Marxist views of religion	Key concepts and ideas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideology • Opium of the people • Alienation • Spiritual gin • Social control • Conservative force • Religion as revolutionary force • Theology of hope • Liberation theology • Hegemony • Organic intellectuals • Dual consciousness • Counter hegemony • Religion as an ideological state apparatus 	Marx Engels Gramsci Bloch Althusser Maduro Althusser	

TOPIC AREA	KEY CONCEPTS	SUGGESTED SOCIOLOGISTS	
Weber and religion	<p>Key concepts and ideas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationalisation • Calvinism • Protestant ethic • Asceticism • Role of capitalism • Predestination 	Weber	
Feminist views of religion	<p>Key concepts and ideas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patriarchal organisation of religion • Oppression of women in religion • Goddess religions • Gender inequality in religion • Female spirituality 	Woodhead De Beauvoir El Sadaawi Daly Armstrong	
Religion and social change	<p>Key concepts, ideas, theories and debates include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religion as a conservative force • Religion as a revolutionary force • Fundamentalism and conflict • Calvinism and protestant ethic • Consensus views • Role of patriarchy • Oppression • Alienation • Liberation theology • Baptist movement and civil rights • Principle of Hope • Pentecostalism • Hegemony and counter-hegemony • Organic intellectuals • Dual consciousness • Christianity as revolutionary force • Female spirituality 	Durkheim Marx Weber De Beauvoir Daly Billings Maduro Bloch Gramsci Armstrong Bellah Parsons Engels Juergensmeyer Bruce	



The ability to select relevant theories, ideas and concepts is key to success in A Level Sociology. Selecting a range of possible material to answer different forms of questions not only streamlines your revision but can show higher order synoptic skills. Consider planning 3 or 4 points for each side of a debate.

TOPIC AREA	KEY CONCEPTS	SUGGESTED SOCIOLOGISTS	
Religious organisations	<p>Key concepts, ideas, reasons and explanations for formation and existence of different forms of religious organisation including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churches • Denominations • Cults • Sects • New Age Movements • New Religious Movements • Religious market theory • Compensators • Vicarious religion • Spiritual shopping • Holistic milieu • World-affirming NRMs • World-rejecting NRMs • World-accommodating NRMs • Client cults • Audience cults • Cultic movements • Typologies • Marginalisation • Disenchantment • Rejection of metanarratives • Rationalisation 	<p>Bruce Stark and Bainbridge Woodhead and Heelas Heelas et al Wallis Troeltsch Niebuhr Weber Wilson Davie Herveiu-Leger Lyon</p>	



EXAM GOLD

Optional topics have more synoptic links between the different specification points and these are tested throughout the three different questions that you are asked. When revising content for the optional topic areas you will find many key concepts, ideas and theories overlap between the different specification points. As a result, it can be confusing to organise your own notes.

One way to address this is through creating mind-maps and spider diagrams that show the different connections between ideas and concepts. For example, whilst you may revise Marxist views of religion, these can also be applied to the debate over whether religion is a conservative force or a force for change. Likewise, many reasons for increased secularisation can be applied to the growth of new religious movements. Understanding these links is key to keeping your revision focused on the most important concepts, ideas and theories, and help you to concentrate on the most effective studies to use in your revision.

TOPIC AREA	KEY CONCEPTS	SUGGESTED SOCIOLOGISTS	
Social Groups and Religiosity	<p>Key concepts, ideas, reasons and explanations for trends in religious belief and attendance of different forms of religious organisation including by social class, gender, age and ethnicity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theodicies of misfortune • Theodices of good-fortune • New Age Movements • New Religious Movements • Marginalisation • Changing social norms • Patriarchal organisation • Rationalisation • Secularisation • Gender socialisation • Expressive and instrumental roles • Risk aversion • Employment • Cultural defence • Cultural transition • Ageing effect • Socialisation • Cohort effect 	Weber Marx Bruce Miller and Hoffman Stark and Bainbridge Davie Woodhead Modood et al Voas and Crockett Bird UK Census	
Secularisation and renewal of religious beliefs	<p>Key concepts, ideas, theories and debates over the extent of secularisation, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationalisation • Disenchantment • Desacrilisation • Monopoly on truth • Sacred canopy • Schism in religion • Structural differentiation • Religious pluralism • Believing without belonging • Religious market theory • Disneyfication of religion • Fuzzy fidelity • Cultural defence • Cultural transition • Impacts of migration 	Weber Wilson Berger Bruce Davie Stark and Bainbridge Lyon Voas Parsons	

TOPIC AREA	KEY CONCEPTS	SUGGESTED SOCIOLOGISTS	
<p>Significance of religion in contemporary society</p>	<p>Key concepts, ideas, reasons and explanations for trends in religious belief and attendance of different forms of religious organisation including by social class, gender, age and ethnicity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secularisation in global context • Fundamentalism as reaction to globalisation • Postmodernity and religion • Online religion • Religious diversity globally • Religious resilience • New Christian Right • Globalisation and growth of rational thinking • Spiritual individualism • Problems with measuring religious belief on global scale 	<p>PEW Research Centre Davie Bruce Weber Berger Hervieu-Leger Lyon</p>	

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