




## PGCE Social Sciences – University of Roehampton

Social Sciences is a dynamic and powerful subject area. It helps students to understand the society they live in, question assumptions, and think critically about issues such as inequality, identity, power, education, citizenship and social change. As teachers of Social Sciences, we help young people to make sense of the world around them and to become informed, reflective and active citizens.

I am delighted that you will be joining our PGCE Social Sciences community. To help you prepare for the academic year ahead, I would like you to complete the following tasks. They are designed to introduce you to key ideas in sociology and social science education, encourage reflection on subject pedagogy, and support you in auditing and developing your subject knowledge.

### Task 1: Introductory Reading & Reflection

**a) Read one of the following open-access, UK-based articles about teaching sociology in secondary schools:**

1. “Popular but Peripheral: The Ambivalent Status of Sociology Education in Schools in England” Explores teachers’ perspectives on sociology’s growing popularity in England, while highlighting issues like low status, lack of professional coherence, and minimal curriculum support.  
 [Download PDF \(LSE e-prints\)academia.edu+3repository.canterbury.ac.uk+3discovery.ucl.ac.uk+3journals.sagepub.com+6eprints.lse.ac.uk+6researchgate.net+6journals.sagepub.com+1repository.canterbury.ac.uk+1](#)
2. “Powerful or Disempowering Knowledge? The Teaching of Sociology in Secondary Schools and Colleges” by Sarah Cant & Chatterjee  
Discusses how sociology teaching can either empower students with critical, justice-oriented knowledge or unintentionally reinforce inequalities due to curriculum design and pedagogy.  
 [Download PDF \(Canterbury Christ Church University repository\)researchgate.net+5repository.canterbury.ac.uk+5journals.sagepub.com+5](#)
3. “Sociologically-Informed Teaching: Ideas for Teachers” (SecEd via Mr Jones Whiteboard)  
Offers practical teaching ideas—such as using concepts like cultural capital, subcultures, and social inequality—to bring sociology alive in UK secondary classrooms.  
 [Read full article \(online\) mrjoneswhiteboard.blog+1mrjoneswhiteboard.blog+1](#)

***After reading your chosen article, reflect on the following questions:***

- What is the status and role of sociology in the modern UK school curriculum?
- How can sociology help students become critical thinkers and informed citizens?

- What pedagogical or systemic challenges are identified in relation to teaching sociology effectively?
- What distinctive knowledge, skills or perspectives do students gain from learning sociology?
- What motivates you personally to teach sociology in the UK context?

You may wish to make brief notes on your responses and bring them with you in September.

### Task 2: Subject Knowledge Audit

a) Download and review the specifications for:

- AQA A-Level Sociology
- Edexcel A-Level Politics or Citizenship Studies (optional)

b) Create a table rating your knowledge of key topics using:

- **RED** – little or no knowledge
- **AMBER** – some knowledge
- **GREEN** – secure/confident knowledge

Include key content areas such as:

- Families and Households
- Education and Social Policy
- Crime and Deviance
- Power and Politics
- Social Stratification
- Methods of Social Research

This task is not a test. It is simply a way of identifying your current strengths and areas for development before the course begins.

### Task 3: Learning Through Quizzing

a) Join the free learning platform *Seneca Learning* at <https://www.senecalearning.com>, create a profile, and complete:

- AQA Sociology: Education and Research Methods
- Optional: Citizenship or Politics overview if applicable

b) After completing, note down:

- Any topics you found unexpectedly difficult
- Any areas you feel students might struggle to grasp conceptually (e.g. Marxism, Weberian theory, qualitative vs. quantitative methods)

This will help you begin thinking not only about your own subject knowledge, but also about how students experience Social Sciences as learners.

**Task 4: Thinking like a social scientist**

Spend 15–20 minutes thinking about the following question:

***To what extent does sociology help students to see the world differently?***

Write a short paragraph or note down a few bullet points in response. There is no single correct answer. The aim is to begin thinking about what makes sociology distinctive and valuable as a school subject.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming you to the PGCE Social Sciences community in September. This year will be both challenging and rewarding as you develop your knowledge, confidence and identity as a teacher. These tasks are intended to help you begin that journey with curiosity, reflection and a strong sense of purpose.

Warm regards,  
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