

Sociology Reading List

In addition to completing the transition project, you might like to explore some of the following options for preparatory reading before you embark on the A Level course in Sociology.

Magazines/journals

Key magazines would include:

- Sociology Review – available at a reduced rate subscription through the school
- New Internationalist
- The New Statesmen
- The Economist

All newspapers are valuable resources for students. A number of key newspapers have sociologists writing articles, and cover stories in a very sociological in-depth way. Key newspapers include:

- The Guardian – On Tuesday there is a useful 'Education' supplement, and on Wednesday there is a useful 'Society' supplement
- The Independent.
- The Times
- The Observer
- The Telegraph
- The Financial Times

Television

Almost all television programmes have sociological value. From soaps & Big Brother to current affairs and documentaries. Ones to look out for include:

- Panorama (BBC1)
- Channel 4 News
- Cutting Edge (C4)
- Have I Got News For You

Websites

- www.educationforum.co.uk/sociology_2/onlinesochome.htm
 - www.sociology.org.uk/
- AQA Home Page: http://www.aqa.org.uk/qual/gce/sociology_new.php
S-Cool Revision Site: http://www.s-cool.co.uk/topic_index.asp?subject_id=64

Sociology Central: <http://www.sociology.org.uk/>
National Statistics: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/glance/>
Sociology Resources <http://www.ruthssociology.com/>

Fiction suggestions:

1. Isaac Asimov – *Foundation* (series) Scientists analyze an entire galaxy and they predict the future dynamics of behaviors over thousands of years. The series takes you through

different planets, times, and individuals who are involved in shaping the power structure throughout time-but the predictions of the original mathematical psychologist hold steady. *Research, prediction, societal change, power, macro perspective.*

2. Margaret Atwood – [Handmaid's Tale](#) A handmaid is what we now call a surrogate and in a position of servitude in a society where women are not educated. *Gender, education, inequality.* (Atwood's *Oryx & Crake* series is also excellent for social change.)

3. Junot Díaz – [The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao](#) Biography and history of Oscar, his family, and the Dominican Republic and the intertwining events. C. Wright Mills would love this book as it demonstrates the application of a *sociological imagination*. *Culture, power, politics, socialization, family, gender, nationality, immigration.*

4. Charlotte Perkins Gilman – [Herland](#) In this utopian novel, three men (one of whom is a sociologist) encounter a society with all women (and no men). *Societal structure, culture, gender.*

5. William Golding – [Lord of the Flies](#) Creating society in a vacuum. *Gender, groups, inequality, social change.*

6. George Orwell – [Animal Farm](#) Marxian theory with farm animals – good stuff!

7. Joseph Heller – [Catch-22](#) The main character faces a “catch-22” as he wants out of war but can't because the paperwork to get out won't let you get out if you do the paperwork. *Bureaucracy, war, gender.*

8. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn – [The First Circle](#) A dense read but worth the effort, we learn about Gleb Nerzhin, a prisoner, and the intertwined lives of many others in a Russian prison (WWII era). *Politics, war, crime, imprisonment, work, gender, social class.*

9. Robert Heinlein – [Stranger in a Strange Land](#) A look into our society from an outsider's perspective, including *norms, mores, culture, prejudice, social order.* (A potentially good partner with [Horace Miner's Body Ritual of the Nacirema.](#))

10. Ray Bradbury – [Fahrenheit 451](#); George Orwell – [1984](#); Aldous Huxley; – [Brave New World](#) All deal with authoritarian futures and include so many things we discuss in sociology classes, e.g., *bureaucracy, media, political power, censorship.*

Runners Up:

11. Barbara Kingsolver – [The Bean Trees](#) This novel takes you into the world of a young woman set in the southwest U.S. and in a rich Native American cultural milieu. Themes involve *social class (poverty), family, young motherhood, culture, race and ethnicity, gender.* (Any of Kingsolver's books could be read and enjoyed with a sociological eye.)

12. Alan Lightman – [Einstein's Dreams](#) A similar story repeated in the same town but in a totally different society where time works differently than our own linear timeframe. Each chapter could be analyzed and critiqued using a sociological perspective – would the society described with that time structure really look that way? *Societal structures and institutions, culture, interaction, conflict.*

13. Greg Bear – [Darwin's Radio](#) and [Darwin's Children](#) Bear writes “hard science fiction” (it is based on scientifically accurate information) and the Darwin series illustrates evolution in an accelerated form. It offers a society in which bodies are evolving at a quick pace and how the society reacts and deals with those changes. *Evolutionary change, culture, gender, social control.*

14. Frank Herbert – [Dune](#) Another classic science fiction read, the events in this world mirror realistic societal dynamics and offers much to analyze sociologically. *Social structure, institutions, culture, power use and abuse, deviance, gender, social class, ethnicity.*

15. Milton Murayama - *All I Asking For is My Body* Step into the coming-of-age story of a young man in Hawaii. Much of it is written in Hawaiian Pidgin English thus I recommend those sections be read aloud. *Race and ethnicity, social class, culture, hierarchy, gender, power, agency.*