



responsibilities to both the perpetrators and their possible victims.

- **Involvement:** Some types of research involve methods that create high levels of involvement with those being researched. Where close personal and/or intimate relationships between the researcher and respondent(s) exist, care needs to be taken to ensure that, once the research is completed and contact diminishes, distress is not caused to potentially vulnerable people. For example, if your research involves visiting the elderly on a regular basis, it would be unethical to simply stop your visits once the research is completed.
- **Power:** It would be unethical to bully or blackmail (emotionally or physically) people into participating in your research. In addition – especially when researching people who are relatively powerless – relationships need to be based on trust and personal integrity on the part of the researcher. For example, if the researcher promises anonymity as a way of researching people involved in criminal or deviant activities, disclosing respondent identities to the authorities would be unethical.
- **Consent:** Related to some of the previous categories, where possible, the researcher should always gain the consent of those being researched.
- **Safety:** Care always needs to be taken to ensure the physical and psychological

safety of both the researcher and the respondent.

In the preceding sections we have covered a range of ideas relating to research methods and methodology; although many students reading this will be using the information we've covered for exam purposes, a substantial number will be putting at least some of the ideas covered into action through sociology coursework for this involves creating a research proposal for a possible piece of sociological research (which you might want to use as the basis for an actual piece of research, if you intend to take the coursework option in your A2 year). This being the case, the final section in this chapter offers advice on how to complete the AS Research Proposal.

AS Coursework: Research Proposal

Preparing the ground

If you choose the coursework option, rather than the research methods exam, you have to complete a 'Research Proposal' by Easter in the year of your AS exams. Apart from being worth 30% of the final AS grade (15% of your

Section	Maximum mark	Maximum word length
1. Hypothesis/Aims	8	100
2. Context and Concepts	20	400
3. Main Research Method and Reasons	20	400
4. Potential Problems	12	300