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# A2 Sociology for AQA

Chris Livesey & Tony Lawson

**Hodder Arnold**

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Finally, to paraphrase the mighty Arcade Fire:

Consider this text a tunnel.

Yeah, a tunnel – From my window to yours.

Meet me in the middle, the empty middle ground.

And since there's no one else around,

We'll let our time grow long,

And remember everything we've come to know.

Chris Livesey

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## About This Book

### About This Book

In writing this book we have tried to satisfy two main aims:

**First**, we wanted to retain a sense of continuity between this and our previous (AS) text in terms of both overall structure and scope, mainly for the benefit of those students and teachers who've used the AS text in their first year of the A-level course. In terms of structural continuity, therefore, the general layout will be familiar to anyone who has used **AS Sociology for AQA** (although it's not, of course, necessary to have used this AS text to get the most from the A2 text). More specifically, we've once again chosen to tie the text closely to the **AQA Specification** (highlighting, where appropriate, **synoptic links** within and between the A2 and AS Modules) and we've retained the basic structure of the AS text by dividing the sections into two parts: introductory material ('**Preparing the Ground**') provides a general overview of a section and is broadly aimed at students of all abilities, while more challenging material ('**Digging Deeper**') is included to both develop the initial material and stretch the more able student.

In addition, we've retained a couple of features we believe worked well in the AS text:

The **Key Word** focus, whereby the text is structured around significant concepts – a system designed to both help students to

focus on the most important ideas in a particular area and encourage planned examination answers.

**Integrated exercises** designed to achieve a variety of aims (mainly relating to the development of the interpretation, analysis and evaluative skills required at A2). These exercises involve three main types:

- **Warm-up** exercises appear at the start of a section and are designed to ease students into a topic by getting them to think about it in a way that builds on their existing knowledge. The basic idea here is to identify the knowledge students already possess about a topic or issue, something that provides a foundation for building a more sociological level of understanding. This type of exercise also serves as a whole-class ice-breaker for each new section of the course.
- **Growing It Yourself** exercises are more focused and, in general, they're designed for small group work. They usually require students to generate and discuss information, although, reflecting the increased demand for evaluative skills at this level, many of these exercises require students to make decisions about the information generated through discussion. This type of exercise is normally closely integrated with the surrounding text and is designed to complement student reading and note-taking by requiring

them to reflect on – and expand – the information presented through the text. Each exercise has been designed to flow naturally from the text and generally requires little or no prior preparation by students or teachers. Having said this, some of the exercises take the form of **simulations** that require students to take on various roles as part of the overall discussion process; these, reflecting the fact they are slightly more complex than the standard exercises, require a relatively simple level of prior organisation and preparation.

- **Discussion Points** provide opportunities for students to discuss or debate different ideas – something we felt would be useful to build into the overall design to help students clarify and express their thinking in a relatively structured way. Some of the discussion points are tightly-constructed around a particular issue, while others are more loosely constructed to allow students greater scope for discussion and debate.

In terms of our **second** aim, although structural continuity was important when designing this text, we also wanted to reflect the fact that A2 study involves both greater theoretical and evaluative depth.

In relation to the former we were conscious of the need to strike a balance between classical (Marx, Durkheim, Weber and the like) and contemporary sociological theory (writers such as Luhmann, Baudrillard and Foucault), on the basis that, while it's important for students and teachers to have access to contemporary material, we shouldn't lose sight of the classical origins of sociology (something we

feel is generally reflected in the structure of AQA A2 examination questions).

In terms of the latter we decided to add a couple of extra features to the A2 text.



**The Potting Shed** involves questions that reflect the structure of the smaller-mark exam questions (requiring students to 'identify and explain' something, for example). These short, relatively simple, questions have also been designed to help students make **synoptic links** between, for example, A2 and AS modules (once again reflecting the general structure of the smaller-mark AQA exam questions).



**Weeding the Path:** The most significant change between the A2 and AS text, reflecting the fact that A2 study requires students to use evaluation skills more rigorously than at AS, is the addition of clearly-signposted evaluation material. Although such material runs throughout the text (at its most basic, of course, being by juxtaposition) we felt it would be helpful to draw students' attention more specifically to this type of information.

Finally, although this A2 text, like its AS counterpart, is focused around helping students work their way successfully through the AQA A-level Sociology course, we hope we've managed to produce a text that, while informative and challenging to all abilities and interests, is one you will enjoy reading – not only because (we trust) it will help you achieve the best possible grade in your examination but also, more importantly perhaps, because we firmly believe that Sociology is a fascinating subject to study in its own right.