

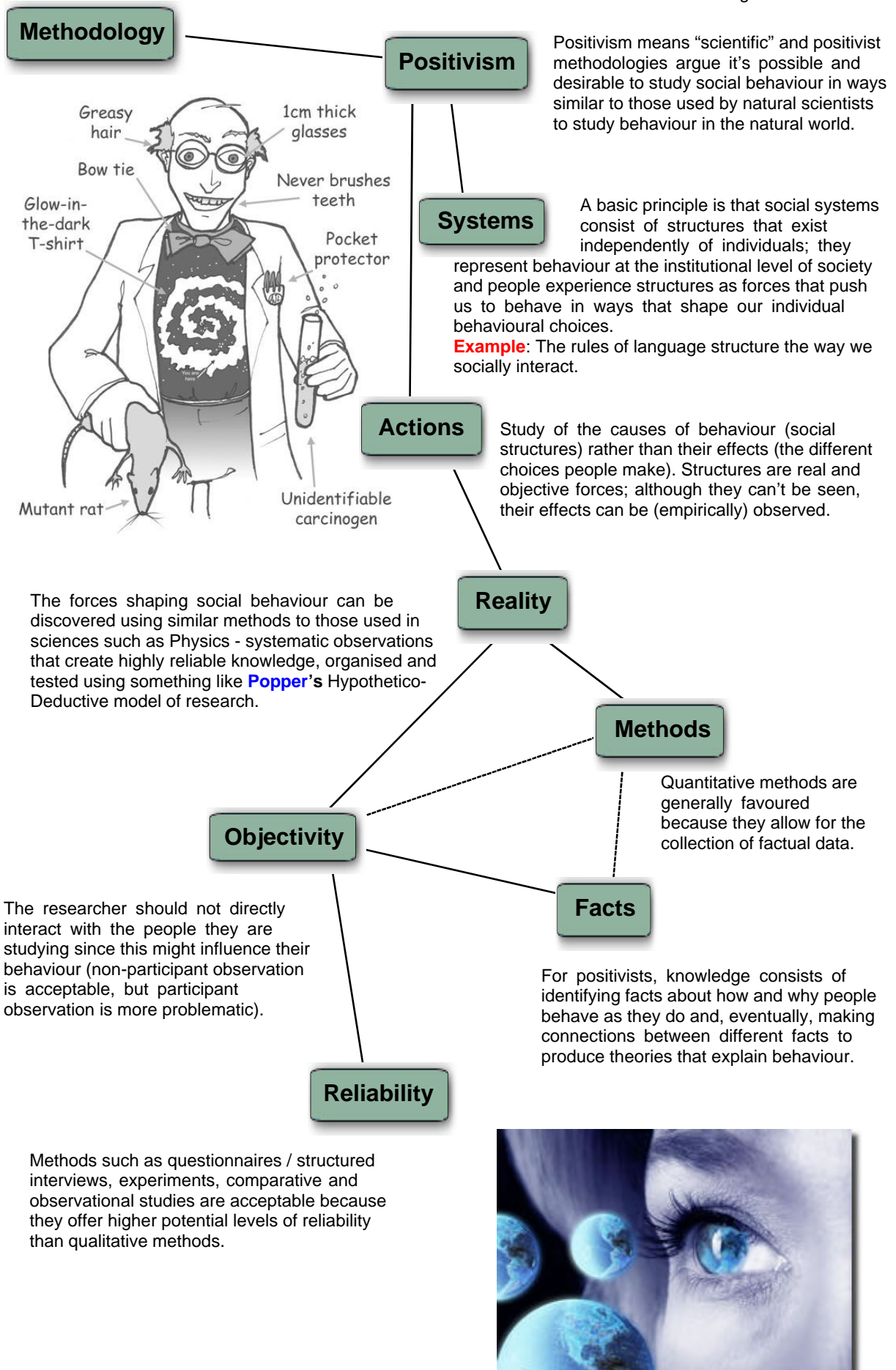
AS Sociology

Revision

**Sociological
Methods**

**“The relationship between Positivism,
Interpretivism and sociological
research methods”.**

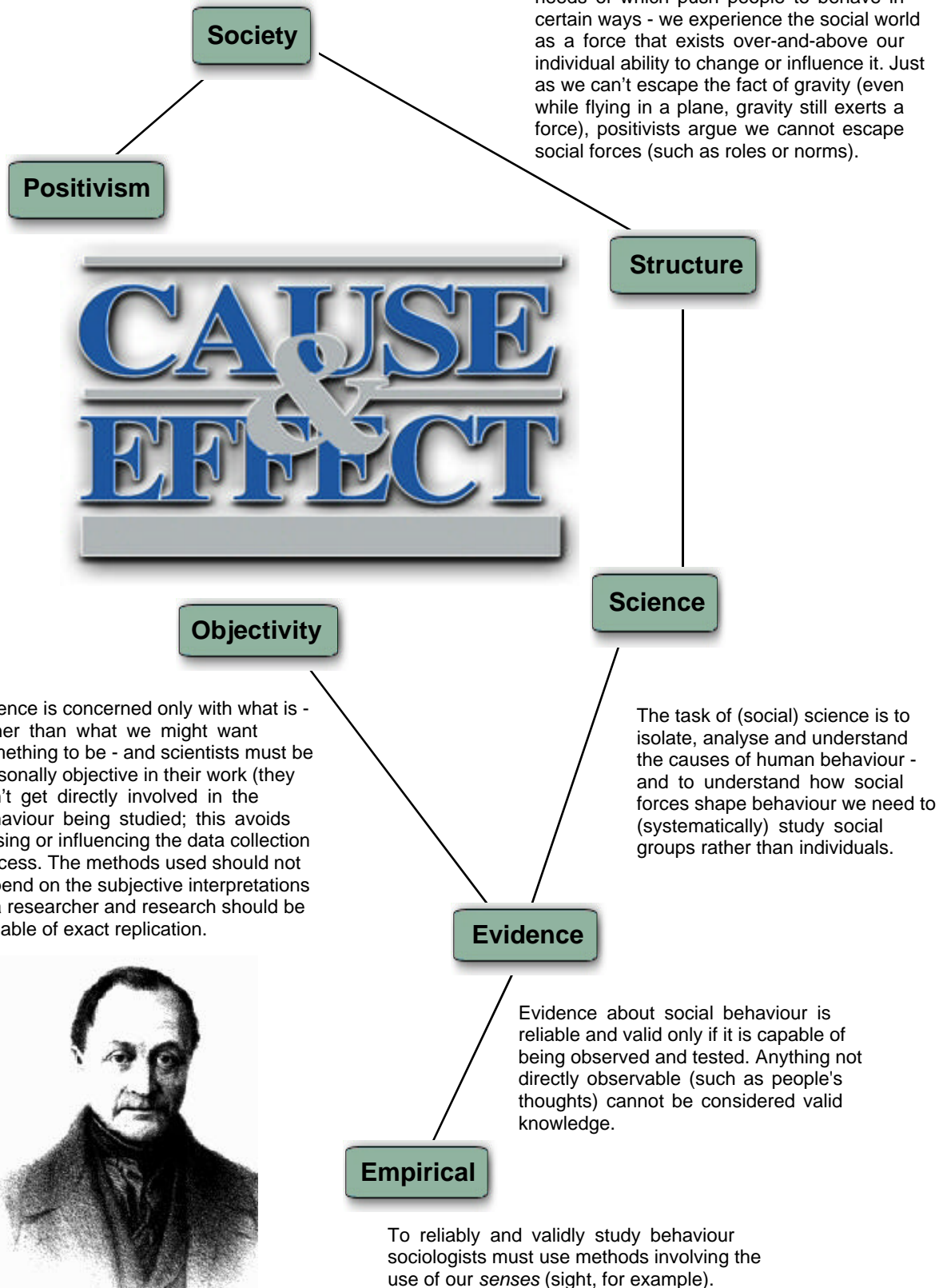
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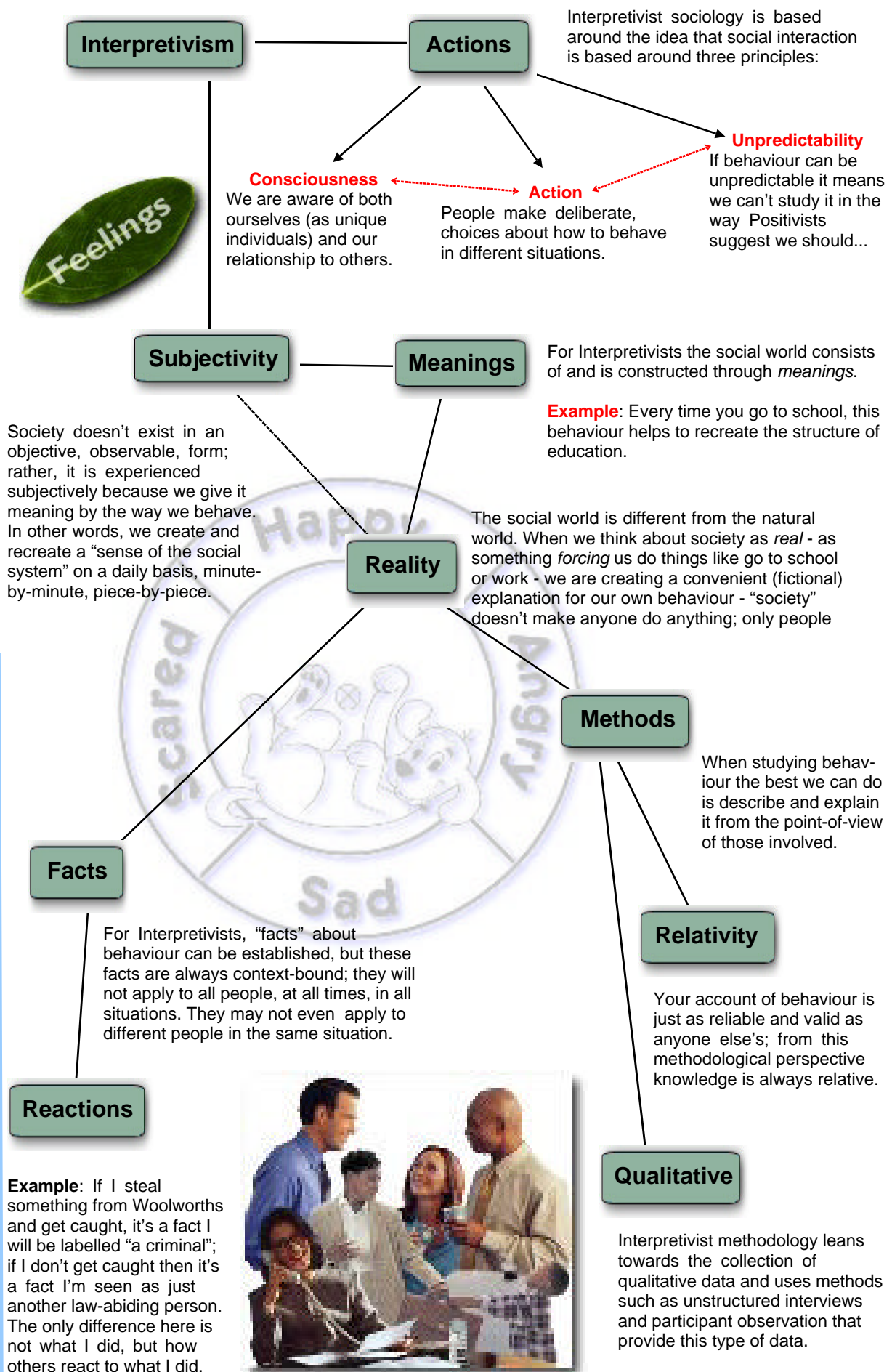
The social world is similar to the natural world in terms of how it can be studied, because human behaviour is, determined by rules developed within social groups.

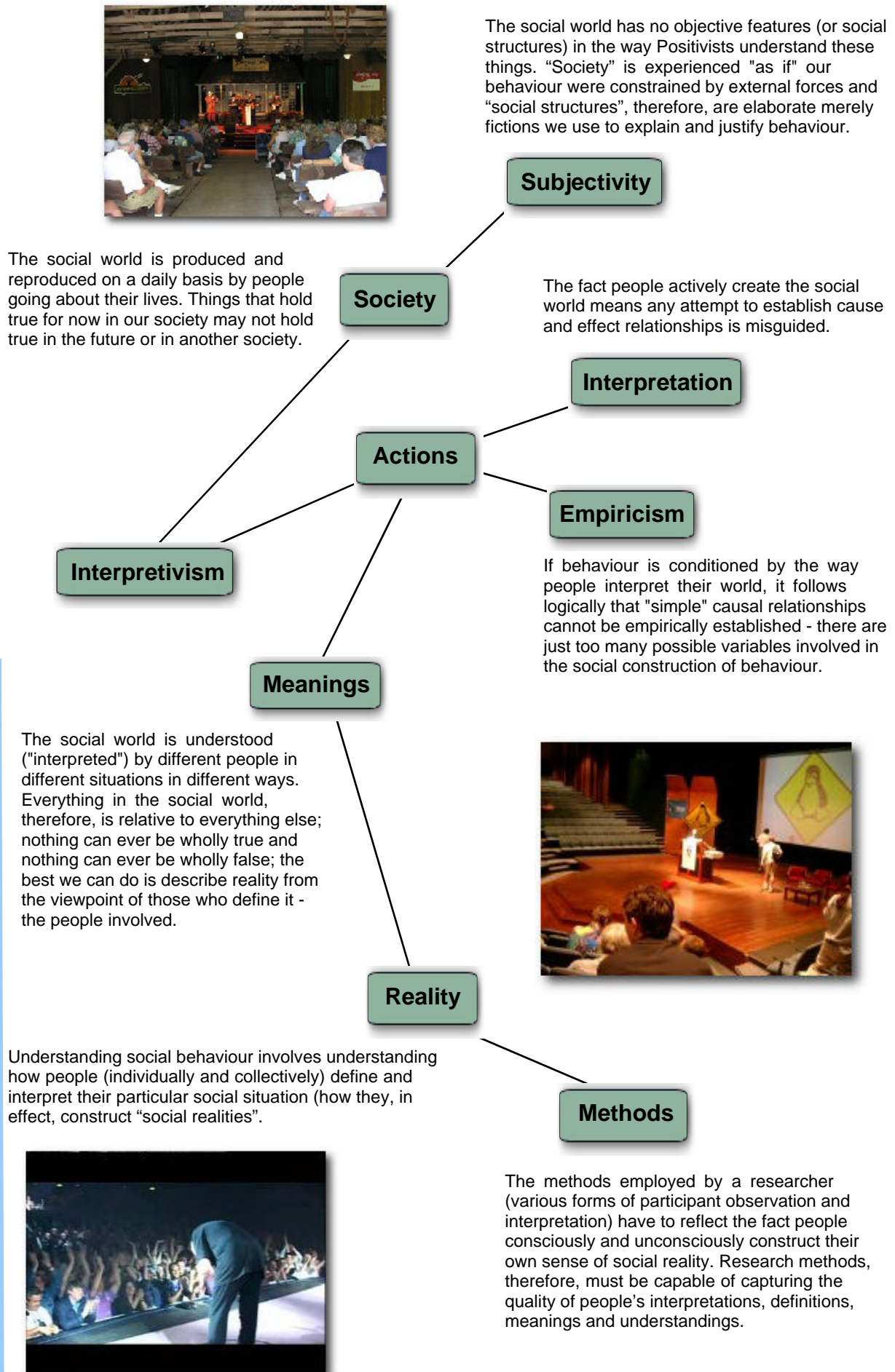
Example: The need to survive leads people to develop work groups and the need to socialise children leads people to develop family groups.

Because societies are social systems - the needs of which push people to behave in certain ways - we experience the social world as a force that exists over-and-above our individual ability to change or influence it. Just as we can't escape the fact of gravity (even while flying in a plane, gravity still exerts a force), positivists argue we cannot escape social forces (such as roles or norms).



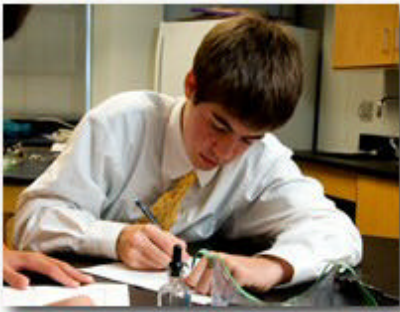
Auguste Comte (1798 - 1857) - the father of positivist thinking in Sociology





Exam Questions

At AS level it seems unlikely that examiners will ask **direct** questions about sociological methodology (such as “Assess different methodological approaches” exam questions asked at A2 level).



However, what this means is that students have to recognise instances (usually in the higher mark AS questions) where it is appropriate to introduce methodological arguments and debates into the question.

For example, a question like:

“Using material from Item B and elsewhere, assess the usefulness of unstructured interviews to the sociologist. (20 marks)”

Invites the student to discuss some of the methodological reasons for some sociologists seeing unstructured interviews as a useful research method...



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