

Sociology Independent Study – Social Stratification

Introduction

1. Explain what social stratification is.
2. Give examples of different types of social stratification.
3. Research modern slavery. Use the following website – www.gov.uk/government/collections/modern-slavery
4. Research the history of South Africa. Does this system fit any of the types of stratification that you have studied?

The functionalist perspective

1. Explain the work of Davis and Moore on stratification.
2. Explain the criticisms of Davis and Moore.
3. Do you agree that social stratification is a 'universal necessity' for society? Explain your answer.

Socio-economic class

1. Explain what socio-economic class is.
2. Explain economic inequality.
3. Explain different social classes in British society.
4. Do some research into economic inequalities in Britain today. Use the following website as a starting point – www.equalitytrust.org.uk/scale-economic-inequality-uk.

Marx on class

1. Explain Marxist ideas about class and capitalism.
2. Explain some of the criticisms of Marxist ideas about class.
3. Research life in present-day China. Concentrate on two issues: the economy and human rights.

Weber of class

1. Explain Weber's ideas about class.
2. Explain some of the criticisms of Weber's ideas about class.
3. Draw up a chart to compare the ideas of Marx and Weber on socio-economic class.
4. Research the work of the sociologist Frank Parkin (1931-2011)

Life chances: education

1. Explain the meaning of life chances.
2. Explain the link between education and life chances.
3. Research recent examples of individuals and groups who have experienced discrimination. Use the following website – www.theguardian.com/uk.

Life chances: health

1. Explain the social construction of health.
2. Explain the link between social class and health.

3. Research the way in which the mass media in Britain report the 'lifestyle' related to health issues (e.g. smoking, alcohol, diet etc.).

The affluent worker

1. Explain embourgeoisement.
2. Explain the affluent worker in the class structure.
3. Research the 'Great British Class Survey' (BBC 2011)

Social mobility

1. Explain social mobility.
2. Explain why rates of social mobility have declined.
3. Research – who are the wealthiest members of British society and how did they become so wealthy? The Sunday Times 'Rich List' should give you some interesting insights.

Poverty & relative deprivation

1. Explain how poverty is defined.
2. Explain how poverty can be measured.
3. Explain what relative deprivation is.
4. Research the problem of homelessness in Britain. Use the following website – www.homeless.org.uk/facts-figures

The underclass

1. Explain who the members of the underclass are.
2. Explain the ideas of Murray on the impact of welfare programmes.
3. Research the social impact of the New Poor Law (1834).

Globalisation

1. Explain what globalisation is.
2. Explain the criticisms of globalisation.
3. Explain the impact of globalisation on the UK.

The welfare state

1. Explain the development of the welfare state in Britain.
2. Explain different perspectives on the welfare state (New right, left, Marxist & feminist)
3. Research how health care is provided in the USA and compare it to the provision in Britain.

Weber on power

1. Explain Weber's definition of power.
2. Explain rational, traditional and charismatic authority.
3. Research Steven Lukes' 'three faces of power'