**Assessment Objectives AS Sociology**

In AS and A-Level Sociology exams, different answers are assessed according to specific Assessment Objectives. AQA Sociology distinguishes between three different types of objectives, which will be outlined and explained below. It is important to note that the Assessment Objectives are interlinked, for instance, the skill to apply information (AO2) is premised on understanding it (AO1).

AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding

AO2 – the skill of Application

AO3 – the skill of Analysis and Evaluation (see Browne ix for key words on AO1,2,3)

**Knowledge and Understanding (AO1)**

**AO1 is tested in questions when you are asked to: analyse; define; evaluate; explain; outline; outline and explain**

-to know and understand the main theories, research methods, and concepts used by sociologists

-to understand the practical, ethical and theoretical issues arising in sociological research

-to be familiar with some sociologists’ studies and the findings of the respective studies

**Application (AO2)**

**A02 is tested in questions when you are asked to: Applying material from item A…; Using one example…**

-to link ideas, concepts, theories, studies and methods to each other and the question

-to show how the material you select is relevant to the question

-In questions on method in context, you need to show the strengths and limitations of a specific method (e.g. participant observation) to the characteristics of a specific research issue (e.g. bullying in school)

-to use the material of an item when asked, and linking this with your own knowledge and the question

-to use relevant examples. These can be from studies, news and current events, other sociological topics and even personal experience (but be careful with this)

-to link ideas from one area in sociology to material in another area

**Analysis (A03)**

**A03 is tested in questions when you are asked to: analyse; evaluate**

-to break down an argument or explanation into the different ideas that make it up and showing how they fit together

-to compare and contrast ideas, therefore pointing out the similarities and differences

-to organise essays appropriately, with a well -focused intro, and a clear, logical chain of reasoning from paragraph to paragraph, leading to an appropriate conclusion

**Evaluation (A03)**

-to look at arguments and evidence for and against a particular view

-to examine a theory’s assumptions (e.g. Functionalism) or linking it to a particular perspective (e.g. Positivism)

-to put forward alternative views or perspectives to create a debate

-to discuss the strengths and limitations of a research method