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# VCE UNITS INFORMATION

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## VCE Sociology Units 1 and 2

### CONTENT

#### Unit 1: Youth and Family

This unit uses sociological methodology to explore the social category of youth and the social institution of family. Sociologists draw on methods of science to understand how and why people behave the way they do when they interact in a group. Sociology attempts to understand human society from a holistic point of view, including consideration of society's composition, how it is reproduced over time and the differences between societies. When sociologists investigate a topic, they attempt to do so with a reflective, critical mindset. Sociologists are guided by theories, or frameworks, to explain and analyse how social action, social processes and social structures work.

Area of Study 1 explores the way youth is constructed as a social category, in the light of differing experiences of young people. There is a range of potential negative impacts of categorisation, including stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination. Students explore how and why the experience of being young differs across time and space. They examine a range of factors that lead to different experiences of youth, as well as the potential negative impacts of homogenous categorisation, such as stereotypes of young people in a context characterised by a rich diversity in the ways young people live.

In Area of Study 2, students investigate the social institution of the family. In a multicultural society like Australia, different communities have different kinds of families and experiences of family life. Factors such as changing demographics, feminism, individualism, technology, changes in the labour market and government policies have been identified as influencing the traditional view of the family. There is a range of theoretical approaches used by sociologists to explain the purpose and experiences of family life, including functionalist and feminist approaches. Comparative methodologies also enable a comparison of family types and family experiences across time and space. Students draw on quantitative and qualitative sources in their study. These sources may be drawn from secondary sources and from primary research undertaken by the student.

#### Unit 2: Social Norms: Breaking the Code

In this unit, students explore the concepts of deviance and crime. The study of these concepts from a sociological perspective involves ascertaining the types and degree of rule breaking behaviour, examining traditional views of criminality and deviance and analysing why people commit crimes or engage in deviant behaviour. It also involves consideration of the justice system, how the understanding of crime and deviance has changed over time, and the relationship between crime and other aspects of a society, such as gender and ethnicity.

In Area of Study 1, students explore the concept of deviance. There are different explanations of what constitutes deviant behaviour. Generally, it is defined as involving actions that are considered to be outside the normal range of behaviour according to the majority of members of a society. Students investigate the functionalist, interactionist, social control and positive theories of deviance.

Students also explore the phenomenon known as moral panic. This refers to the belief that a subculture or group poses a threat to the social values and culture of broader society. The event is often presented in a stereotypical fashion by the mass media.

In Area of Study 2, students investigate crime and punishment. They explore patterns of crime and consider the significance of a range of factors, such as class, gender, age, race and ethnicity. Students explore different methods of punishment and the extent to which each of these methods serves its aims.