What are Research Methods?

Starter:

How do sociologists go about their research?

List all the ways you can think of.

Use the images to help you.

The plan…. With lessons

- You need to know:
  - How research is carried out.
  - How sociologists use questionnaires.
  - How sociologists use observations.
  - How sociologists use interviews.
  - How you can evaluate research.
  - How to evaluate questionnaires, observations and interviews.
  - How are ethics in important in sociological research.
  - How do sociologists choose a method.
  - How do sociologists use samples.

We will cover all of this content this term.

We can then begin revision for the exam in term 4.

Things are not always what they seem…

Sociologists carry out research because…

- They want to explore what we **take for granted** in society.
- They want to discover **opinions and meanings** behind the way people live.
- They want to investigate **why people in Britain are different** to people in other parts of the world.
- They want to explain **how different parts of society work** together.
- They want to understand the world we live in, in a more **in-depth** way.
- They want to **explore trends and patterns.**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zSdnd9MznPk

Different Types of Research

Primary Research	Secondary Research
Facts: • Information gathered directly by the sociologists. • They speak to the participant directly (face to face). • The findings from their research are based on interactions, answers and opinions from participants. • The sociologists knows exactly where the information has come from, knows how true the data is and knows who has been asked questions. **Methods:** • **Interviews** • **Questionnaires** • **Observations** • Content Analysis • Longitudinal Studies • Experiments • Case Studies	**Facts:** • The information already exists, so it has been collected by somebody else. • It provides a popular source of information for sociologists. • Is often used in research studies. • A good way for a sociologist to build an understanding of the bigger picture. • Allows sociologists to examine the past. **Methods:** • Official Statistics • Non-Official Statistics • Data from Social Surveys • Census Data • Use of Personal Documents/Diaries • Use of Historical documents and evidence

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-S2EiPD4-W0

Different Types of Data

Data is information collected from research. Data is used by sociologists in their reports and publications.

Quantitative Data	Qualitative Data
• Data in numerical form which can be put into categories, or in rank order, or measured in units of measurement. • This type of data can be used to construct graphs and tables of data.	• Qualitative research gathers information that is not in numerical form. Normally in a written form (words/sentences). • This type of data can be used to construct written reports and make theories about society.

For example…

Surveys of Families from 'Treeville' show that **78%** do not feel they have enough income to meet their needs and desires. It was found that most families in the town earn less that **£20,000** per year.

For example…

Interviews with families in 'Treeville' showed that they find other ways to make them feel happy, even though financial worries exist. Many of the parents drink over the recommended limit a week.

What is a participant?

- Simply, a participant is a person who is taking part in your research. For different types of research you will have different kinds of participants.

Female school students used as participants to research the impact peer pressure has on the age girls begin to wear make-up.

Criminal gang used as participants to investigate the role of illegal drugs in gang violence.

Working mother used in interview research to investigate the difficulties of balancing work life and home life as a breadwinner.

What is a Pilot Study?

- When you carry out research it is hard to know whether it will work out. Research is also often expensive. Because of this, often sociologists will carry out a pilot study. This is a small-scale ('mini') version of what they would do in the full scale study.

- For example, if a sociologists was using a questionnaire, they may send the questionnaire to ten of their friends to check that the questions make sense, before sending them to their 200 participants.

What is a Hypothesis?

- A hypothesis is a statement you can test (with research). It is a bit like a prediction about what you will find out from research. A hypothesis is presented at the start of research and helps to outline what will be investigated.

Examples:

- ***Boys will be better at handing in homework when they are older.***
- ***Mothers find leaving their children for work harder than fathers.***
- ***The media shows more negative images of mental illness than positive images.***
- ***Schooling in the UK is not effective in preparing young people for the world of work.***

Task: Scenarios

Look at the research scenarios below:

Identify the hypothesis, the participants, the type of research and the type of data used.

Scenario 1	Scenario 2
Dr Popper is trying to find out about the behaviour of teenagers at the cinema. He predicts that girls are less likely to go to the cinema than boys. He carries out a survey stood outside the Odeon in Trowbridge and gives the survey to teenagers he sees walking into the cinema. The questions involve ranking answers from 1 to 10 on how much they agree with statements. The teenagers give the questionnaires back to him. He then analyses results and produces statistics.	Dr King is trying to find out how divorce has changed over time. He uses the government website to find statistics from each year of the number of divorces filed. He is particularly interested in the number of women who filed for divorce. He predicts that the number of women who filed will divorce will peak at the same time that the feminist movement peaked. He will use the information to plot a graph and see if there is a relationship between the two.

Extension: Write your own scenario (like those above). Make sure you include information on the kind of participants which are used, the data and type of research. Aim to have a clear hypothesis.

Task: Why do sociologists carry out research?

- Answer this question using the sentence starters/key words below….

- Sociologists carry out research because…
- Another reason is that they want to…
- Also they find research useful because…
- Sociologists can use…
- This would be useful to a sociologist because…
- There are different types of data….

Key Words:

Trends/Patters, Wider Society, Culture, Investigate, Explore, Measure, Explain

Key Words:

- Quantitative
- Qualitative
- Primary
- Secondary
- Pilot Study
- Hypothesis
- Participants

Plenary: This or That

Primary or Secondary?

Aiming to find out what live was like in 1066 by looking at the Bayeux Tapestry (famous tapestry which maps out the story of the Battle of Hastings).

Quantitative or Qualitative?

Plenary: This or That

Primary or Secondary?

FRUIT	NUMBER OF CHILDREN WHO CHOSE IT
PEAR	
WATERMELON	
ORANGE	
APPLE	
BANANA	

Primary school teacher aimed to find out the favourite fruit of their students by asking them to fill out the survey question.

Quantitative or Qualitative?