

Name:

The Social and Cultural World

Concepts

Society and Culture integrates concepts and applies research methods to the subject matter.

The concepts are tools to organise and to further understand the subject matter. They spiral through the course and are classified as **fundamental**, **additional** and **related**.

The fundamental course concepts are:

- **persons**
- **society**
- **culture**
- **environment**
- **time**



THE FIVE KEY CONCEPTS

Persons

Every person is a unique individual who develops in a social and environmental setting in which he or she is influenced by, and interacts with, other persons and groups. Communication, the sharing of values and beliefs, and cooperation are major interactions. The identity achieved by each individual is the result of interactions at the micro, meso and macro levels of society.

Examples include: Socialisation, Self and Identity, Human Rights and Obligations, Individual growth and development, Communication, Personality, Life Style, Rights of passage, Alienation.

Society

Society is made up of people, groups, networks, institutions, organisations and systems. These aspects of society may include local, national, regional and international patterns of relationships and organisation. People belong to informal and formal groups, and within and between these groups there are patterns of interactions that contribute to unique cultures. **Examples include:** Groups and institutions, Class and Status, Authority/Influence and Power, Conflict and Co-operation, Kinship, Social Networks, Peer Groups, Class, Race & Ethnicity, Community, Roles. Discrimination, Socialisation.

Culture

Culture refers to the shared knowledge, attitudes and behaviours that give each society its coherence, identity and distinctive way of life. Culture is demonstrated by the beliefs, customs, values, norms, rules, laws, governance, arts, technologies and artefacts that people generate and use as they interpret meaning from their world and solve present and future problems.

Culture is dynamic and undergoes change, and is therefore not static. **Examples include:** Language, Myths/Rituals and Beliefs, Knowledge, Technology, Cultural Diversity, Customs/Norms/Values, Art and Artifacts, Prejudice and Stereotypes, Science and Civilisation.

Environment

Every society is located in a particular physical setting and interacts with its environment.

The attitudes and values that people have in regard to their environment greatly affect interactions between persons, society, culture and the environment. Unique culture is generated from the interactions with the immediate environment. Different locations and their environments – including urban, rural, coastal, inland and isolated – present societies and their cultures with both opportunities and constraints. **Examples include:** Location, surroundings, Landforms/Vegetation/Climate, Landuse, Interdependence, Ecosystems.

Time

Every person, society, culture and environment is located in a period of time and is changing with time. Time can be examined as past, present and future. Our perceptions of time are drawn from past events and these influence our ideas about the present. These perceptions need not, however, determine possible ideas of a future. The concept of time is best studied in context – last century, this century, and pre- and post-events – or as a particular decade.

Time is studied in relation to continuity and change. **Examples include:** Past and Future, Present, Continuity, Change and Conflict. Cultural Heritage, Social Mobility, Innovation, Adaptability, Science, Technology, Tradition.

ACTIVITY

Instructions: Complete the activity below based on the information provided and your own knowledge and experience.

CONCEPT	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES FROM BOOKLET	OWN EXAMPLE
Persons			
Society			

CONCEPT	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES FROM BOOKLET	OWN EXAMPLE
Culture			
Environment			
Time			

The additional and related course concepts are:

- **power**
- **authority**
- **gender**
- **identity**
- **technologies**
- **globalisation**

The additional course concepts help us to understand and analyse the interactions between the fundamental course concepts. These additional course concepts are important when analysing and understanding the interactions of society at the micro, meso and macro levels.

Power

Power is the ability or capacity to influence or persuade others to a point of view or action to which they may not always agree. Exercising power is important in initiating or preventing change.

Authority

Authority is linked to power and the right to make decisions and to determine, adjudicate or settle issues and disputes in society. Authority is best understood as the legitimate use of power. The use of authority is important in the process of decision-making and in initiating change and maintaining continuity.

Gender

Gender refers to the socially constructed differences between females and males. Social life – including family life, roles, work, behaviour and other activities – is organised around the dimensions of this difference. Gender also refers to the cultural ideals, identities and stereotypes of masculinity and femininity and the sexual division of labour in institutions and organisations. Gender reflects the value a society places on these social constructs, which are particular and unique to a society.

Identity

Identity refers to the sense of self and can be viewed from a personal, social and cultural level. Identity is formed over a period of time and is the result of interactions at the micro, meso and macro levels of society. An identity has dimensions or layers that create a sense of inclusion in a group or culture. Contributing factors to one's identity may be gender, sexuality, family, class, ethnicity, beliefs, social status, group membership and national pride.

Technologies

The term 'technologies' refers to all the tools that we use to assist our interactions in society. Technologies can lead to innovation and can initiate change to micro, meso and macro operations in society. The value placed on technologies at any level of society influences the rate of change to society and culture. Technologies are constantly changing and adapting and their impact varies over time. Communication-based technologies facilitate the interaction between the micro, meso and macro levels of society.

Globalisation

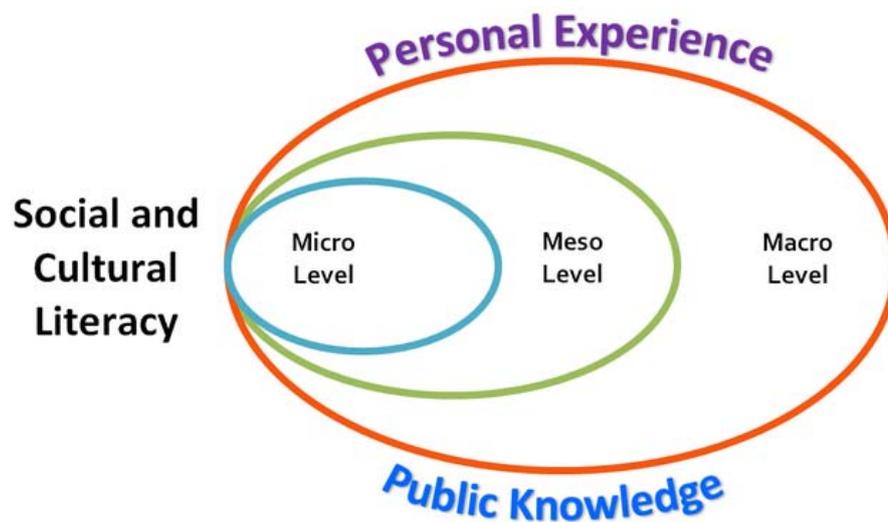
Globalisation is the process of integration and sharing of goods, capital, labour, services, knowledge, leisure, sport, ideas and culture between countries. Globalisation is evidenced in the emergence of global patterns of consumption and consumerism; the growth of transnational corporations; global sport; the spread of world tourism; and the growth of global military and economic systems. Globalisation is assisted by technologies and media integration, resulting in an increasing consciousness of the world as a single place.

Watch: How to understand power:

<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/how-to-understand-power-eric-liu>

Social and cultural literacy

Society and Culture is designed to facilitate the development of a student's social and cultural literacy. Achieving social and cultural literacy is a developmental process that requires the student to synthesise personal experience and public knowledge at the **micro, meso and macro levels of society**. Social and cultural literacy refers to the idea that people should possess a body of knowledge, understanding and skills that allows them to share, communicate effectively, and respect themselves and others. The process of gaining social and cultural literacy is reflected in the diagram below.



Social and Cultural Literacy

Personal experience refers to the knowledge gained from reflecting on individual experiences.

Public knowledge refers to general knowledge and the knowledge available to everyone. The term also refers to all the knowledge found in the public domain that is the work or research of other people.

Micro-level interactions are personal and occur between individuals and their family, peers and individuals in the community.

Meso-level interactions occur between the micro and the macro levels of society. Meso-level structures are groups in the community, village, school, workplace, local interest club, branch, organisation and state. The meso level is also known as the middle level.

Macro-level interactions are impersonal and relate to large institutions, the media, law and government and are evident at a national and international level.

Interactions exist between micro and meso, micro and macro, and meso and macro levels.

Interactions should be viewed as two-way.

ACTIVITY

Instructions: Complete the activity below based on the information provided and your own knowledge and experience.

CONCEPT	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
Power		
Authority		
Gender		

CONCEPT	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
Identity		
Technologies		
Gender		

Answer:

1. Who holds power in your family? _____

2. How is that power used ? _____

3. Who has authority in your family? _____

4. How is that authority used?

5. Who holds power in your everyday experience of school? _____

6. How is that power used? _____

7. Who has authority in your school? _____

8. How is that authority applied? _____

9. List 3 male gender stereotypes and 3 female gender stereotypes

10. Will these stereotypes change over time? If so, how and why? _____

11. Research: Provide an example of 2 types of technology that was essential in each of the following periods of history and explain why each was so important in those times:

Medieval times: _____

TO PEEL AND ALARM

ALARM – A Learning and Responding Matrix

<https://www.virtuallibrary.info/alarm.html>

Why ALARM?

ALARM was developed by ESL Teacher Max Woods. It aimed to assist students to improve their writing skills by **making each body paragraph specific**. This, however, was not the motivation behind its development.

ALARM seeks to help students learn how to learn by **making the learning process EXPLICIT**. It is important to understand **how to learn** if we are to take on board more than just the **content** to be learned. Understanding how to learn, rather than just the content, is the key to becoming **lifelong learners**.

Another purpose of ALARM is to **promote deep understanding**, rather than superficial knowledge which is learned by rote. This is achieved partly by requiring us to employ **higher order thinking skills**, such as analysis and evaluation, but primarily by **asking provocative questions**, which promote inquiry and reflection. ALARM fundamentally challenges the role of the teacher - demanding that the teacher primarily be the lead enquirer, rather than providing students with the answers immediately.

How does ALARM work?

ALARM:

- provides a step by step guide to the process of learning and then responding to a question
- makes explicit the ordering of concepts from simple to complex
- allows students to tap into higher order concepts throughout the teaching process
- aids students to identify gaps in their knowledge
- allows students to communicate with a common terminology across the curriculum
- provides templates which can be adapted to suit content area, complexity of information, level of depth required

TOPIC SENTENCE	POINT	EVIDENCE	EXPLAIN	LINK TO QUESTION	
Name and Define (Identify the points/argument)	Describe (Outline the details of the points/argument)	Explain (Express the reason for this point/argument)	Evidence (Provide evidence to support your point/argument)	Analyse (Express how/why the evidence supports your point/argument)	Evaluate (Express an opinion/judgement on the significance /impact of your point/argument)

Sample Body Paragraph.

‘Egypt is the gift of the Nile.’ (a quote from the historian Herodotus). Assess this statement.

The River Nile is incredibly important to Egypt. The river runs the entire length of Egypt with fertile land on either side. Egypt is located in a desert environment and it is this river which allows it to flourish. The important historian Herodotus stated that it was a ‘gift’ to the Egyptians. It is this water that provided transport, water for drinking and crops for the Egyptians. Therefore without the Nile River, Egypt would have been a desert area which did not allow for habitation, for food sources and the development of society.

BOS KEY TERMS AND ALARM

NAME, DESCRIBE, AND DEFINE	Classify, Define, Describe, Identify, Outline, Recall, Recount, What
EXPLAIN	Account, Clarify, Construct, Demonstrate, Predict, Summarise
ANALYSE	Apply, Calculate, Compare, Distinguish, Examine, Extract, How, Investigate
CRITICALLY ANALYSE	Discuss, Extrapolate, Interpret, Synthesise
EVALUATE	Appreciate, Assess, Deduce, Justify, Predict, Propose, Recommend, To what extent

'WHY' will be categorised depending upon mark value.

Costello, C. (2015). ALARM- A learning and responding matrix. Virtual Library. Retrieved from <https://www.virtuallibrary.info/alarm.html>

Secondary research

Watch the following clips & read the newspaper article.
Answer the questions below for each clip & the newspaper article.

Clip 1:

Where the hell is Matt? 2012

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pwe-pA6TaZk>

Clip 2:

The women behind the Napoleon Perdis beauty empire

<https://au.tv.yahoo.com/the-morning-show/video/watch/29174447/the-women-behind-the-napoleon-perdis-beauty-empire/#page1>

Clip 3:

Changing the world, One word at a time! The Queen Latifah Show.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YshUDa10JYY>

Clip 4:

Married to the Moonies

<https://vimeo.com/43248078>

Newspaper article 1:

Vast majority of faiths inspired by Spaghetti and Maradona

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/vast-show-of-faiths-inspired-by-spaghetti-and-maradona/news-story/2cc64b311efd9a4558ad7d60878d3b28>

Vast show of faiths inspired by spaghetti and Maradona

Marea Donnelly, History Writer, The Daily Telegraph

December 22, 2015 12:00am



About 73,000 Australians identified as Jedis in the 2001 census

To believers of established faiths, a denomination convinced that humans evolved from pirates, while heaven promises a beer volcano, is at best parody and at worst something far more sinister. But after an Australian member last month won the right to wear a spaghetti strainer headdress in a driver's licence photo, members of the Church Of The Flying Spaghetti Monster now hope to win the legal right to celebrate marriages in New Zealand by next month. The group is the most recent of dozens of unusual faiths adopted and promoted around the world. Their beliefs span telepathic communication with extraterrestrials to worship of British royal consort Prince Philip and Argentinian soccer legend Diego Maradona.

Church Of The Flying Spaghetti Monster

Identifying as Pastafarians, the group evolved in 2005 in protest against teaching evolution and "intelligent design", or belief in a universal creator, in Kansas schools. Despite an apparently irreverent faith promoting "a lighthearted view of religion", the church gained followers in Germany and Poland, where a Warsaw court paved the way for official recognition. US physics graduate Bobby Henderson, then 24, inspired the movement in a letter to the Kansas State Board of Education about teaching intelligent design in biology classes. Henderson argued his belief that "a Flying Spaghetti Monster" created the universe and intelligent design were equally valid.

Cosmic People of Light Powers

Founded in 1997 by Ivo Benda, an information systems engineer with the Czech Skoda car company, two years after cowherd Miloslav Drskova "changed his world" by introducing him to communications with extraterrestrials on the planet Pleiades. Influenced by Czech "spiritual scientist" and ufologist Eduard Meier, Benda believes extraterrestrial civilisations have spaceships orbiting Earth to watch and help the good, who will be transported into another dimension. Claiming 12,000 followers, in 2001 Benda contacted Czech president Vaclav Havel and Slovak president Rudolf Schuster to request a meeting between extraterrestrial civilisations and heads of state.

Church of All Worlds

A revival of ancient polytheistic European and Middle Eastern worship began in Britain before World War II, but blossomed with devotion to nature and psychology from the late 1950s. The Church of All Worlds, founded in 1962 by Oberon Zell-Ravenheart and his wife Morning Glory Zell-Ravenheart, is one of America's oldest neo-pagan deities. Partly based on Robert Heinlein's 1961 science fiction novel, *Stranger In A Strange Land*, followers recognise Gaea as the Earth Mother Goddess and the Father God, as well as Faerie realms from Greek pantheons.

The Prince Philip Movement

The faith adopted by Kastom people on Vanuatu's Tanna island in the 1950s was reinforced when Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip visited in 1974. Yaohnanens believed Philip was an ancient divine being, the son of a mountain spirit who travelled to a distant land where he married a powerful lady, only to eventually return. Philip was sometimes considered a brother to John Frum of another Tanna cargo cult. Philip then sent a portrait to villagers, who responded with a traditional pig-killing club, or nal-nal. In compliance with their request, Philip sent a photograph of himself posing with the club.

Maradonian Church

Maradonians count the years since football legend Maradona's birth in 1960. Devotees Hernan Amez, Alejandro Veron and Hector Campomar opened their church in 2001 in Rosario, 300km from Buenos Aires, using Maradona's jersey number 10, or diez in Spanish, and dios, Spanish for God, as a symbol. With 200,000 followers, they celebrate the nativity on Maradona's birthdate, October 30, and use an Anno Diego calendar, dating from 1960. Easter is celebrated on June 22 to honour Maradona leading Argentina to victory against England in the 1986 FIFA World Cup.

ANSWER:

1. List the concepts related to the clips/newspaper article.

2. Explain how the concepts are related to the clips/newspaper article.

3. Describe how the clip assists with your understanding of the course using the ALARM structure.

Identify / Define

Describe

utilising Australia's language and cultural diversity for the economic and social benefits of all Australians.

What makes it hot?

Multiculturalism is a hot word as the idea of a culturally diverse society is not supported by all Australians.

Some people fear that a society inclusive of many cultures will lead to a breakdown in the social cohesion of the Australian community. Others view multiculturalism as a type of reverse racism which discriminates against "mainstream Australians" and benefits "minority groups".

Coexistence of people from diverse cultures is feasible when there is common agreement about basic principles such as respect for the rights and property of others, a commitment to democratic ideals and the rule of law. Many people recognise the reality of Australia as a multicultural society, are proud of the harmonious co-existence of diverse cultures and value the benefits arising from this.



The BIG picture

- Multiculturalism, hybridity of culture, cultural diversity, culturally plural are terms emerging from diverse and complex influences.
- Push and pull reasons stimulate diversity – pushed as a result of war, unrest, natural disaster, flood, famine and pulled due to employment, cost of living, increase in standard of living, opportunities
- Internal and external population movements create migration and this leads to diversity of culture
- A hybrid culture has a connection to post colonialism, migration of the worlds people and forces of globalisation
- As societies and cultures merge and perpetuate we see multicultural societies emerging as hybrid - people (micro), schools (meso) and societies (Australia) become a blend of cultures, values, beliefs or traditions.
- A hybrid society describes the 21st century across many cultures/countries of the world and is a post-modernist term.
- A hybrid society gives rise to a hybrid identity and all the issues inherent or attached eg Australian flag debate and republicanism
- Diversity brings social change and social change creates diversity - diversity, democracy and equality belong together
- Hybrid society = Diversity + equality
Democracy
- Hybrid identities – at a personal and social level

At the heart of a multicultural and hybrid society is the concept of culture. Defining culture can be complex – it is personal and shared and same but different and important to understand at micro, meso and macro levels of society. It is who we are, our identity. There is an element of ethnocentrism though – that idea or belief in or assumption of the superiority of the social or cultural group that a person belongs to, why? Our social identity is featured as both continuity and change, and that's why it's complex.

Culture is everything: language, heritage, art, social relations, education and identity – and at the same time is intangible. It is the glue that binds us, it enriches and informs our lives every day, it is something we make and something we participate in as a human right and while its public value can be assessed, it resists measurement. Culture is complex and very interesting.

Capturing the reality: describing Australia today

- The evolving cultural character of Australia. Since Federation, the Australian population has changed dramatically in terms of cultural background. Ethnic diversity accelerated after World War II, and since this period Australia has become one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world.
- According to the 2006 Census, migrants from the United Kingdom and Ireland represent 31% of all migrants who arrived in Australia before 1991, but only 12% of those who arrived subsequently. In contrast, the proportions of migrants from Asian countries rose from 18% to 42% across these two periods. Because they have settled in Australia over a shorter period of time than other immigrants, the Asian-born population tends to be younger than the other overseas-born population, and is especially concentrated in the 25-45 year age bracket (41% compared with 28% of migrants from other countries).
- Australia has more than a quarter of the population born overseas. Today, Australia's population of about 23 million is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse populations in the world. Australia has a unique history that has shaped the diversity of its peoples, their cultures and lifestyles today. Three major contributors to Australia's demographic make-up are a diverse Indigenous population, a British colonial past and extensive immigration from many different countries and cultures.
- Although the majority of the population are Australian born, more than 75% of Australians identified with an ancestry other than Australian in the 2011 Census. About 2% of Australians come from Indigenous backgrounds and about 43% have at least one parent who has born overseas. 30% of the population were born in another country. Of the overseas born, the major countries of birth are England, New Zealand and China. About 8.5% of Australians were born in non-English speaking countries. In all, Australians come from over 200 birthplaces.
- Collectively, Australians speak over 200 languages. Languages other than English are spoken by about 16% of the population with about 61,000 people speaking an Indigenous language. Other than English, the most common languages spoken today are Chinese, Italian, Greek and Arabic. There are over 50 Indigenous languages and Australian creoles actively spoken by Australians.
- The major religion in Australia is Christianity with about 61% of the population identifying as Christian. This group comprises over 70 different Christian denominations with the major denominations being Catholic; Anglican; Uniting Church; Presbyterian and Reformed; and Eastern Orthodox. Other major religions represented in Australia today include Buddhism (2.4% of the population), Islam (2.1%), Hinduism (1.28%) and Judaism (0.45%). About 7,361 Australians practise Aboriginal traditional religions. About 22% of Australians have no religion.
- Language is a key marker of membership of an ethnic group. Language allows communication of values and beliefs of a particular culture and allows participation in family and community life. The majority of Australians speak English as a first or other language, however a significant number of people also speak languages other than English. About 77% of Australians speak only English.

From: Australian Bureau of Statistics: Utilise statistics and graphs as examination preparation

Indonesia: A Hybrid Society



Read the following information and answer the questions in your exercise book.

Indonesia has a population of approximately 210 million people, from 300 different ethnic groups who speak more than 400 distinct languages and dialects. The Javanese are the largest ethnic group, comprising 41% of the population, and more than 85% of the population are Muslim, 10% Christian and 3% Hindu or Buddhist.

This diversity makes Indonesia a **hybrid society**. Rather than having a single or homogenous identity it is comprised of a range of social and cultural influences and components. As you know from

Australia, a family from a Chinese or Indian background will have a very different customs and values compared to a family from an English or Greek background, although there will be some central Australian values and behaviours that will be common to all.

Since gaining independence in 1945 the Indonesian government has followed a philosophy known as the *Pancasila* – meaning “five principles” in the Sanskrit language. This philosophy is designed to unite the various ethnic groups and maintain national stability.

A plural society

Bali is renowned for its identity as a Hindu-Buddhist island in the Indonesian archipelago, the world’s most populous Muslim nation. Yet Bali in fact has a substantial Muslim minority. Muslims residing in rural areas are usually descendants of long-standing populations, with origins in Java, Madura, South Sulawesi (Bugis), Lombok (Sasak), or elsewhere in the Indonesian-Malaysian region. These Muslims — who have long histories in Bali — are known as Bali Slam, or Bali Muslims, and have assimilated to Balinese identity. They are culturally Balinese. A few live in predominantly Muslim villages, but most live in mixed Hindu-Muslim communities.

As the last published census of 2000 revealed, meanwhile, the number of Muslims in Bali has grown quite dramatically in a short time. In that year, 9.7 per cent of the island’s population was Muslim, up from six per cent less than a decade earlier.

With a population of 3,890,757 in the 2010 census and 4,225,000 as of January 2014, the island is home to most of Indonesia’s Hindu Minority. According to the 2010 Census 83.5% of Bali’s population adhered to Balinese Hinduism, followed by 13.4% Muslim, Christianity at 2.5% and Buddhism 0.5%.

Most of the new arrivals are migrants from neighbouring islands who come in search of jobs. The increase may be associated in part with the growing tourism industry and its labour needs, but their numbers also escalated during the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s, when Bali fared better than most areas of Indonesia. Bali is attractive, moreover, because it is considered one of the safest parts of Indonesia by Indonesians too. The new arrivals have settled mainly in the urban areas of southern Bali, where they serve as a cheap labour force. Accordingly, the percentage of Muslims in these areas, an estimated 17 per cent, is higher than average.

1. Define ‘Multicultural’.
2. What is a hybrid society? How is it different from a homogenous society?
3. Explain how Australia adheres to being a multicultural society AND a hybrid society.
4. Explain how Indonesia adheres to being a multicultural society AND a hybrid society.

MICRO, MESO AND MACRO LEVELS IN SOCIETY

See also Page 4 above

CONCEPT	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
MICRO LEVEL		
MESO LEVEL		
MACRO LEVEL		

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PHENOMENA	Provide examples		
	MICRO LEVEL	MESO LEVEL	MACRO LEVEL
Having breakfast at home			
Catching the bus to school			
Updating your facebook status as 'Looking for work'			
Talking to your neighbour about working in her business			
Viewing public Facebook profiles			

DOCUMENTARY: MICHAEL PALIN'S SAHARA
PROGRAM 3: THE WODAABE PEOPLE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=goZJSklFes8>

1. What are your first impressions of the Wodaabe?

2. According to the French woman, what are the interactions like between the men and women?

3. Describe what the men are doing. Why are they doing it?

4. According to the narrator, how do the women look?

5. How is the husband/man chosen?

6. What is the most important status symbol?

7. How does this link to the Micro Level in society?

SOCIETY AS A CONSTRUCT THAT DEVELOPS OVER TIME

Society: Society is made up of people, groups, networks, institutions, organisations and systems. These aspects of society may include local, national, regional and international patterns of relationships and organisation.

Social structures: The organized relationships between the basic components of a social system or society

Social construct: a perception of an individual, group, or idea that is 'constructed' created and developed by society through cultural or social practice

Social expectation: the internalised social norm concerned with what people should do - individuals, organisations and for society as a whole.

According to Karl Mannheim social structure refers to the web of interacting social forces. Social structure is a living structure i.e. it's organic, meaning it is created by people and values, maintained for a time and changes as time changes.

We create our society and its culture. People socially construct the structures that support the world around us - belief systems, norms and values, ideas about gender and gender roles, social class, work, law, media, popular culture, technology, construction and deconstruction of race and racism, prejudice and discrimination, stereotypes and the idea of what is ideal!

We socially construct ideals, values, beliefs and norms and each different part of the social structure depends upon conformity of the social values and norms. The institutions and associations are inter-related according to these norms. Individuals perform their roles in society in accordance with the accepted norms and when norms and values modify it ripples to change in the structures around us.

Social structure is dynamic and constantly changing. It is socially constructed through visible social processes and mechanisms. It is constructed by the active and subjective participants in that society.

Gender identity:

The idea of gender identity is an example of social construction and is a result of sociocultural influences throughout an individual's development. Our gender identity can be influenced from the ethnicity of the group, their historical and cultural background, family values and religion. Gender is a structural feature of society and the sociological significance of gender is that it is a device by which society controls its members. Gender, like social class and race, can be used to socially categorize people and has led to prejudice and discrimination. When a society has specific norms, people living within the society will adapt to them and they will do the same even for discriminatory norms. Contemporary anthropological viewpoints argue whether notions of gender constructs are natural or socially constructed.

- Family size has become smaller and many women now become mothers much later than was the case for previous generations. Many children also live with only one parent and have the other parent living elsewhere.
- increased involvement, especially of women, in paid employment, contribute to shaping patterns of couple formation and dissolution, which today differ substantially from the patterns apparent during most of the 20th century.
- Marriage rates have fallen markedly in recent decades, while cohabitation rates have increased.
- The rise in the divorce rate during the second half of the 20th century, especially after the introduction of the *Family Law Act 1975*, represents one of the most spectacular changes in family relationships in Australia.
- The movement of mothers into the paid workforce was one of the revolutionary changes of the second half of the 20th century, and it has had widespread repercussions for family life, workplaces and communities.
- In response to the changing social environment of work and family, various policies have now been implemented in workplaces and communities to accommodate the family commitments of employees. Of particular note is the recently introduced Paid Parental Leave Scheme, funded by the Australian Government. Other initiatives include the provision of flexible work hours and leave to look after family members, both young and old, as well as the provision of formal child care.
- Another factor that sets the scene for contemporary family life is the evolving cultural character of Australia. Since Federation, the Australian population has changed dramatically in terms of cultural background. Ethnic diversity accelerated after World War II, and since this period Australia has become one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. According to the 2006 Census, migrants from the United Kingdom and Ireland represent 31% of all migrants who arrived in Australia before 1991, but only 12% of those who arrived subsequently. In contrast, the proportions of migrants from Asian countries rose from 18% to 42% across these two periods. Because they have settled in Australia over a shorter period of time than other immigrants, the Asian-born population tends to be younger than the other overseas-born population, and is especially concentrated in the 25-45 year age bracket (41% compared with 28% of migrants from other countries).
- These changes form the backdrop to family and community life in contemporary Australia. They frame the economic and social participation of families, the supports they give and receive, and their economic and subjective wellbeing.

Society as a construct that develops through time

What do we mean when we say 'society is a construct'? The syllabus defines this as:

“ society is actively and creatively produced by human beings rather than being given or taken for granted. ”

BOSTES NSW, *Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus*, Sydney, 2013.

This means that the social world and how we perceive qualities such as gender and adolescence are creations of what we want our lives and behaviours to be. These constructs are not static and can evolve and change over time. For example, consider the way gender roles have changed over time: the 1950s role of Western women is typified by the housewife whose domain was the kitchen and raising her children. However, the impact of the women's liberation movements and feminism helped redefine gender roles for women, with challenges to existing notions of subservience, education, birth control, work roles and pay. The demand for change generated a dynamic interplay of radical ideas, public debate and changing behaviours. Over time, these social interactions and debates significantly altered behaviours and changed the life options and aspirations of women. Gender roles were redefined and – despite the challenges this represented to conservative elements of society at that time – the options for women were no longer 'fixed' and the way opened for new possibilities.



Alamy/ClassicStock

Figure 1.11 The classic 1950s look: conservative and demure



Getty Images/Rolls Press/Peppertoto

Figure 1.12 The classic 1970s look: assertive liberation

The macro level provides the framework for understanding the wider social structure and the institutions that shape day-to-day life. These include how our educational and political systems operate on a collective scale. For gender roles to improve, changes to the law were needed as well as educational opportunities for women and changes in the way women were portrayed in film, song and advertising.

The meso level is the world of our networks and the way we participate within our community. Changing laws does not necessarily lead to a change in attitudes and it is in the lived experiences of the social world that we enact our values and refine our behaviours. This is the contemporary domain where men decide to play mixed netball or girls stop playing on the same football teams as boys as they get older. Changing and evolving gender roles at this middle level are a very real and lived experience.

The micro level views gender on a very personal level, such as in the family. In this context, there can be intergenerational contrasts in values. For example, the attitudes of parents and grandparents may have been constructed at a very different time and context from that of the next generation. Such face-to-face interactions are powerful determinants of identity and they work to shape values that influence behaviour. Society is composed of the interactions of its members at each of the micro, meso and macro levels and these interactions influence the ways its members interact over time.

Social expectation

Our behaviour is shaped by our expectations. If we do something that offends others, their negative reactions make it clear that this behaviour is unacceptable, just as we are rewarded when we act in a positive way. In Australia, it is considered polite and correct to say 'please' and 'thank you' as part of conversation, but this is not the case in all cultures – for example, in Indonesia, saying 'please' is not an expectation. If someone asks you for something, you give it to them. In an Australian context, omitting polite language is considered rude, so parents train their children by withholding something until they say 'please'. This training is a key dimension of socialisation, which is:



the process by which individuals learn to become functioning members of society by internalising the roles, norms and values of that society.

BOSTES NSW, *Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus*, Sydney, 2013.



Social norms are part of the fabric of social expectations – that is, the rules that define how we ought and ought not behave. As we learn these norms and adapt them into social roles, we learn to structure behaviour to meet social expectations so we can be successful participants in society. These norms become endorsed by our society. Consequences are developed to reinforce the acceptance of these norms – for example, getting in trouble with our family, getting a detention at school or being questioned by the police.

In our everyday micro- and meso-world interactions, we talk, smile, frown and in multiple ways construct a social landscape of agreements and rejections, approvals and disapprovals, 'head nods' and messages of ambivalence. We define who we are and who we are not in the context of our social world.

Social expectations can also be intensified by communications technology. The action of sharing a photograph, updating your status, accessing newswatches or making a comment on an event that happened today puts you in a macro-world interaction. Although you may perceive this as just communication among a group of selected friends, the ownership and the options for this message to be globally distributed can take it out of your control. Information can 'go viral' and be spread by communication technology, potentially delivering instant fame or lasting shame. The worth of this communication is determined by the expectations and judgements of those who observe it, which is a dynamic illustration of how we socially construct the world and what we know and share.

QUESTIONS

1. Explain the concept 'society is a social construct'.
2. Define 'social expectation'.
3. Outline the social expectation of women and explain how they have changed since World War 2.
4. Define 'social norms' and provide 5 examples.
5. Explain how the concepts below relate to social expectations:
 - Macro Level
 - Micro Level
 - Meso Level
6. Explain how Social Expectations can be linked to communication technology.

GROUPS AND INSTITUTIONS OF SOCIETY

(HOW THEY SHAPE AND ARE SHAPED BY INDIVIDUALS)

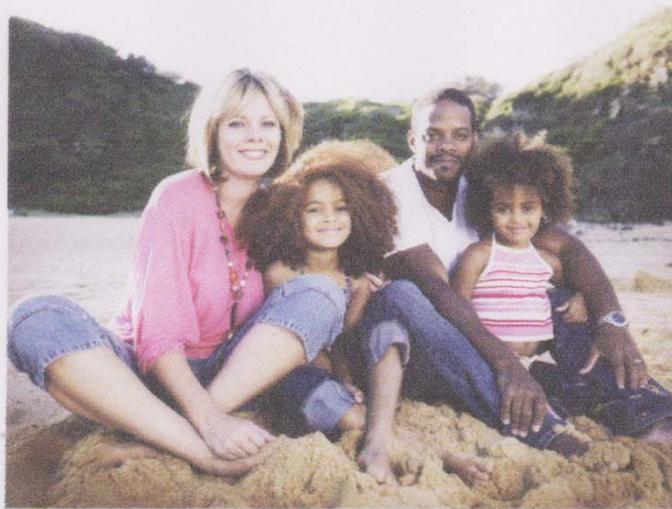
In order to understand the social structure that makes up our social and cultural world, it is important to understand the roles of family, school, peers, work, government, media and the legal system. Read the following information and complete the table below.

GROUP/ INSTITUTION	Outline the role, influence and significance of each group/institution
FAMILY	
SCHOOL	
PEERS	
WORK	
GOVERNMENT	
MEDIA	
LEGAL SYSTEM	

FAMILY

Across all cultures and throughout people's lives, family plays a vital role in shaping individuals. Whether in child rearing, training in survival skills, creating a livelihood or nurturing each other, the role of the family is a compelling force. Throughout time and across the world some form of the family unit has been the basic building block of society. Family is recognised as the primary determinant of socialisation.

For most people, family is the social glue that binds our sense of self and place in the world. This is evident in the energy and expense that is typically associated with family events such as a marriage, birth, coming of age and even death. Different societies have different ways of celebrating these events, yet their importance is evident to the cultural observer. Likewise, the distress and challenges when family structures break down is equally powerful. The death of a family member, separation and divorce can all have a profound impact on people's lives. Indigenous Australians who have experienced the Stolen Generation know the profound impact of losing their family, a damage that extends into further loss of language and culture. The impact of such events on a person's life provides an important message to us all to respect the role of the family in identity formation and cultural transmission.



Getty Images/The Image Bank

Figure 1.13 A nuclear family: mum, dad and the kids

ACTIVITY

- 1 List the different types of families in contemporary society.
- 2 Identify two concepts or words that explore the relationship between a person and their family. Briefly explain the significance of each concept/word.
- 3 Debate the topic, 'The family creates the best and worst of times'.
- 4 Predict the characteristics of the family in the near future.
- 5 Identify the range of family types represented in your class. Ask each class member to provide one word to describe their family or how they would like their family to be. Create a table that categorises this information.

SCHOOL

Schooling and its primary goal of education is a significant determinant of how individuals are shaped. Schooling has a profound impact on the individual; it can influence so many qualities and capacities, such as literacy, numeracy and the ability to think in new ways. It offers knowledge, understanding and the skills to analyse and research in an interactive context with fellow students. While the social dynamics with fellow students during recess and lunch may be the highlight of the school day, we should not lose sight of the life opportunities an education can provide. Schooling is a vital dimension of socialisation with a key capacity of forming an identity by refining values, ethics, citizenship and aspirations.

In Australia, all young people have the right to an education. It is compulsory, embraces both primary and secondary education and is organised into government and non-government systems, as well as home schooling. Opportunities presented through schooling can influence personal and social identity.

For most young people, schooling is a significant early encounter with a social institution. Each schooling system typically has formal structures such as a hierarchy of leadership and across the student cohorts there are roles, statuses and responsibilities. There are formal requirements, including attendance, curriculum and testing, which all operate in political, economic and cultural contexts. Schools have to engage with interrelated issues such as religious, moral and ethical education, strategies for discipline and learning to deal with authority.

In Western cultures, the rise of mass education was driven by the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century. Before that time, education was only available to the wealthy elite. Although every Australian child has access to core educational opportunities, is there a case for arguing that our system reinforces inequality? The social mobility that access to education offers has enabled many Australians to expand their life options. Questions such as, 'How do we measure the success of our education systems?' are crucial questions for our future.

ACTIVITY

- 1 Is schooling part of the micro, meso or macro world, or a combination of these?
- 2 List four concepts or words that explore the relationship between a society and a school. Briefly explain the significance of each concept/word.
- 3 List four concepts or words that explore the relationship between time and school. Briefly explain the significance of each concept/word.

PEERS

One of the greatest influences on children and teenagers is the interaction and dynamics of the peer group: the micro network of close friends, companions and colleagues, often with a circle of acquaintances close by. Peer groups can be closed, operating as a clique, or open and fluid, allowing access and easy interaction with other groups. Peer groups can come together and maintain a connection through a common interest, such as sport and sporting ability, style or fashion sense, a leisure focus such as a particular music genre, ethnicity, academic interests, a particular sense of humour, or popularity. It could be driven by the people you meet on the first day of school and it can be difficult to change peer groups once you have become part of a group.

For many teenagers, peer groups are powerful socialisation agents, and are often more significant than family or teachers. Peer groups typically require strong loyalty from their members, and have roles and statuses that may be unspoken but are very real in interpersonal dynamics. Members are expected to conform to avoid rejection. The friendships you form at school can be lifelong or short-lived.

There will probably be no time in your life when you know and can appreciate as many individuals as you do when attending school. Students are typically acquainted with as many as 100 people during the years when they are forming their identities, making mistakes, having victories and experiencing aspects of life for the first time. This is a powerful way to learn about the diversity of experiences life offers. However, it also means you are learning from some relatively inexperienced people.

- 1 List four concepts or words that explore the relationship between a person and their peer group. Briefly explain the significance of each concept/word.
- 2 List four concepts or words that explore the relationship between time and your peer group. Briefly explain the significance of each concept/word.
- 3 Keep a tally of the time spent in communication with your parents in one week. Also keep a tally of the time spent in communication with your peers in one week. Compare the quantity and quality of communication between these groups.
- 4 Sometimes, peer groups are led or dominated by an individual who is described as an alpha male or alpha female. Does your peer group have an alpha female and/or male?
- 5 Does your peer group have any rules, symbols or special language? If so, what are the purposes of these?

CLASS DISCUSSION

- 6 Discuss the following statement: 'Peer groups are essential for social survival'.

WORK

Work in day-to-day life has many challenges and opportunities. Of significant sociological importance is the way that work roles shape a person's sense of self. People dedicate much of their waking lives to work and work is an important identifier of self. The questions 'Who are you?' and 'What do you do?' typically receive a response linked to a person's work role – for example, 'I'm a nurse ... taxi driver ... ferret wrangler ... barista ... barrister ...'. Each work role

ACTIVITY

comes with its perceived respect, status and position in a hierarchy, with an expectation of job satisfaction and financial rewards.

The task of every culture is to find ways of making and distributing things people need and want. Providing these goods and services is at the core of work as an essential social institution that shapes the lives of people. In understanding work, there are many issues and questions. How do we distinguish between paid and unpaid work? How do we deal with the unemployed and those alienated from their work roles? Does social class dictate work opportunities? What is the impact of consumerism? How do we ensure work is ethical and does not exploit workers?

For many adults, the workplace is also a social network that provides friendships, relationships and daily routines. The tasks performed at work can be inspiring, creative and challenging, as well as routine, monotonous and even dangerous.

ACTIVITY

- 1 Identify three work roles in different industries or professions. Describe the meso-level and macro-level aspects of each role. Imagine and describe the ways each work role may influence the personalities and behaviours of those involved.

RESEARCH

- 2 Describe the issues associated with blurring the boundaries between work life and home life.
- 3 Assess the purpose and value of the networking site, LinkedIn.

GOVERNMENT

The social structure of any country is defined by the system of government – that is, the means by which the laws of a nation are made and carried out. Governments can be categorised into a number of broad types, including democracy, communist, dictatorship and monarchy. There are many variations of these types, including, republic, commonwealth, people's republic, fascist state, constituent assembly and constitutional monarchy.

Australia's government is defined under the Australian Constitution as a constitutional monarchy. In Australia, every elected government at either local, state or federal level has the right to create laws that Australians are expected to live by. An understanding of these processes is a vital dimension of citizenship. Voting in elections enables eligible citizens to indicate their preference for which political party will make the laws that govern their country. However, our system of government, which reflects our British heritage, is in contrast to the

laws and customs of the First Australians. In Aboriginal cultures, traditional laws do not change. In Aboriginal culture, these laws have been in place since the beginning of time, so the process of creating new laws by Australian governments can be a source of confusion to traditional peoples. For example, the combination of some protectionist principles, land rights decisions and the Northern Territory Intervention removed the power for traditional peoples to make decisions and has been a source of confusion.



Figure 1.14 Protest as a means of engaging with government: protests in Brisbane during the G20 summit in November 2014 called for an end to black deaths in custody

In the era of globalisation, the role of government is changing because of expanding privatisation, free trade and the increasing power of transnational corporations in a global context. Nonetheless, governments will have to effectively deal with global issues such as climate change, global financial crises, terrorism and rising militarism.

MEDIA

The influence of the media as a dynamic aspect of our social structure is substantial, and at times, overwhelming. One voice, one opinion or one action can be distributed on a global scale to anyone who has a form of the technology that provides access. Mass media has changed and developed over time: from print (such as newspapers and magazines), film, records, radio and television, to the Internet and social-media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, as well as online news and other news media options.

The question of how these forms of media shape individuals and are shaped by individuals is a crucial one in considering how we can be critically discerning about information and the media and aware of major national and global issues.

When we access media, whether the news or the latest blog update, we unwittingly invite information providers into the intimate space of our homes and our lives. Their perspectives and information either inform or connect with us, or we switch channels. If they are popular they shape not only our view of the world, but simultaneously they shape the perspectives of the millions of viewers in their audience. How do we respond when a celebrity, sports star, 'shock jock' or even a terrorist sends a message to the world? Do we get an exaggerated perspective when particular events are replayed on every media source?

What is the role of the media? In this age of information, our popular culture and media are filled with corporations, lobby groups and advertisers who are engaged in shaping opinions and we must decide the extent to which they shape our behaviour, our spending and most importantly, what we value.



Shutterstock/Oleksiy Murki/Shutterstock

Figure 1.15 Being 'liked' is everything.

- 1 List four concepts or words that explore the relationship between culture and the media. Briefly explain the significance of each concept/word.
- 2 How much influence do you think the media has over your micro, meso and macro worlds?
- 3 What are the key roles and responsibilities of the media?

ACTIVITY

THE LEGAL SYSTEM

Laws and the justice system are enacted by the police, the judicial system (lawyers, the courts, judges), the prison system and welfare organisations, as well as the victims and perpetrators of criminal activity. These represent the social institutions that express power and authority in most contemporary cultures. Max Weber, considered one of the founders of modern sociology, identified a key form of authority as 'legal-rational authority'. This model identified that explicit rules and procedures are created by those who govern and must be followed by those who are governed. To break these agreed rules identifies those individuals as deviant and their actions as criminal behaviour.

Legal systems cannot guarantee that all citizens agree with or support the values and beliefs that created the laws. Many of the laws in a capitalist economy focus on protecting property and there is an argument that laws tend to defend those in positions of power and privilege. Historically, Australian laws created and supported the White Australia Policy and enabled the Stolen Generation, policies that were not supported by all citizens. Who receives the attention of our legal system? Is it organised crime or corrupt politicians or corporate criminals? Which groups populate our prison systems? It is now generally accepted that in Australia justice should facilitate social inclusion and promote a sense of social responsibility. It is also accepted that justice should encourage active citizenship and support the welfare, dignity, social justice and human rights of all at the local, national and global levels.

LOOKING IN/LOOKING OUT: EXPLORING THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL WORLD

A particular challenge of this course is examining other ways of living. You are expected to move outside the familiar boundaries of your own day-to-day experience and outside your culture. It would be too restrictive to only study Australia. Society and Culture mandates that other cultures, other countries or other ways of living be a feature of learning. Of course, a substantial part of course work will relate to local examples, content and understanding, but to ensure that there is an appreciation of the world beyond our own, it is important to do some cross-cultural studies, which offer a more universal understanding of human behaviour.

For effective cross-cultural studies:

- suspend making judgements: when we first encounter unusual cultural practices, our first reactions are typically disbelief, dismissal or judgement. Such negative reactions mean we cannot effectively come to a genuine understanding of the behaviours in question. Aim to find out more information. What are the circumstances and social context of these behaviours? What concepts can better help you understand them? Realise that you are not being asked to deny your own values and beliefs, just to put them aside while you explore the reality of the lives of people who have another way of living. When we do not judge, we are able to demonstrate social and cultural literacy by showing concern for the welfare, rights and dignity of all people.
- avoid being a tourist: studying other cultures can be quite exotic and is often the reason why many Australians spend so much money on overseas travel. Typically, we enjoy new, exciting experiences that take us out of our everyday world. However, aim to look beyond the exotic and find aspects of behaviour that add meaning to understanding people's lives. Be more of a traveller, and less of a tourist. Get off the bus and get to know the locals!
- be respectful: it is easy to act in a charitable and tolerant manner when you meet people of other cultures. Most Australians struggle to realise the full implications of being part of a dominant culture and find it hard to fully appreciate the reality of being marginalised as a minority. Offer all cultures the respect and dignity you would expect for your own.
- consider cultural relativism: despite the best intentions and any amount of detailed study, it is difficult to fully understand what it is like to belong to another culture. The process of socialisation is a lived experience over many years and as a researcher you must accept that you may never really understand how subtle and knowledgeable you need to be.

Preparing a cross-cultural study

To understand the way you interact with individuals, groups and the community within the social and cultural world, it is useful to prepare a cross-cultural study that compares Australia with a culture from another country. You could use personal reflection and interviews to gather the material for your Australian section, and content analysis of secondary material for your overseas section.

It is important to realise that you will be generalising during this exercise. You will research your own experience, and generalise that it is typical of Australians. In a short piece of work this is acceptable, but you must always be aware that you are doing it, and acknowledge its limitations.

The investigation

The syllabus requires you to conduct an investigation (or social and cultural research) at this stage. The series of questions in the box below will help you to conduct this investigation.

The Investigation

Family

- Who comprises your family?
- With whom do you interact in your family?
- What groups does your family interact with?
- What links does your family have to your community?

Roles and status

- What roles do you play within your family?
- How is status allocated within your family?
- What other roles do you play within your life?
- Do you have status from those roles?
- How do these various roles and levels of status allow you to interact with individuals and groups?
- How do these various roles and levels of status allow you to interact within the community?

Conflict, cooperation and decision-making

- What are your major sources of conflict?
- Are you involved in conflict with individuals?
- How do these conflicts reflect upon your interaction with groups within your community?
- With whom do you cooperate during a typical day?
- How does your cooperation allow you to interact with others?
- What sorts of decisions do you make in a typical day?
- How many of these decisions are made completely independently?
- How many of these decisions require interaction with other persons or groups within your community?

Gender

- What is the gender mix within your family?
- How significant do you think that gender mix is?
- How significant is your gender during your interaction with individuals and groups within your community?

Communication

- With whom do you communicate?
- How does communication help you interact with these people?
- How is communication carried out within groups with which you are involved?
- How does communication aid interaction within your community?
- What role does the media play in your communication?
- What role does gender play in your communication?

Power, authority and influence

- How is power and authority distributed in your family?
- Is gender significant in this distribution?
- How is power and authority distributed within the groups with which you are involved?
- Which individuals do you believe have an influence upon you? Are they from your micro or macro world?
- How can you have influence within your community?
- What do you think being a 'good citizen' means?

THE AMISH

Make notes based on the following information

History of the Amish

Religion

Ordnung

Family

Gender Roles (two sections)

Roles and Status	
Adolescence and Rumschpringes	
Conflict, co-operation and decision making	
Communication	
Power, Authority and influence	

CASE STUDY

THE AMISH

The Amish as a group have their roots in Europe at the time of the Protestant Reformation in the middle of the seventeenth century. They derived from a group impatient with the pace of reform in existing churches. One of the main issues was baptism. While the accepted churches demanded infant baptism, a breakaway group called Anabaptists practised adult baptism. One group of Anabaptists became the Amish, and many of them migrated from Europe to North America in the 1700s and 1800s.

Today, the Amish are based largely in Ohio, Pennsylvania and Indiana in the United States. It is thought there are about 150 000 Amish in North America, and that their population is doubling every twenty years. There are a number of different groups within Amish society, and this means that there will be variations within the way they organise their societies.

Religion is at the base of Amish life. They believe that they should obey god at all times, and live lives of simplicity and humility, largely cut off from the outside world. Religion is the tool to support their isolation from mainstream society. They believe strongly in peace and cooperation, and regard pride as a major failing. This is why they do not like photographs being taken of them: they feel it is prideful.

Amish communities follow the *ordnung*, which is a set of rules agreed upon by the community. Each community sets its own *ordnung*. Consequently, rules vary widely among the Amish. Some of the rules that Amish communities follow are designed to allow them to maintain a separate identity from mainstream society, and are based around their desire to live a



A modern Amish farm.

simple, non-technological lifestyle. Some examples are given below. Remember that these will not apply to all Amish communities.

- Electricity and telephones are not connected to Amish houses because they are considered 'worldly'.
- Amish will not own cars.
- Amish travel in horse-drawn buggies.
- Education is completed in Year 8.
- Breaking of rules may result in 'shunning'.

It would be wrong to think of the Amish as a society trapped in a time warp. Like any society they experience changes over time. They are subject to the forces of modernisation, particularly as competition for prime farming land forces some Amish to consider other ways of making a living. Amish people have proved adept at managing businesses, and have established a presence on the World Wide Web. This has meant some compromises with traditional beliefs and practices, but has allowed Amish communities to maintain an individual identity and still be successful economically.

Family

Amish communities highly value family life. It forms the basis of their society. Like all other aspects of Amish life, it conforms to the traditional values and attitudes of the community. From the courtship, which typically starts with the boy taking a girl home from Sunday evening singing in his buggy, family life is subject to tradition. Courtship is normally a secretive affair, with the couple's intention to wed only being publicly announced two weeks before the wedding. The wedding is normally in November, on a Tuesday or Thursday to fit in with the demands of the farming seasons, and the ceremony, in the bride's home, would last four hours. There are none of the trappings associated with a contemporary western-style wedding, with the Amish avoiding such things as photographs, rings, flowers and catering.

Children are intimately involved in family life, having to work around the home, farm or business after school. With school traditionally finishing after Year 8, family life is often viewed as the preparation for life on the family farm or business. There is no real concept of leaving home to further education or employment opportunities. With the emphasis on hard work, and Amish typically getting up with the sun, there is little time for Amish children to do much more than their assigned family duties and homework.



CASE STUDY



A typical Amish barn, a centrepiece of their communal culture.

Gender roles in Amish families are clearly defined, with the father being the recognised head of the household. Unmarried women may work outside the home, but married women are expected to work only within the family home. Older males have the responsibility of educating young boys in areas such as farming, and working with wood and leather. Young girls will be educated by the older women within the family, learning homemaking skills and, as the implications of limited land and large families forces gradual adaptation of modern ideas, also business skills. Once Amish children start work, they are expected to hand over their pay to their father to support the family.

Amish families combine elements of single and extended family units. Living in self-contained communities also allows the concept of family to have a larger dimension in Amish life. Grandparents move out of the main house into a nearby 'dawdy house' as they get older. They are respected as older, knowledgeable members of the family, and would be considered an important source of advice within the family. Uncles, aunts, cousins and older siblings could all be expected to live in close proximity, and provide nurturing and support for the family unit.

Roles and status

Roles within the Amish community are largely based on gender. Males provide leadership within the community. Although status doesn't really exist in the way it does in contemporary western societies, there is a hierarchy of leadership in Amish communities. It is based on religion, with church bishops being the established leaders of the community. They are responsible for enforcing church rules and conducting official ceremonies, such as baptisms and burials.

Church ministers and deacons support them. These men form an effective 'council of elders' within an Amish community, and are responsible for their community following its particular *ordnung*.

Adolescence is an important time for Amish. With adult baptism being a vital and highly significant example of continuity in Amish culture, the time prior to baptism becomes the last period of youthful freedom before fully accepting the responsibilities of adulthood and membership of the Amish church. They begin typical adolescent rituals such as dating, which may start with a ritual such as riding together in a buggy. Even though parents usually know their children are dating, it is rarely talked about at home.

Amish communities are prepared to allow adolescent Amish the opportunity to experience the world of the 'English' (non-Amish). There is an acceptance that this is a time to 'sow wild oats' and experiment before fully committing to Amish life. Known as *rumschpringes*, or 'time out', this has had some repercussions for Amish societies in the 1990s. Amish youth may experiment with alcohol and smoking, but normally spend time together at hoedowns and barn dances. There have been court cases over the last few years, however, where Amish youth have been convicted of drug distribution among Amish communities.

Most Amish negotiate *rumschpringes* keen to return to the stability of life in their own communities. They undergo baptism and commit to adult life accepting the *ordnung* of their community. There exists a fear, though, that if drugs such as cocaine and amphetamines penetrate Amish youth, the whole concept of *rumschpringes* will be destabilised. If this was to happen, the implications for cultural continuity among the Amish could be profound.

Conflict, cooperation and decision-making

Amish society is based upon cooperation. By accepting the *ordnung*, the Amish establish a commonly accepted set of values that are adopted willingly. A strong commonality among Amish is their willingness to yield to higher authority. The highest authority is god, and within the community the bishop, ministers and deacons are the interpreters of that ultimate authority. In the family, this is reflected by children's acceptance of parental authority. Personal responsibility is highly valued by the Amish, as are such personal qualities as a peaceful and gentle demeanour.



CASE STUDY



An Amish buggy on the road. What is the cultural significance of the photo being taken from behind?

One of the most outstanding examples of the cooperative nature of the Amish community is the practice of barn raising. The entire community cooperates to erect a barn on the property of an Amish member. Buggies arrive at dawn, and an experienced Amish carpenter organises and directs teams of men in the building process. A complete frame is normally erected before lunch, with the walls and roofing going on in the afternoon. The women prepare a community meal for the noon break, and the children either play games or act as runners for the men. The result of this community cooperation is a barn completed in a single day.

As modernisation impacts upon Amish society, there is potential for conflict within society. American television has reported on accusations of child abuse within Amish communities. Although the Amish themselves are relatively unaffected by media, they are still subject to national laws, and interaction with government welfare agencies in particular has the potential for conflict.

The move by some Amish into the world of commerce also has the potential to cause conflict within communities. Some Amish have established million-dollar businesses, and to do so has required more interaction with the modern world than is accepted by others. The Beachy Amish (named after Moses Beachy, who founded the Order in 1927), for example, don't reject all modern technology. Instead, they allow such things as phones and cars, which are basically essential in the modern business environment.

If an Amish community believes that someone has broken their baptismal vows, church members can

decide to shun them. This means that they are not spoken to or allowed to participate in daily life. If a family member is shunned, the rest of the family is required to observe this, and not sit at the same table for meals. The justification for shunning is found in the Bible, and the Amish see it as a short-term solution designed to bring the erring member back to an acceptance of their ways. The number of Amish who eventually are excommunicated (banned from the church) is believed to be very small.

Gender

Gender roles are clearly defined in Amish society. Given that many of the values and beliefs of the Amish have their roots in seventeenth century Europe, it is not surprising that males have traditionally been the leaders of the community. With traditional roles so clearly defined, those living within an Amish community would not be expected to challenge the division of labour between the male provider and the female homemaker.

Yet modernisation has the potential to impact upon traditional gender roles within Amish communities. With farms normally being passed on to males, females traditionally accepted their role to marry and be a farmwife. With the emergence of successful businesses, women are starting to be valued in the Amish communities for their business abilities. In Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, three single Amish sisters have run a successful pie shop for nearly thirty years. After their eldest brother inherited the family farm, they made a conscious decision to support themselves. They only employ unmarried Amish women, and have been accepted because their success benefits the community. If this type of approach were to become a model for other Amish women, it would have the potential to disrupt the traditional gender roles upon which so much of Amish society is based. Thus change would start to outweigh continuity in that particular Amish community.

Communication

As with all aspects of Amish life, communication is initially based around the family. The family unit is the basis of communication. Communication within the family is not hampered by the intrusion of media, and revolves around the family and community activities. With religion being so prominent in Amish life, church activities provide many of the opportunities for community interaction and communication. Preaching services are held every



CASE STUDY

second Sunday at the home of a church member, and would normally be followed by a communal meal and visiting.

The Amish are multilingual, with their language often depending upon the situation. At religious services, it is normal for the Bible to be quoted in High German, while conversational communication would normally be in a dialect that is often referred to as Pennsylvania German or Dutch. It is a form of German based on the language of the seventeenth century ancestors. Children learn English by the time they reach Year 1 and, if speaking to non-Amish, the conversation would normally be in English.

Power, authority and influence

With their strong emphasis on religious and community traditions, the Amish see the Bible as the major source of power and authority in their society. Bishops have a particularly influential role in the community, as they are the main link to the *ordnung* as well as to god. Through the interpretation and implementation of the *ordnung*, the unofficial council of elders holds effective authority within an Amish community. With so much of life being based on communal activities, it is rare for that authority to ever be challenged.

YOUR TURN

Film study: *Witness*

Witness is a 1984 film starring Harrison Ford and Kelly McGillis. It was directed by the Australian director Peter Weir, who was nominated for an Academy Award for the film. It is the story of a young Amish boy who witnesses a murder, and Detective John Book, who has to be protected by the Amish community after he is injured during the murder investigation. An Amish website states that the film 'portrayed Amish lifestyle fairly accurately in what was shown, but ... portrayed a very limited segment of Amish lifestyle'. When using a commercial film as a source of information, remember that it is made to entertain, not inform, and that commercial considerations often outweigh factual depictions.

- 1 What are your first impressions of the Amish when the film opens?
- 2 Do you think the scenario that finds the young boy, Samuel, witnessing a murder is realistic? Make sure you explain your answer.
- 3 What examples can you find of the networks that bind Amish society together?
- 4 What aspects of Amish culture are portrayed in the film?
- 5 Based on your knowledge and research, how accurate do you think *Witness's* depiction of Amish society and culture is? Make sure you support your answer with specific examples from both the film and your research.

The main source of power within the Amish world is the male head of the family. The father of a family provides the organisation, experience and effort to maintain the economic viability of a farm or business, and the family is expected to recognise this. With family assets, such as farms and businesses, being passed through the male line, tradition reinforces the powerful position of the father.



A still from *Witness*.

The Amish Approach to Education

Amish schools actually serve to strengthen and perpetuate that power by teaching the importance of community to their children. In doing so, the school provides students with not only factual knowledge, but also a firm understanding of societal values as taught by the teacher, strengthened by student interaction, and as shown by the community. In acting as a role model, the teacher reinforces with her lessons and life what the family teaches at home. She also receives respect and support from the families of her students, who realize that her authority must not be undermined in order for her to teach scholars both factual and societal knowledge.

Another important aspect of Amish school's success concerns the teacher's use of students in her lessons. In order to teach her pupils, the teacher utilizes the children themselves. Embodying the Amish value of cooperation, the teacher most often will teach a lesson to a select few, then allow those students to relay the information to their classmates and to the grades below them. By operating in this fashion, the students interact with one another on a greater frequency, which facilitates group cohesion. Such cohesion deemphasizes competition, a main component in mainstream schools, and encourages students to help one another for the benefit of all.

The third aspect which the Amish utilize to effectively teach their children concerns the participation of the entire community. Community involvement is possibly the most important element of the Plain school's success. A special partnership exists between the school and the parents of the pupils that does not normally occur in modern schools. A school board made of parents makes all administrative decisions. Amish schools do not have principals or superintendents. In addition, parents handle all janitorial work, construction, and upkeep. Parents automatically realize their part in shaping their children's education as soon as the children enter school.

Link the key concepts to the Amish and Australian view of education.

The Australian Approach to Education

It is essential for a child to attend school until about the age of fifteen. Young adolescents see the HSC as their logical end of schooling but it has advantages and disadvantages. The advantage of schooling is that the average adolescent grows and belongs to a stable peer group to associate and identify with. The disadvantage is that dependence on parental support can prolong the tension which exists between parental and peer group influences, leading to greater openness and comfort today's adolescent exhibits. It's a very good thing if adolescents attend tafe or uni after they finish their HSC to receive a fuller education that could lead to a better career. If the child's education level exceeds that of the parents, the adult-adolescent communication is at risk. School life provides opportunities for students to form relationships with the opposite sex- especially in co-ed schools. But because these opportunities are unreal, it does not really prepare a person for an adult heterosexual relationship.

For adolescents, the transition from school to work is very slow. It will not take place for most adolescents till they are well into their 20's because the majority of adolescents spend between 2-6 years at TAFE or UNI. For adolescents who go to work before tertiary education, it will be very hard for them. Unemployed and casual workers who try to get into the work force straight after their schooling life produce a poor self-esteem and self-image. This also has an effect on their social lives.

Leisure is an essential part of an adolescent's life. The pressure of school, relationships, work and family are all laid upon them. Leisure relieves their pressure and takes their mind off from all the complications in life. Most adolescents spend their leisure time in unproductively in ways such as playing games in game centers, dance parties and hanging out in the wrong places in the wrong time. Adolescents should use leisure in productive ways such as community help, sport, reading, studying for pleasure, exercise and family time. Productive leisure would help them in the future.

FILM STUDY: WITNESS

1. What are your first impressions of the Amish when the film opens?

2. Do you think that the scenario that finds the young boy, Samuel, witnessing a murder is realistic? Make sure you explain your answer.

3. What examples can you find of the networks that bind the Amish together?

4. What aspects of the Amish culture are portrayed in the film?

5. Compare your own culture with the Amish – what do you share and what is different? Provide **THREE** similarities and **THREE** differences.

FILM STUDY: WITNESS

Make notes from the film about the way the following groups and institutions of society are shaped by individuals

Family

School

Peers

Work

Government

Media

Legal System

Social and cultural research methods

During the study of both the Preliminary and the HSC courses, students are required to develop knowledge and understanding of a variety of the methods used to conduct research. Students will also need to develop skills in:

- planning research tasks, including developing appropriate research methods
- applying research methods ethically
- compiling and organising collected information
- analysing, synthesising and interpreting the findings
- writing up and editing their conclusions in ways appropriate to different audiences.

The term 'method' refers to the specific tools of the investigation, or the ways that data can be collected and analysed – for example, a questionnaire.

Two main approaches for research are quantitative and qualitative.

Quantitative methods enable the collection of very specific data from a sample of the relevant population. The findings may then be extrapolated for the whole population under study. With a quantitative method, information is collected by counting, and is able to be collated into percentages and then represented by tables and graphs.

While the ease of collating data gathered through quantitative methods has its advantages for the researcher, it must be remembered that quantitative methods:

- do not allow the researcher to interact closely or personally with those being questioned; the process is impersonal and as objective as possible
- rely heavily on the researcher's ability to develop a non-biased set of research questions or items in order to record data within the selected sample.

Qualitative methods rely on the researcher's interpretive skills to understand the often complex and detailed data gathered.

Qualitative research is useful:

- for studies at the individual or small group level
- for finding out, in depth, how and what people are thinking and feeling.

Analysis of qualitative data can be more challenging than analysis of the numbers collected through a quantitative method.

Analysis of qualitative data requires sorting responses to open-ended questions and interviews into broad themes or categories before the researcher is able to draw meaning or conclusions from the data.

Research methods such as questionnaire and interview can produce both quantitative and qualitative information, depending on how the questions are structured.

Closed questions that require only a 'yes' or 'no' answer, or questions that allow only a limited choice of responses, produce easily quantified and tabulated data.

Open-ended questions, on the other hand, produce descriptive responses that are qualitative in nature and therefore require categorising and analysing before any understanding can be gained.

It is important to remember that research methods exist on a continuum from quantitative to qualitative – that is, from methods that easily measure and quantify data to those that collect detailed and less measurable and, therefore, less quantifiable data. Many methods contain aspects of both – that is, they include quantitative and qualitative elements.

Distinguishing the two broad approaches to social research	Quantitative methods Researchers collect data that can be measured, counted or quantified, resulting in a statistical report. The focus of quantitative research is WHAT and HOW MANY.	Qualitative methods Researchers aim to gather an in-depth understanding of an issue by way of open-ended questioning, non-statistical research techniques, or value-based observations. A qualitative investigation focuses on WHY and HOW.
Main features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large and randomly selected sample of respondents who represent the particular population of interest • Structured data collection instrument, with closed-ended or rating-scale questions • Quantities and trends identified; comparisons can be made • Researcher is not necessarily known to the participants • Participant characteristics can be hidden from the research • Lack of direct contact with the sample assists detachment of the researcher; however, care still needs to be taken in construction of the instrument to ensure that the researcher is aware of potential bias that may be built into the questions • Quantifies the findings in numerical data, tables, graphs and diagrams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually a small sample and not randomly selected • Interactive process • Participants' characteristics may be known to the researcher • Narrative report with conceptual description of behaviour, values, attitudes and beliefs • Contains direct quotations from research participants • Invaluable for the exploration of subjective experiences • Relies heavily on the researcher's interpretive skills to understand the complexities of findings • Direct quotations from documents and from participants can be utilised

Research methods

Quantitative methods of research	Qualitative methods of research
<p>Questionnaire with closed-ended questions or rating scale questions where the findings can be counted and observed as statistics – the data collected can be quantified.</p> <p>Content analysis is used in quantitative research to detect and count, and the data collected in this way can be quantified.</p> <p>Statistical analysis examines statistics to make generalisations and extrapolate trends.</p> <p>Observation that detects and counts and where the data collected can be quantified.</p>	<p>Questionnaire with open-ended questions gathers opinions and therefore is qualitative in nature.</p> <p>Content analysis as a qualitative method is used to analyse and interpret themes, words and images from documents, film, art, music and other cultural artefacts and media. After coding the responses, the researcher analyses, interprets and makes qualitative judgements about meanings of the content.</p> <p>Interview with open-ended questions is qualitative in nature.</p> <p>Focus group entails the collection of data from an in-depth planned discussion of a defined topic held by a small group of people brought together by a moderator.</p> <p>Secondary research involves accessing data already produced by other researchers. The researcher makes a subjective judgement about what material is useful and what is not for the purpose of the research process. Summaries and syntheses are made of the research findings.</p> <p>Personal reflection is the use of, and evaluation of, personal experiences and values to demonstrate analysis and interpretation of data in the context of the research focus.</p> <p>Participant observation is where the researcher is immersed in the action being observed and his or her role as researcher is not obvious. Non-participant observation is where the researcher observes the interactions taking place without actively engaging in them. The researcher draws meaning from what is being observed, rather than simply counting specific actions as in a quantitative observational study. Both participant and non-participant observation can be covert or overt.</p> <p>Case study involves the in-depth study of a cultural group, which can be any group</p>

Quantitative methods of research	Qualitative methods of research
	of individuals who share a common social experience and/or location. Case study is considered a methodology when it combines two or more research methods, such as 'observation, interview and documentary evidence', to gather the data.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

SURVEY

Features:

- Combines observation, interview and/or a written list of questions
- Uses representative samples of specific populations
- Can be done in large numbers

Advantages

- Large sample = less bias
- Easy to calculate
- Able to ensure anonymity = more honest answers
- Quick to answer
- Provides lots of information

Disadvantages

- No assurance of honesty
- No way of knowing if the questions were understood
- Standardised form restrict people

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Features:

- Examines the data generated from questionnaires or secondary research
- Enables you to make generalisations and describe trends
- May involve graphs or charts

Advantages

- Complements qualitative research
- May be beneficial

Disadvantages

- The strength of the analysis is linked to the quality of the questionnaire
- Collating information could be difficult

CONTENT ANALYSIS

Features

- Systematic process for examining the subject matter of a source of information to obtain justifiable and reliable information
- Method of summarizing any form of content by counting various aspects of the content
- Interprets hidden meanings and trends in common media types
- Sources if information include textbooks, novels, TV, internet sites etc

Advantages

- Provides quantitative data to supplement research
- Can be used on a wide range of media

Disadvantages

- Difficult to design

QUESTIONNAIRE

Features

- A collection of questions related to a specific topic that you distribute to a sample of respondents
- Can include open and closed ended questions
- Ensure you:
 - Relate questions to hypothesis
 - Do not use unclear questions
 - Avoid emotions in questions
 - Ensure confidentiality

Advantages

- Investigates a wide range of areas
- Can assess values beliefs, opinions and attitudes
- Minimal cost
- Can be answered quickly
- Allows for a variety of questions
- Quick analysis

Disadvantages

- People may not answer open ended questions
- Little flexibility
- May lead to misinterpretations of questions
- People may not return questionnaire

FOCUS GROUPS

Features

- Involves bringing a group of 3-8 people together to discuss an issue
- Planning and implementation similar to an in-depth interview

Advantages

- Complements quantitative results of a questionnaire
- Helps gauge people's thoughts etc on an issue
- Can be taped and used for reports
- May provide a broad range of options

Disadvantages

- May be difficult to manage
- Must have a definite framework to stay on task
- Will produce findings which can't be measured so best to use with quantitative results

INTERVIEW

Features

- Speaking to another person to find out information
- It requires prior knowledge of the topic
- A list of questions you know you'll ask
- Your technique in gaining information is important
- It requires a recording device (eg I Phone)

Advantages

- Good as a supplement to questionnaires
- Additional info is easily asked for
- The pressure is on the interviewer
- People talk more than they write
- Can be taped and used for reports
- Allows the interviewer to press for more details

Disadvantages

- Lack of anonymity
- Will not give a broad range of opinions
- Difficult to re-administer
- Cannot be quantified or easily collated
- Only as good as the subject chosen

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Features

- Dependent on your experiences, memories and values
- Requires you to respect the people and issues you are going to be reflecting on

Advantages

- As it is about your it requires you to be honest and open about your life and feelings about a specific thing
- It is often used by the person researching and writing to explain how they felt during the process and their reaction to the topic

Disadvantages

- Should be used in conjunction with other information
- Impossible to quantify
- Some topics could cause friction within the family

PARTICIPANT AND NON PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Features

- Involves watching and recording in a clearly defined area of human behavior
- Non participant/direct observation does not involve the researcher joining in
- Participant observation involves the researcher joining in

Advantages

- Identity of the persona and social situation is known
- The researcher reflects on the social situation
- Easily gather information about a large number of people fairly easily
- A good source of primary information
- Familiarity
- Can be carried out without interrupting others
- Allows you to study how people really behave rather than how they say they behave
- If carried out in secret, will not alter the subject's behavior

Disadvantages

- Danger of believing we are better than we really are
- Eyes and ears aren't reliable
- You must be on the spot when the behavior is taking place
- People's own prejudice may influence
- Does not allow you to find out reasons for behavior
- People may object to being observed
- If people know they are being observed, they may be self-conscious.

Task

Examine the characteristics of the following methodologies and identify their advantages and disadvantages. Some topics may require research on a laptop.

METHODOLOGY	CHARACTERISTICS	ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES
Survey: uses different instruments such as observation, interview or questionnaire		
Case Study: collection of data through observation, interviews and documentary evidence		
Participant Observation: Researcher immerses in the action that is being researched. Data is collected by the observer, quantitatively and qualitatively, although researcher needs to be aware of bias		

<p>Content analysis: Study and interpretation of written and visual information</p>		
<p>Focus Group: A small group discussion of 3-8 participants. Interview questions are asked and recorded</p>		
<p>Action Research: an informal qualitative, interpretive, reflective and experimental methodology</p>		
<p>Interview: A set of questions closed and/or open- ended questions for quantitative and qualitative results</p>		

<p>Questionnaire: An impersonal instrument suitable for a large group of people. Set of closed ended and open ended questions</p>		
<p>Observation: Watching and recording behaviors within a defined area.</p>		
<p>Ethnographic study: Direct observation and reflection of data from immersion within a group by the researcher. Observation, interview used</p>		
<p>Statistical Analysis: Examination of data to interpret meaning, make generalisations and extrapolate trends.</p>		

TASK

HSC Examiners are keen to find out how well you know the research methodologies and whether you can distinguish between them. Complete the following as part of your revision.

TERM	DEFINITION	LIST EXAMPLES
QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGIES		
QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGIES		
Distinguish between qualitative and quantitative methodologies		
PRIMARY RESEARCH		
SECONDARY RESEARCH		

TASK

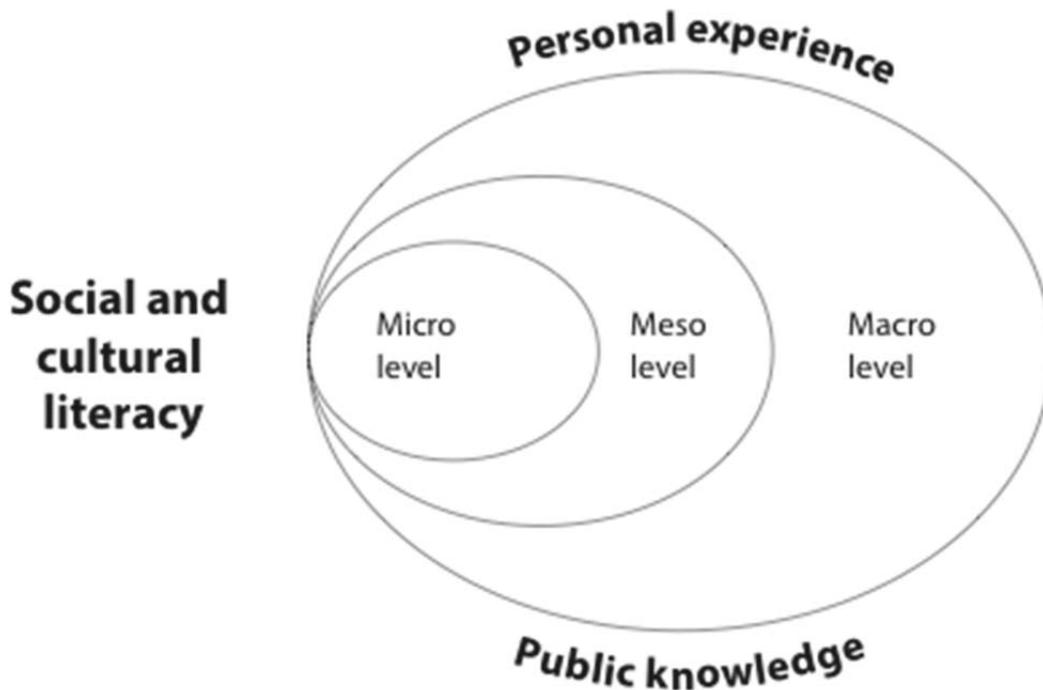
Can you tell the difference between these methodologies?

METHODOLOGIES	DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS BETWEEN THEM
Survey and questionnaire	
Case Study and ethnographic study	
Observation and participant observation	
Content analysis and statistical analysis	
Focus group and interview	
Action research and participant observation	

Social and cultural literacy

Society and Culture is designed to facilitate the development of a student's social and cultural literacy. Achieving social and cultural literacy is a developmental process that requires the student to synthesise personal experience and public knowledge at the micro, meso and macro levels of society.

Social and cultural literacy refers to the idea that people should possess a body of knowledge, understanding and skills that allows them to share, communicate effectively, and respect themselves and others. The process of gaining social and cultural literacy is reflected in the diagram below.



Personal experience refers to the knowledge gained from reflecting on individual experiences.

Public knowledge refers to general knowledge and the knowledge available to everyone. The term also refers to all the knowledge found in the public domain that is the work or research of other people.

Micro-level interactions are personal and occur between individuals and their family, peers and individuals in the community.

Meso-level interactions occur between the micro and the macro levels of society. Meso-level structures are groups in the community, village, school, workplace, local interest club, branch, organisation and state. The meso level is also known as the middle level.

Macro-level interactions are impersonal and relate to large institutions, the media, law and government and are evident at a national and international level.

***Interactions exist between micro and meso, micro and macro, and meso and macro levels.
Interactions should be viewed as two-way.***

Social and cultural literacy

A socially and culturally literate person demonstrates the following characteristics:

- Has a sense of personal, social and cultural identity and understands that culture underpins one's behaviour, beliefs and values
- Is interested in, observes and asks questions about the micro, meso and macro levels of society
- Empathises with and appreciates the diverse beliefs and values of different societies and cultures
- Researches effectively and ethically, showing critical discernment towards information and the media
- Communicates effectively with individuals and groups and works cooperatively in a cross-cultural setting
- Applies skills to achieve social inclusion and is aware of the issues of discrimination and prejudice
- Avoids making judgements of another culture's practices using the values of his or her own culture
- Has a sense of social responsibility and displays active citizenship by engaging critically with social issues, and takes considered action for the welfare, dignity, social justice and human rights of others at the local, national and global levels
- Is aware of, and sensitive to, major national and global issues such as poverty, disease and conflict, including armed conflict
- Considers the impact of globalisation, technologies and rapid change, as well as continuity and its implications for the future

Social and cultural research

Students will:

- outline the principles and practices of ethical research that underpin all social and cultural research
- examine the process of research using the steps briefly outlined below as a guide.

1. **Decide on the topic to be researched**



2. **Develop a focus question or hypothesis**



3. **Gather background information**



4. **Design the research**



5. **Develop the research methods to be used**



6. **Apply the research methods ethically**



7. **Compile and organise the collected information so that it is manageable**



8. **Analyse, synthesise and interpret the findings**



9. **Write up the conclusions in an appropriate format, considering the audience for the final product**



10. **Check the final product for editing or typing mistakes and ensure that all bibliographical information is included and correct**

Ethical research

Social and cultural researchers are expected to conduct research in an ethical manner.

Following the principles of ethical research is important because:

- this promotes trust that the information collected will be used responsibly and will be treated with respect and confidentiality
- if the respondents feel comfortable with the ethical research process, they are much more likely to offer replies to questions and therefore genuine knowledge can be gained by the researcher.

In practice, ethical research means that:

- any prospective research participants must be fully informed about the procedures and any possible risks involved in the research, and must give their consent to participate
- participants are not put in awkward situations or asked to talk about sensitive topics that may make them feel uncomfortable
- the ethical researcher is open and honest with participants about the topic and scope of the project and the nature of the participation or information expected from them
- the protection of participants' rights to confidentiality and privacy is ensured
- the researcher anticipates any negative effects on the research participants (including the researcher), such as personal danger, police intervention, social embarrassment or harassment – the researcher needs to prevent these
- the researcher is mindful of the special needs of any vulnerable groups, such as children
- there is nothing covert associated with the research.

Once data (information) is collected, the researcher begins the process of analysis, synthesis and deduction. At this point, the ethical researcher needs to be aware of any assumptions or biases that may underlie the research. It is critical that the researcher analyses the data without looking for evidence to support any preconceived ideas about what she or he may find.

Ethical research practices apply to both primary and secondary research – for example, in secondary research, the collection and use of information from books, magazines, the internet, communication technologies and so on. The protection of intellectual property in the writing-up process through the acknowledgement of all information used is critical, not only out of respect for the original author of the information but also to protect the researcher from breach of copyright law. With the availability of film clips, information, images and other content from the many sources accessible to researchers, discernment and care need to be taken in order to avoid material that might be inappropriate or potentially offensive for the audience of the final product.

Plagiarising other people's work is unethical, a breach of copyright law, a misuse of intellectual property, and an untruthful representation of other people's work as the researcher's own. Researchers must never plagiarise!

TASK

As part of your study routine, research and complete the following.

Define public knowledge	
Define personal experience	
Distinguish between public knowledge and personal experience	
Define micro world	
Define meso world	
Define macro world	
Explain social and cultural literacy	
Explain the characteristics of a socially and culturally literate person	

<p>Explain why it is important to be a socially and culturally literate person.</p>	
<p>List the advantages in undertaking the steps in social and cultural research</p>	
<p>Research and write a definition of 'Ethical Research'.</p>	
<p>Explain why ethical research is important</p>	
<p>When conducting research, what does the researcher need to be aware of in terms of 'Ethical research'?</p>	

