Studying Society

How evidence and ideas shaped sociology

SS24.S.1 "Describe the development of sociology as a social science field of study.* 1a Explain the contributions of important figures in the field of sociology, including Émile Durkheim, George Herbert Mead, Karl Marx, Max Weber, and W.E.B..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one contribution made by each of the five named sociologists. Circle the five bold sociology terms, then draw a line from each term to a nearby explanation or example of it.

Inside the Social World

1. In the nineteenth century, factories drew people into crowded cities, where new jobs and old inequalities met. Think of a textile mill: its schedule shaped when workers ate, traveled, and slept. As scholars began studying such patterns with evidence rather than treating them as personal quirks, sociology took shape as a social science. Karl Marx argued that conflict over control of workplaces and wealth drives social change. His focus on **power** asks who can set the rules and who must follow them. Émile Durkheim studied how shared institutions hold a society together, an idea called **functional integration**.

2. Durkheim also showed that even suicide rates, often seen as purely individual, varied with social ties. This insight helped sociologists examine **social structure**, the patterned relationships and institutions that shape people's options. Max Weber added that researchers should ask what people think their actions mean. His idea of **social action** treats behavior as connected to other people and their expected responses. At the mill, a worker might join a strike to demand higher pay or to show loyalty to coworkers. Counting who joins matters, but understanding why they join matters too.

3. George Herbert Mead examined how people develop a sense of self through interaction, including imagining how others see them. W.E.B. Du Bois used surveys, historical records, and maps to document Black life and racial inequality; he challenged claims that inequality reflected natural differences. His work showed how evidence can expose barriers built into institutions. Sociologists also study **culture**, the shared meanings, values, and practices people learn. A mill's rules may seem fair to its owners but unfair to its workers. Together, these thinkers expanded sociology from explaining large institutions to studying everyday meaning, while testing claims about society against evidence.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Marx's focus on power and Durkheim's focus on functional integration offer different ways to study society?

2. How did Durkheim's finding about suicide rates support the study of social structure?

3. What would Weber's approach add to a count of workers who joined a strike?

4. How did Du Bois's research challenge a claim about inequality, and how did Mead widen the questions sociologists ask?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a school changing its lunch seating rules. In five to six sentences, explain how two named thinkers from the passage might study the change, use two bold sociology terms to explain different effects, and name one kind of evidence they could collect.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one contribution made by each of the five named sociologists. Circle the five bold sociology terms, then draw a line from each term to a nearby explanation or example of it. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Marx's focus on power and Durkheim's focus on functional integration offer different ways to study society?	**Marx studied conflict over who controls workplaces and wealth. Durkheim studied how shared institutions hold society together.**
2	How did Durkheim's finding about suicide rates support the study of social structure?	**Suicide rates varied with social ties, showing that patterned relationships can affect outcomes often seen as purely individual.**
3	What would Weber's approach add to a count of workers who joined a strike?	**Weber would ask what joining meant to workers, such as demanding higher pay or showing loyalty to coworkers.**
4	How did Du Bois's research challenge a claim about inequality, and how did Mead widen the questions sociologists ask?	**Du Bois used evidence about Black life and racial inequality to challenge claims that inequality reflected natural differences. Mead studied how interaction shapes a person's sense of self.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

If a school changed its lunch seating rules, Marx might ask who chose the rules and whose preferences were ignored. His focus on power could reveal that some students have more influence over the decision. Mead might study how students react when friends invite or exclude them from a table. Those interactions could shape how students see themselves, while the school's culture could make some seating choices seem normal. Students could collect anonymous interviews about who feels included and compare those accounts with the new rules.

Accept other accurate connections between the named thinkers and the passage's ideas. For Part 3, look for two distinct terms applied to the new situation and a plausible kind of evidence.