Your notes

GCSE Sociology: revision notes

Educational achievement and social class

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Class differences in achievement

- Children from working-class backgrounds, on average, get lower results than middle-class children and are less likely to go to university.
- Halsey, Heath and Ridge (1980) studied boys and found that those from the service (middle) class were far more likely to stay on and go to university than working-class boys.

Material deprivation

- A lack of money and resources: poor housing, less space to study, fewer books and computers, poor diet, and not being able to afford trips or tutoring.
- Older students may need part-time jobs, reducing study time.

Cultural factors

- **Cultural deprivation**: the idea that some working-class families lack the norms, values and language that help at school. Critics say this blames families.
- **Cultural capital**: the knowledge, attitudes and skills (such as confidence and familiarity with museums and books) that middle-class children gain at home and that schools reward.
- Language: some sociologists argue middle-class children use a more elaborated language code, like that used at school.
- Parental interest and involvement, and parents' own education, also affect achievement.

Key terms

Material deprivation	A lack of money and resources.

Cultural deprivation	The idea that some families lack the norms and values that help at school.
Cultural capital	Knowledge, attitudes and skills that give an advantage at school.
Service class	Middle-class professional and managerial workers.
Social class	A group of people with a similar economic position.
Elaborated code	A detailed, formal way of speaking, like that used at school.

Your notes

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. What is material deprivation?
2. What is cultural capital?
3. What did Halsey, Heath and Ridge find?
4. What is a criticism of cultural deprivation theory?
5. How can part-time jobs affect achievement?
6. What is an elaborated code?
7. How can parental interest affect achievement?
8. Which is an example of material deprivation?

Answers

1. A lack of money and resources
2. Knowledge, attitudes and skills that give an advantage at school
3. Service-class boys were far more likely to go to university
4. It blames working-class families
5. They reduce time for study
6. A detailed, formal way of speaking, like that used at school
7. Involved parents can support learning and help with choices
8. No quiet space to do homework

What to do next

Practise 10 questions on this topic

Try 4 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

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