

## Unit 1 Thinking Sociologically

### Text A

#### Preparatory Work

(1)

Micro-level sociology: a b e

Macro-level sociology: c d

(2)

Sociology is the study of **social behavior or society**, including its origins, development, organization, networks, and institutions. Like sociology, psychology, economics, history, demography are **all related to the study of society and human activities**. In this way they share similarities.

The differences lie in the follows:

- **Psychology** is the study of **human behavior and mind**, embracing all aspects of conscious and unconscious experience as well as thought of the human beings.
- **Economics** focuses on the **behavior and interactions of economic agents** and how economies work, that is the economic activities of the human kind.
- **History** is the study of the **past events** as well as the memory, discovery, collection, organization, presentation, and interpretation of information about these events, particularly **how it relates to humans**.
- **Demography** is the **statistical study of populations, especially human beings**. As a very general science, it can analyze any kind of dynamic living population, i.e., one that **changes over time or space**.

(3) (open)

#### Teaching suggestion:

##### You can refer to the following textbooks:

John J. Macionis & Nijole V. Benokraitis ed., *Seeing Ourselves 7<sup>th</sup> ed.* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007)

James M. Henslin ed., *Down to Earth Sociology: Introductory Readings 14<sup>th</sup> ed.* (New York: Free Press, 2007)

(4) (open)

#### Teaching suggestion:

You can refer to the last two parts of the text: “What Work Do Sociologists Do” and “How is Sociology Useful to Me and to the World” (paragraph 19-26) for positive reasons.

Negative reasons vary (why not choose a career related to sociology), for instance, no interest (in social sciences), character reasons (not cut out for dealing with people), and practical reason (no high pay).

### Critical Reading

## I. Understanding the text

### 1.

Part	Para(s).	Main idea
I Introduction	1-2	Key topics to be covered in the main parts
II Defining sociology	3-6	Relationship with other social sciences
III Contents of sociology	7-12	What will I learn from sociology
IV Necessity of studying sociology	13-18	What abilities will sociology help you develop
VI The job of a sociologist	19-23	Job potentials of a sociology major
VII Conclusion	24-26	Summary of the usefulness of sociology to individuals and the world

### 2.

(1) To emphasize the importance of sociology and arouse readers' interest in (studying) sociology.

(2) The intended audience of the essay are university and college students. The audience is young and curious about everything but needs some guide in choosing their courses in university study.

(3) In Para. 7, Cargan and Ballantine try to demonstrate that sociology is based on systematic and objective study of human behavior.

(4) They illustrate the difference between individual explanation and group explanation using divorce as an example. Individual explanation considers a divorce as a personal problem caused by conflict between the husband and wife within the family. Sociology can help us move beyond "individual" explanations to consider the social surroundings that influence the situation: economic conditions, disruptions caused by changing sex roles, and pressures on the family to meet the emotional needs of its members.

(5) We can see that the first list of skills (sociology trains us in) is broader and more general category, and the second list of skills (employers look for) is the overlapping or subcategory of the former list. So we can simply put the skills of the second list into its respective categories in the first list (actually, some of the skills in the second list can be put into two or more general categories in the first

list). **Note: this is only one way of reorganize the two lists, and not necessarily the best one.**

- Ability to view the world more objectively: ability to plan effectively; self-confidence about job responsibilities; ability to listen to others; self-motivation; effective leadership skills
- Tools to solve problems by designing studies, collecting data, and analyzing results: ability to organize thoughts and information; ability to conceptualize problems clearly
- Ability to understand group dynamics: ability to work with peers; self-motivation; ability to interact effectively in group situations; ability to listen to others
- Ability to understand and evaluate problems: effective problem-solving skills; effective leadership skills;
- Ability to understand your personal problems in a broader social context: willingness to adapt to the needs of the organization; ability to handle pressure

## **II. Evaluation and exploration**

(1) Yes. The title is a question to the key issue of sociology, which is very clear and focused. And the text provides and elaborates the answers to the key question “why study sociology”.

(2) The introduction is very effective. It starts with six questions about sociology to arouse the readers’ interest or curiosity in this topic.

(3) Subtitles in the text are effective and necessary in dividing the text into different but related parts so that the readers can have a clear structural framework about the organization of the text.

(4) The benefits of taking sociology described in Para. 13 are grouped into a general list of five abilities/skills in paragraph 14 and 12 skills in paragraph 15. It is not necessary to use examples to illustrate every benefit mentioned in a long list. However, if the authors added some statistics to support the five categories, the argument would be more convincing.

(5) The conclusion or statement that “sociology is the broadest of the social sciences” is reasonable. Cargan and Ballantine described the wide range of areas sociology covers, and other related disciplines that sociology overlaps with, such as social psychology, political sociology, anthropology, and social history.

(6) Sociology not only covers vast areas of social studies, but also provides objective perspective and scientific methods in understanding the society and individuals. It also trains us in necessary life and work ability or skills in correctly dealing with issues and problems. In a word, sociology offers us a platform for critical thinking.

(7) Sociologists probe into a social phenomenon/problem with

scientific methods (group explanation instead of personal/individual one) that the next unit is to discuss in details (they include experiment, survey, participant observation/field work, and available data analysis).

(8) Structural functionalism, or simply functionalism, is a framework for building theory that sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. This approach looks at society through a macro-level orientation, which is a broad focus on the social structures that shape society as a whole, and believes that society has evolved like organisms. This approach looks at both social structure and social functions. Functionalism addresses society as a whole in terms of the function of its constituent elements, namely norms, customs, traditions, and institutions.

- Conflict theories are perspectives in sociology and social psychology that emphasize the social, political, or material inequality of a social group, that critique the broad socio-political system, or that otherwise detract from structural functionalism and ideological conservatism. Conflict theories draw attention to power differentials, such as class conflict, and generally contrast historically dominant ideologies. It is therefore a macro level analysis of society. Karl Marx is the father of the social conflict theory, which is a component of the four paradigms of sociology.
- Symbolic interactionism is a sociological perspective which developed around the middle of the twentieth century and that continues to be influential in some areas of the discipline. It is particularly important in microsociology and social psychology. Symbolic interactionism is derived from the American philosophy of pragmatism and particularly from the work of George Herbert Mead who coined the term and put forward an influential summary: people act toward things based on the meaning those things have for them, and these meanings are derived from social interaction and modified through interpretation.
- Utilitarianism is a theory in normative ethics holding that the best moral action is the one that maximizes utility. Utility is defined in various ways, but is usually related to the well-being of sentient entities. Originally, Jeremy Bentham, the founder of Utilitarianism, defined utility as the aggregate pleasure after deducting suffering of all involved in any action. John Stuart Mill expanded this concept of utility to include not only the quantity, but quality of pleasure, while focusing on rules, instead of individual moral actions.

## **Language Enhancement**

### **I. Words and phrases**

**1.**

(1) C&D (2) A&C (3) C&D (4) A&C (5) C&D  
(6) C&E (7) C&D (8) B&C (9) A&E (10) C&F

**2.**

- (1) 单日，单一天
- (2) 单身汉
- (3) 挑选出
- (4) 独立地（只身）
- (5) 通常的，常见的
- (6) 共同的
- (7) （英国）平民院（下议院）
- (8) 宣判有……罪
- (9) 罪犯
- (10) 逃跑
- (11) 分解
- (12) 闯入
- (13) 中断、暂停
- (14) 爆发
- (15) 解体

**3.**

(1) major in (2) curious about (3) interact with (4) relate to (5) engage with  
(6) lead to (7) specialize in (8) conform to (9) based on (10) refrain from

**4**

(1) break away from (2) convict of (3) bond with (4) engage in (5) embark on  
(6) profit from (7) involved in (8) focus on (9) depended on (10) encounter

## II. Sentences and discourse

### 1.

- (1) As you learn more about sociology, you will gradually find the links between its individual and separate parts and see the whole picture of sociology.
- (2) Sociologists' interests will immediately aroused by seeing any two or more people with close relationships.
- (3) You can ponder over the phenomenon that some societies allow and expect premarital sex while others punish it with banishment and death.
- (4) Through systematic scientific study, sociologists can fully understand human behavior in groups, which is impossible through mere common sense.
- (5) Sociology can help us explain "individual" cases more insightfully by linking them with the crucial social conditions behind them.

### 2.

- (1) He majored in chemistry when enrolled in while studying in university.
- (2) Terrorism poses a threat to many countries.
- (3) While studying overseas, you must interact more with the local people/natives.
- (4) The corruption of some of this country's officials has sparked public resentment and protest.
- (5) Due to his contribution to the company, he negotiated with his boss and renewed his contract with better conditions.
- (6) At the age of 16, she published her first poem and embarked on her long journey to literature.
- (7) In the process of translating the Chinese classic *Journey to the West* into German, he encountered many difficult problems.
- (8) After arriving in Britain, he took a whole month to adapt to the country's rainy climate.
- (9) Your company should engage more actively in the environmental projects of the government.
- (10) Ten years ago, he was convicted of robbery.

### 3.

社会学家们的不同兴趣促使他们研究许多不同的领域。有些社会学家精于社会心理学，该领域研究的问题包括：个人在群组中的行为，谁是领导人物，什么类型的领导效果好，为何有些群组比别的群组效率高，为何个人通常会随大流，以及许多涉及个人作为群组成员的作用和行为问题。社会学的另一个专业领域是政治社会学，它研究政治权力，投票行为，官僚制度，以及个人与群组的政治行为。

人类学则审视不同族群的文化；社会学也如此。但是两者所采用的研究方法和研究重点有所不同。人类学家通常研究原始族群，而社会学家则主要聚焦于现代族群。涉及社会学的另一个领域是社会史，它强调通过历史来理解社会情境。以上所述仅仅是社会学家广泛研究兴趣的几个例子，也说明社会学是如何与其他社会科学共享研究兴趣的。

#### **4.**

(3) (1) (4) (2)