

# Sociology

## Guidelines for Study



### General Tips

- Sociologists study all types of groups. The impact of the group on a particular individual, or the behavior of the entire group may be studied. Sociologists are interested in how group rules are made, how they are changed, or how an individual's behavior may be affected by the group.
- They are also interested in lifestyle and practices, and these change and are affected by certain elements of the social environment.

### Reading Clues

- Look for the key questions and concepts being investigated. Don't get lost in details and examples; they are there to help you understand the main ideas.
- Note terms; look for them throughout your reading. Be sure you understand the author's definition of each term used. Learn to apply the terms to larger concepts by making up your own examples.
- Recognize the theoretical model underlying the author's point of view. Sociologists generally develop their theories based on one of three theoretical models:
  - \* Structural Functionalism: Attempts to explain the elements of society, show how they are related, and explain how they affect each other.
  - \* Conflict: Attempts to point out the groups in conflict, show which groups have power, and illustrate how power is maintained.
  - \* Symbolic Interactionism: Attempts to observe and record, methodically and in detail, the social drama that is individuals in society.
- Many of your readings are studies, or are based on studies, which are done by sociologists. These researchers strive to remain objective and unbiased, yet it is good to question the validity of their statistics and sources. Learn to question everything.

*Sociology is the study of people in context of the society in which they live. We are fascinating and complex creatures. Relax and persevere — you will learn a lot about yourself in the process!*