

SOCIOLOGY PAPER 1 and 2
SECTION A METHODS GLOSSARY

“Methods are at the heart of sociology. They are the way that sociologists find out about society.”

Terms in bold are MUST know terms. Terms in italics are more advanced.

Key word/concept	Definition	Example
social research		
Data		
primary data		
secondary data		
qualitative data		
quantitative data		
pilot study		
hypothesis		
sample		
representative		
target population		
sampling frame		
random sample		
systematic sample		
quota sample		
snowballing sample		
opportunity sample		
convenience sample		
census		
researcher		
respondent		
low response rate		
questionnaire		
open questions		
closed questions		
postal questionnaire		

survey (Warning! Do not use as an example of a method!)		
self completion		
interview led questionnaires		
interview		
structured interview		
unstructured interview		
rapport		
interviewer bias		
personal characteristics		
observation		
overt observation		
covert observation		
participant observation		
gatekeeper		
non- participant observation		
ethics		
informed consent		
confidentiality		
anonymity		
right of withdrawal		
physical harm		
psychological harm		
reliability		
validity		
<i>triangulation</i>		
<i>content analysis</i>		
<i>positivism</i>		
<i>anti-positivism</i>		