

## GCSE Sociology – Research Methods key words

Data – Information collected by research

Primary research – Information collected by the researcher themselves

Secondary research – Information that has been collected for another purpose by someone else

Census – A questionnaire given to every household in Britain by the government every ten years

Content analysis – A method for a detailed study of secondary data

Sample – A small group of people chosen by the researcher

Sampling frame – The list from which the sample is selected

Random sample – The sample is chosen by pure chance from the target population

Systematic sample – Every 5<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> or 100<sup>th</sup>, or whatever, name on the list is chosen

Quota sample – The researcher asks those who meet the criteria until he has filled his sample

Snowball sample – One person suggests another, and so on

Opportunity sample – Whoever happens to be available is chosen

Representativeness – The idea that the sample should have the same mix of people as the rest of the population

Respondent/subject/participant – Those taking part in the research

Qualitative data – Data in the form of words which has lots of detail

Quantitative data – Data in the form of numbers that can easily be put into graphs and tables

Validity – Whether or not research is a true reflection of what is happening

Reliability – Whether research can be repeated and then compared to other data

Survey – Collecting data from a fairly large group of people

Questionnaire – A list of questions for use in research

Closed questions – Choice of responses is fixed by the researcher, who gives two or more options

Open questions – Ask the respondent to answer the question in their own words

Interview – When the researcher asks the respondent a set of questions

Structured interview – The interviewer reads out the questions and records the responses

Unstructured interview – Like a conversation, these are informal and flexible. Questions are rarely pre-set, but the interviewer will have points he wishes to cover

Pilot study – A trial run before starting the research

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Observation – When the researcher observes the group they are studying

Overt observation – when the researcher is openly observing a group

Covert observation - when the researcher is secretly observing a group

Participant observation –when the researcher joins in with the group he is observing

Non- participant observation – when the researcher just watches the group he is observing

Triangulation - using more than one method to get more valid or more reliable results

Practical issues – These are concerned with how the group to be studied will be found, and how much time/money the research will take

Ethical issues –These are concerned with protecting the respondent during sociological research

Sensitivity – Some respondents may belong to a vulnerable group eg young people, the elderly, disabled etc, or the research may be about a sensitive topic eg sexuality, religion, inequality etc

Confidentiality – This may be promised to subjects in order to obtain more valid data

Informed consent – Subjects should know what the results of the research will be used for, and have agreed to take part

Right of withdrawal – Subjects should be able to end their involvement at any stage

Bias – Where anyone taking part in the research may have pre-conceived ideas which affect their opinions