

SOCIOLOGY · CHAPTER 2

Terms, Concepts and their Use in Sociology

A 1-page guide for parents · 90-second read.

EXPECTED MARKS

10 marks

TIME TO MASTER

6-8 hrs

HELPLINE

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WHAT THIS CHAPTER IS, IN PLAIN ENGLISH

This is the second chapter of your child's Sociology course, and it gives them the discipline's vocabulary — the precise words a sociologist uses to describe how people live together. The big lesson is that these words mean something exact and technical, often different from how we use them in daily speech. Your child learns about kinds of GROUPS (the close, family-like 'primary' group versus the large, formal 'secondary' group like a school or company); about STATUS (a position a person holds, such as student or daughter) and ROLE (the behaviour expected of that position); about how some positions are given at birth ('ascribed', like caste or sex) and some are earned ('achieved', like doctor or captain); about SOCIAL STRATIFICATION — the four ways societies have ranked people: slavery, estate, caste and class; and about SOCIAL CONTROL — how society keeps order, not only through laws and police but through everyday praise, gossip and disapproval. It is a definition-heavy chapter with no numbers, but the exact wording and the right thinker's name matter a great deal.

5 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CHILD

- What is the difference between a primary group and a secondary group? Give me an example of each.
- What is the difference between an ascribed status and an achieved status?
- What is the difference between a status and a role? Can you give me a role-conflict example from your own life?
- Name the four systems of social stratification. How is caste different from class?
- What is the difference between formal and informal social control?

WEAK-SPOT INDICATORS

- Uses 'status' to mean only wealth or prestige, missing that in sociology it means ANY position (high or low).
- Says primary groups are 'important' and secondary groups 'unimportant' — the distinction is about intimacy, not rank.
- Cannot tell ascribed (born with) from achieved (earned) status.
- Thinks caste and class are the same thing — missing that caste is closed and class is open.
- Believes social control means only police and punishment, missing everyday informal control (gossip, praise).

WHEN TO WORRY — AND WHAT TO DO

This chapter is the vocabulary toolkit for the entire rest of the course — later chapters constantly use 'group', 'status', 'role', 'stratification' and 'social control' in these exact senses. If your child cannot, in their OWN words, distinguish primary from secondary groups, ascribed from achieved status, and caste from class, the later chapters will read like a foreign language. The fix is not re-reading definitions but APPLYING them to everyday examples — your family (a primary group), their school (a secondary group), their own status-set.

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