

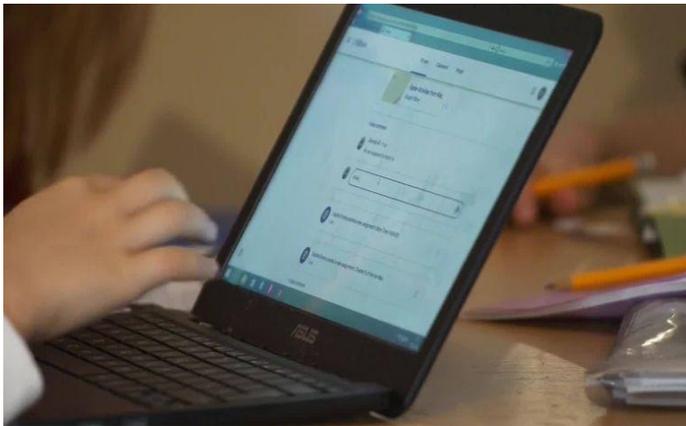
Sociology Enrolment Task

In Sociology, you will look at how an individual's social class, gender and ethnicity has a direct impact on their GCSE outcomes and educational performance. We will examine the reasons for this and consider the relevant importance of each explanation. Today, we are going to start thinking about the issue of social class and educational achievement specifically. Sociologists have actively tried to raise awareness to the issue of the class divide in education, where only 1 in 3 students from disadvantaged backgrounds met the government benchmark of 5A*-C in 2015. Concerns have more recently grown about how working class students have been affected by the coronavirus and how their educational progress has been limited by lockdown and online learning.

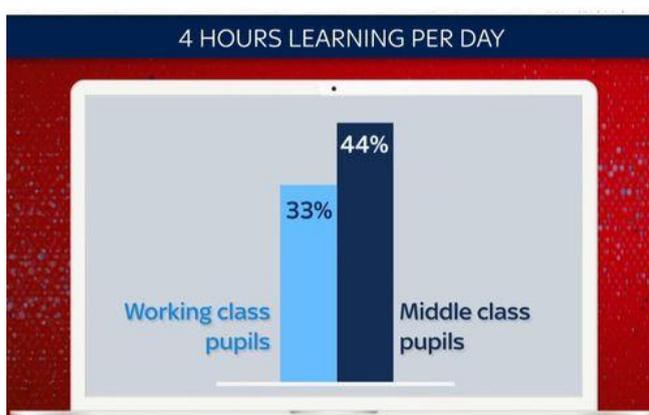
Task: Please read the following Sky News article, which considers how the Coronavirus and online learning may have had a detrimental impact, particularly on working class students. Once you have read the article and watched the clip at the end, please then complete the questions at the bottom of the page.

Coronavirus: Working-class children less likely to take part in lockdown school lessons

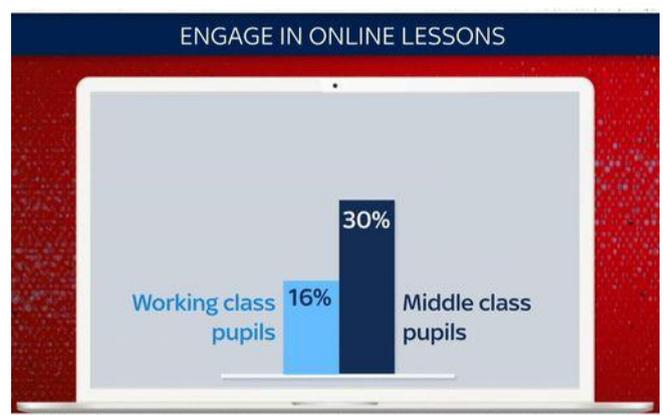
(T.Cohen, Sky News, April 2020)



Disadvantaged pupils are at risk of falling behind because they are not able to learn online from home, new figures suggest. Schools were closed... in an effort to limit the spread of the [coronavirus](#) in the UK, leaving students to continue lessons outside the classroom. But head teachers have told Sky News that, in some schools, 40% of pupils do not have a home computer. Many have no internet access or phone either. Others have home circumstances that make learning difficult. They are concerned that the most disadvantaged pupils - who already fall behind their peers - will see the gap widen if schools remain closed for weeks or months. New figures from the Sutton Trust found that only 23% of pupils took part in live or recorded lessons online every day during the first week of the lockdown. But pupils from middle-class homes were twice as likely (30%) to



SOURCE: SUTTON TRUST POLLING 1-3 APRIL 2020



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take part as working-class pupils (16%). And - with more resources at home - 44% of better-off pupils were spending more than four hours a day learning. This compared with just 33% for those in working-class families. Children in working-class homes were 25% less likely to have spoken to a teacher while at home.

Since schools closed in March, Cheryl Morris and her five children, aged between seven and 18, have been getting to grips with learning online. With just one laptop to go around, and limited space at their home in Feltham, west London, they face a constant challenge to get their work done by the end of the day. "We normally start with the youngest, try and do her work first and then go all the way up and try to squeeze them all in through the day," she said.



Victoria Eadie, chief executive of Tudor Park Education Trust in west London, told Sky News at least 30% of pupils there had been flagged by staff as having no computer at all. Many others have only one which they need to "fight over" with parents and siblings. "Keeping children active and engaged in a learning process, even if you're not really moving forward learning, is incredibly important," she said. "And really that can only be done online because you've got your teacher there and present." He said: "30% to 40% of our students don't have a computer or sometimes even a phone to use. "This is a time when teachers are showing great creativity and innovation, but disadvantaged students, who we know already fall behind, will not be able to access it in the same way. We worry that if this goes on for many months, the gap will just widen."

Sir Peter Lampl, founder and chairman of the Sutton Trust, a social mobility charity, said: "Despite the heroic efforts of teachers working in very difficult circumstances, pupils from poorer homes face a double disadvantage. They have insufficient resources at home to support their learning and they are less likely to be able to access online classes. "The widening of the attainment gap over these next few months threatens to have negative implications for years to come. It is crucial we do all we can to address inequalities."

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-how-lockdown-is-affecting-learning-for-working-class-pupils-11975696>

Now please watch the following clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uRg8sH7DWyc>

Activity. Please write out on a separate piece of paper the following questions and answer them in detail. Then please bring this into your first Sociology lesson.

1. Outline below some (statistical) evidence from the above clip and article that suggest that working class students engaged less favourably in online learning.
2. In your own words, explain **why** online learning will have negatively impacted upon working class students particularly?
3. Apart from a lack of access to technology, what other reasons do you think might explain why working class students underperform in comparison to the middle classes?
4. What more do you think schools and the government could do to support the working classes in education?