Key terms

Comprehensive school - A type of school introduced in 1965 where all students are educated together regardless of ability.

Correspondence principle - schools reflect the workplace and through learning routine and obedience, children are prepared to be exploited in capitalist life.

Cultural capital - The skills and knowledge middle class parents have that they can use to give their children an advantage in the education system.

Deschooling - An alternative form of education proposed by Illich where formal schools are replaced by other methods of education such as home schooling.

Ethnocentric curriculum - A curriculum (things that are taught) that focuses on a particular ethnicity

Formal curriculum - The subjects and topics that are directly taught in schools

Further education - Education after compulsory level Gendered curriculum - How stereotypes and expectations about gender are promoted through both the formal and hidden curriculum.

Hidden curriculum - Things that are indirectly learnt in school (in and outside on lessons) e.g. competition.

Labelling - Attaching a name or trait to a person or group e.g. smart. This is often based on a stereotype

Marketisation - 1988 act and aimed to bring competition and choice into education

Material deprivation - When students lack the money and the things that money can buy to succeed

Meritocracy - The functionalist view that all students have an equal chance in education and success is based on ability and effort

Selective schools - Where students are selected for a school based on certain criteria such as academic ability or religion

Social capital - The networks of relationships/contacts that middle class parents have to help pupils succeed

Social cohesion - When individuals in society are brought together and share the same norms and values.

Social mobility - Movement up the social ladder (e.g. working class to middle class)

Vocationalism - Education focused on more practical or technical skills aimed at a certain job or career

Sociological views of Education

Functionalist	Education is positive as it prepares individuals for work and creates a stable society All pupils have an equal chance to succeed as education is based on meritocracy **Durkheim** – Education transmits shared norms and values, promoting social cohesion. Schools act like a 'mini society' encouraging cooperation. **Parsons** – Education acts as a 'bridge' between family and society, children are judged by 'universalistic standards' and have an equal chance to succeed. ✗ Education may not benefit all students equally (due to class, gender)
Marxist	Education is negative as it helps to maintain the class divide and benefits the middle classes who have a better chance of succeeding. Education prepares working class pupils for low paid jobs and to accept capitalism. **Bowles and Gintis** – 'correspondence principle' – school corresponds to (reflects) the workplace through teaching obedience, accepting boredom and to be motivated by external rewards (qualifications or pay) ✗ Could be outdated as pupils are prepared for a range of jobs today
Feminist	Education is negative as it helps to maintain the gender divide and transmits patriarchal values and ideas. Females learn to adopt the stereotypical 'expressive'/housewife role in society through gender stereotypes shown in textbooks, the majority of headteachers being male and being encouraged to take 'softer' subjects which could lead to lower paid jobs than males. ✗ Could be outdated as girls are encouraged to take 'STEM' subjects and more females are becoming headteachers.

What is taught in schools

Formal/official curriculum – Things that are directly taught in schools (e.g. English/maths) and this is mainly through the National Curriculum in England	**Hidden curriculum –** Things that are indirectly taught in education (rules, routines, regulations) and competition, hierarchy and gender roles

Functions of education

Serving the economy	Social mobility	Social cohesion	Secondary socialisation
Education provides qualifications/skills which prepares pupils for jobs. This helps the economy as essential roles are filled in society.	Education helps pupils move up the social class ladder through gaining qualifications and skills (through work and effort)	Education teaches shared norms and 'British' values which unites society and brings everyone together with shared beliefs.	Education is an agency of secondary socialisation teaching norms, values, beliefs, ideas through the formal curriculum and hidden curriculum.

Types of schools

State	Funded by the government (state) Free to attended (admissions by catchment) Teach the National Curriculum
Independent / private	Not funded by the government (state) Parents usually pay for their children to attend Do not have to teach the National Curriculum Usually have smaller class sizes and improved facilities / opportunities
Grammar	These select pupils based on academic ability Pupils must pass the 11+ to attend High ability pupils can be 'challenged' and 'stretched' in these schools
Faith	These select students if they are of a certain faith (e.g. Christian, Catholic, Muslim) Religious beliefs are promoted in school life and focused on in RE
Academies	These receive funding directly from the government (rather than the local authority) and have more control over how to spend it Do not have to follow the National Curriculum and may have different term dates
Free school	These can be set up by charities, universities, communities etc. and have control over how to spend funding, set term dates etc. Do not have to follow the National Curriculum and are 'all ability' schools
Special schools	These educate children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and may follow a different curriculum Pupils can receive more one-one support and the use of special facilities/equipment

Alternatives to schooling

Deschooling – Illich believed schools should be replaced with alternative forms of education (e.g. homeschooling) where their learning is more personalised and less likely to promote capitalism

Homeschooling – Where children are educated at home by parents/tutors etc. rather than in school. They must receive a full time education and are inspected by the local authority. Gives children more personalised one-one support and less chance of behaviour issues.

Key studies

Durkheim (functionalist)
Major function of education is the transmission of society's norms and values. Education (especially history) provides the link between the individual and society. School enables children learn to cooperate with those who are neither their family or their friends so they can function in society. Rules should be strictly enforced to promote self-discipline and for society to run smoothly.

Parsons (functionalist)
School acts as a bridge between the family and society, taking over as the main agency of socialisation. Schools are based on meritocracy – ability and effort, not money. In school an individual is judged on universalistic standards. Schools socialise children into the basic values of the wider society, maintaining value consensus.

Bowles and Gintis (Marxist)
Correspondence principle – Schools reflect the workplace, students are prepared for work e.g accepting authority (hierarchy), this means that they don't question their position. They do not believe that schools are meritocratic. Class determines achievement.

Willis (Marxist)
Conducted a participant observation of boys in a Midlands secondary school. Working class boys joined a counter school subculture where they avoided attending lessons and resisted any attempt to control their behaviour. They were not obedient. Willis concludes that this prepared them for the kinds of jobs that they would have in the future. These would be unskilled or semi-skilled and quite repetitive.

Ball (Interactionist)
Conducted a participant observation at Beachside Comprehensive to look at the effect of setting / teacher expectations on achievement.
Pupils in lower sets were more likely to be working class, were not given as much support, were labelled and more likely to be disruptive as a result.

Ball and Gerwitz (Interactionist)
They used a range of methods to look at the effect of marketisation and parental choice.
They found that increased parental choice and league tables led to pressure for schools to introduce setting and streaming and to focus on higher ability students to improve their exam results. Middle class parents were better able to use their choices to get their children into higher achieving schools.

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Factors affecting achievement

In school factors	Out of school factors
Setting and streaming **Setting** – pupils are in different sets for different subjects, **streaming** – in the same ability set for all subjects Improves achievement – pupils in higher sets could be challenged Could decrease achievement in lower sets	**Parental values** 1) Parents may value education and see it as important so encourage their child to work hard, get them a tutor etc. 2) Parents may not value education and don't see it as important so don't encourage their children
Mixed ability teaching The opposite to setting/streaming where all abilities are taught together Improves achievement – higher ability could help lower ability but could mean they are not 'challenged' or are held back	**Cultural deprivation** Children may not learn the correct norms and values to succeed in education (could affect working class children)
Teacher expectations/labelling Teachers could label pupils because of stereotypes which could lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy Improves achievement – if pupils accept positive label, could decrease achievement if pupils accept negative label	**Material deprivation** Parents may 'lack money and the things that money can buy' so cannot afford resources for their child to succeed (e.g. revision books, a computer) or may not have a quiet place for them to study
Subcultures / peer groups Pupils may join subcultures who have their own set of norms and values Improves achievement – joining 'pro-school' subcultures which value education, working hard (more likely with females), could decrease achievement if join 'anti/counter school subcultures who don't value education (more likely with males)	

Ethnicity and achievement

Trends	Chinese students are the highest performing ethnic group, black pupils and gypsy/Roma pupils are among the lowest performing (also white British)
Ethnicity is important	Material deprivation – some ethnic groups are more likely to be living in low income households so pupils could lack money to buy resources and succeed Cultural deprivation – some cultures may not value education as highly as others (such as Chinese families) and so do not encourage/push pupils Ethnocentric curriculum – the national curriculum may only be focused on White British culture and show negative aspects of other cultures (e.g. in history) – could decrease motivation Teacher labelling – teachers may label some ethnicities - self-fulfilling prophecy
Not important	Higher % of ethnic minorities going to University Worst performing group = white, working class boys

Class and achievement

Trends	Working class pupils achieve less 5 A*C grades than middle class pupils Achievement gap between FSM and non-FSM Working class less likely to go to University
Class is important	Material deprivation – w/c may lack resources to study Cultural deprivation/parental values – w/c parents may not value education as highly W/c parents may lack cultural capital (knowledge/skills) and social capital (social networks) to help their children succeed W/c pupils more likely to join counter school subcultures (Willis)
Class is not important	Functionalism – education is based on meritocracy (ability and effort not money) A higher % of w/c pupils are going to Uni Other factors (gender, ethnicity) more important

Gender and achievement

Trends	Girls are more likely to achieve 5 A*-C than boys, girls outperform boys at A Level in most subjects
Gender is important	Gender socialisation – girls may be socialised to be more hard-working and obedient so are better suited to achieve in school (boys may be more boisterous and less hard-working) Teacher expectations – girls may be labelled as bright but boys could be labelled as lazy or trouble makers Subcultures – girls more likely to join pro-school whereas boys more likely to join anti-school
Gender is not important	Functionalism – all pupils have an equal chance Marxists – class is more important in achievement The gender gap in achievement could be narrowing

Policies in education

To **improve standards** – Ofsted, league tables, academies

To **increase competition** – Marketisation, league tables. Ofsted

To improve **opportunities for low income pupils** – EMA, longer compulsory education

To make education fairer – comprehensive system (1965) which replaced the tripartite system