MAKE
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How can we help US and UK gang members leave gangs?

Key Stage 5

Sociology and Media Studies

2021

BROUGHT TO YOU BY
RBC
ACCESS ED

Contents

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Part 2: Resources

Each resource is a chapter with activities to complete to demonstrate learning

Part 3: Tips and Guidance

For Students
Getting Started

RBC means Research-Based Curriculum. Each RBC coursebook is written by a PhD student at a university about their cutting edge research.

Why complete an independent 'RBC' study pack?

RBC courses are challenge courses to sharpen your skills and resilience: finishing an RBC course is a major accomplishment to add to your academic CV. To get into a university, you must demonstrate that you are intellectually curious, and will make the most of the academic opportunities available to you. Completing a pack will allow you to gain invaluable experience to write about in your university application..

It allows you to:

✓ Build your subject experience to mention in your UCAS Personal Statement
✓ Sharpen your academic skills
✓ Experience what it's like to study beyond school and at university
✓ Better understand what you enjoy and don't enjoy
✓ Improve your overall subject understanding ahead of final exams

For Students
Getting Started

What's in this booklet?

Your RBC booklet is a pack of resources containing:

✓ More about how and why study this subject

✓ Six 'resources' each as a lesson with activities

✓ A final assignment to gauge learning

✓ Extra guidance throughout about the university skills you are building

✓ End notes on extra resources and where to find more information

Who should complete this pack?

Anyone interested in improving their academic skills or understanding what they should do at university. This pack is especially suitable for anyone interested in studying Biological Sciences.

Even if you are unsure of where your interest in this subject can take you, by completing this pack you will have a clearer idea of the variety of subjects that link to one another.

If you have any questions while you are using the resources in this pack, you can contact your teacher or email us directly at schools@access-ed.ngo.

Good luck with your journey to higher education!

For Students
University Skills

Look out for these Key **Skills Badges throughout the coursebook.** These show that you're building the learning skills you'll need to succeed at University and in Higher Education.

University Ready

To complete this resource, you will have to demonstrate impressive academic skills. When universities are looking for new students, they will want young people who can study independently and go above and beyond the curriculum. All these skills that you will see here will demonstrate your abilities as a university student – while you're still at school!

Every time you have to look something up or write up a reference, you are showing that you can work independently.

Every time you complete a challenging problem or write an answer to a difficult question, you might demonstrate your ability to think logically or build an argument.

Every time you evaluate the sources or data that you are presented with, you are showing that you can 'dive deep' into an unfamiliar topic and learn from it!

Skills you will build for university:

Skill	Description
independent research	your ability to work on your own and find answers online or in books
creativity	your ability to create something original and express your ideas
problem solving	your ability to apply what you know to new problems
building an argument	your ability to logically express yourself
providing evidence	your ability to refer to sources that back up your opinions/ideas
academic referencing	your ability to refer to what others have said in your answer, and credit them for their ideas
deep dive	your ability to go above and beyond the school curriculum to new areas of knowledge
source analysis	your ability to evaluate sources (e.g. for bias, origin, purpose)
data interpretation	your ability to discuss the implications of what the numbers show
active reading	your ability to engage with what you are reading by highlighting and annotating
critical thinking	your ability to consider questions with an open mind and evaluate what is important or not

Where can this subject take me?

Pathways

Studying Sociology or Media Studies can open the doors to many degrees and careers. It intersects with Psychology, Geography and other Sciences. Whatever interests you is likely to relate to Biology in some way. See a snapshot of where studying Sociology and Media Studies can take you.

'Transferrable skills' from Sociology to a career:	'Transferrable skills' from Media Studies to a career:
• Written skills	• Critical analysis
• Oral communication skills	• Research
• Research and analytical skills	• Broad cultural and commercial awareness
• Interpersonal skills	• Creativity in writing, auto-visual, electronic media
• Leadership skills	• Flexibility
• Statistics	• Independent, creative approach to tasks
• Computer literacy	
• Cross-cultural understanding	
• Business sense	

What are some are the 'interdisciplinary' subjects in this course?

Interdisciplinary is a term you will hear used by higher education institutions. It's also how many professionals and academics in the real world operate: they use multiple subjects, or disciplines, to carry out their work.

Thinking about which subjects you like, alongside Science, can help you choose a career pathway later.

Read more about subject selection and careers pathways:

https://targetjobs.co.uk
https://www.prospects.ac.uk
https://thinkuni.org/

Subject map:
Social Sciences

Most students with a Social Sciences degree go on to work in public policy, financial services, civil services, and law. Approximately 25.4% of students doing a Bachelor's degree in Social Sciences choose to pursue a higher degree later on. A combination of the subjects in Social Sciences are very popular amongst students in their sixth form. See below for some careers relating to social sciences.
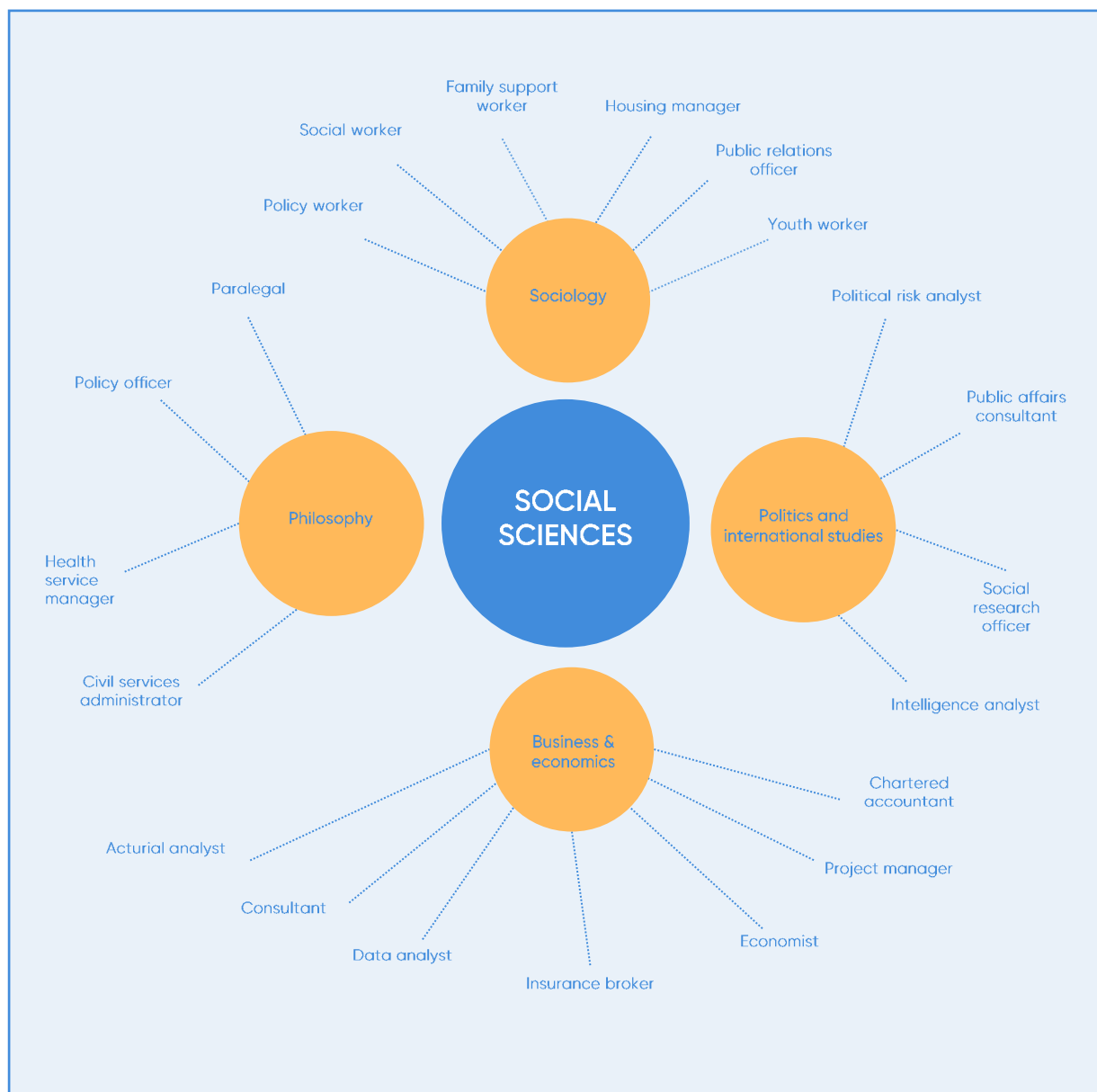
Find our about Science-related careers here:
PROSPECTS: https://www.prospects.ac.uk
TARGET JOBS: https://targetjobs.co.uk

For Teachers
RBC Guide

Learner aims

The Research-Based Curriculum aims to support student attainment and university progression by providing classroom resources about cutting-edge research at local universities. The resources are designed to:

✓ promote intellectual curiosity through exposure to academic research

✓ stretch and challenge students to think deeply about content that may be beyond the confines of the curriculum

✓ develop core academic skills, including critical thinking, metacognition, and written and verbal communication

✓ inform students about how subjects are studied at university, and provide information, advice and guidance on pursuing subjects at undergraduate level

Content

The programme represents a unique collaboration between universities and schools. Trained by AccessEd, PhD Researchers use their subject expertise to create rich resources that help bring new discoveries and debates to students.

The Research-Based Curriculum offers twelve modules suitable for KS5 study. The modules span a range of disciplines, including EBacc and A-level subjects, as well as degree subjects like Biochemistry. Each module includes six hours of teaching content, supported by student packs, teacher notes and slides. All modules are available online and free of charge for teachers at select schools.

Using the RBC pack

These resources are designed to be used flexibly by teachers. The resources can be completed by students individually or in groups, in or out of the classroom.

For Teachers
Using the RBC packs

Here are five examples of delivery options:

Extra-Curricular Subject Enrichment Clubs

The resources can be completed in small groups (4-8 pupils) across a series of weekly lunch clubs or after-school clubs online or in person. Groups can reflect on their learning by presenting a talk or poster on the subject matter at the end of the course.

The resources can be used by students to explore subjects that they are interested in studying at university. This can inform their decision making with regards to university degree courses and allow students to write more effective Personal Statements by including reflections on the Research-Based Curriculum.

The resources can be used to ignite curiosity in new topics and encourage independent research. Schools could hold a research challenge across a class or year group to submit a piece of work based on the resources. Pupils could submit individually or in small groups, with a final celebration event.

Resource packs can function as 'transition' projects over the summer, serving as an introduction to the next level of study between KS3 and KS4, or KS4 and KS5. Students could present their reflections on the experience in a journal.

The Research-Based Curricula programme builds on the University Learning in Schools programme (ULiS), which was successfully delivered and evaluated through the London Schools Excellence Fund in 2015. The project was designed in a collaboration between Achievement for All and The Brilliant Club, the latter being the sister organisation of AccessEd. ULiS resulted in the design and dissemination of 15 Schemes of Work based on PhD research for teachers and pupils at Key Stage 3. The project was evaluated by LKMCo. Overall, pupils made higher than expected progress and felt more engaged with the subject content. The full evaluation can be found here: ULiS Evaluation.

Questions

For more information contact hello@access-ed.ngo

Introduction to Topic London and Los Angeles Street Gangs

Academic studies of street gangs are often US-centric, meaning that they treat gangs as largely an American phenomenon. This is due, in part, to media representations of gangs. However, street gangs exist all over the world and this topic explores their existence not only in the US but in the United Kingdom,.

Comparing the experiences of gang members in the US and UK allows us to better understand how to intervene and tackle what is commonly referred to as 'the gang problem'. Many gang members seek desistance, that is to exit the gang and cease the criminality associated with it, but do not have the tools to do so. This coursebook will examine the ways in which we can study gangs safely and reliably, provide background information on street gangs, explain what is meant by gang desistance, and tackle the current anti-gang enforcement approaches that are in place in the US and UK.

By the end of this coursebook, you will have the tools not only to understand the current approaches to gang prevention, intervention and rehabilitation, but to suggest more effective and ethical ones.

I hope that you find this coursebook, and the topic as a whole, informative and interesting and that it inspires you to undertake sociological research in the future!

Introduction to Topic London and Los Angeles Street Gangs

The topics within this pack will include:

How do we research gangs safely and reliably?

What is a street gang?

Straight Outta Compton? Media and political representations of gangs

What is desistance?

Anti-gang enforcement approaches in the US

Anti-gang enforcement approaches in the UK

An introduction to sociological research methods. This chapter will examine quantitative and qualitative data, primary and secondary data, the dark figure of crime, ethical considerations, and appropriate research methods in gang studies.

This chapter will provide legal definitions of street gangs in the US and UK and explain the problems with gang definitions. It also provides a brief explanation of the history of gang formation.

An overview of representations of gangs in the media and politics in the US and UK. This chapter will debunk three popular gang myths that are found in media portrayals of gangs and discuss negative stereotypes of minority youth.

Using criminological theory, this chapter explains what is meant by desistance from crime and desistance from gangs. It will explain the techniques for reducing gang criminality through prevention, intervention and rehabilitation and discuss the role of non-profit organisations.

An in-depth look at the anti-gang enforcement approaches that have been, and continue be, used in the United States and sociological critiques of these.

An in-depth look at the anti-gang enforcement approaches that have been, and continue to be, used in the United Kingdom and sociological critiques of these. A discussion of the 'knife-crime' epidemic and how this relates to anti-gang enforcement.

Introduction to Topic Studying Sociology at University

University Ready

Sociology is the study of social life. What makes up our social behaviour, relationships, culture, and identity? In order to answer this, the subject stretches across a wide range of related disciplines, including but not limited to: Criminology, American Studies, Media Studies, History, and Politics. The interdisciplinary nature of the subject allows university students to choose the topics that they find most interesting and apply key sociological theories to these.

Studying Sociology at University level gives you the opportunity to pinpoint what you are most passionate about. Whether it be crime and deviance, education, identity, culture, or so forth, Sociology gives you an opportunity to understand more about social life and why things are the way they are. It is eye-opening, challenging, and hugely diverse as a discipline.

Graduating with a degree in Sociology, or a sociological subject such as Criminology, can lead to many career paths. Many, like myself, find sociological research so rewarding that they choose to continue this to PhD level and eventually become university lecturers or academic staff. Others seek careers within the criminal justice system, central government, the media or non-profit organisations, to name a few. If you want to make a positive difference in the world, studying Sociology is an excellent place to start.

Meet the PhD Researcher Kerry Preston

As my choice of undergraduate degree would suggest, I have always been incredibly interested in both crime and the United States. An interdisciplinary degree that offered me the opportunity to study both subjects and spend a year studying in the US was a no-brainer. I became interested in street gangs during my year abroad in California where I took a class called Criminal Organisations and Gangs. I found it fascinating that Los Angeles in particular, had such a large number of active street gangs, and became curious as to why this might be. Upon returning to Essex, I decided to write my final year dissertation on female desistance from street gangs and flew back to LA to interview ex-gang members. Since then, I have produced three pieces of research on LA street gangs and am now working on a cross-comparison of LA and London street gangs.

GCSE Subjects	Media Studies, Child Development, Business Studies
A-Level Subjects	Sociology, Media Studies, Psychology
Undergraduate	BA (Hons) Criminology and American Studies
Postgraduate	MA Global Ethics and Human Values
	MSc Organised Crime, Terrorism and Security
	PhD Criminology

Glossary

Term	Definition
Desistance	The process of ceasing engagement in a pattern of criminal activity
Gang desistance	The process of ceasing engagement in gang membership and the associated criminal activities
Narrative analysis	A form of secondary qualitative research in which the researcher analyses narrative accounts in the form of autobiographies, journals, letters etc.
Sample	A group of people chosen in a research project to be representative of a population or demographic
Minority group	A group that is distinct from the larger population because of factors such as culture, ethnicity, race, social class, sexuality and so on
Social and cultural isolation	The separation of minority groups from the larger population in terms of social equality and opportunities
Segregation	The systematic practice of setting apart a group of people from the larger population and preventing them from integrating in society. For example, in the US, Black people were legally separated from white people in school, on public transport, and in public spaces until the Civil Rights Movement. However, unofficial segregation by neighbourhood and so forth still occurs today.
White supremacy	The racist belief that white people are naturally superior to people of other races and ethnicities
Rationale	The reasoning or justification behind a choice or course of action

Glossary

Term	Definition
Qualitative data	Non-numerical data that describes qualities, characteristics or information. Examples of qualitative data are: interviews, observation, focus groups etc.
Quantitative data	Numerical data that is statistical in nature. Examples of quantitative data are surveys, questionnaires, polls etc.
Primary data	Data that is collected by the researcher first-hand
Secondary data	Data that is collected by the researcher second-hand (that already exists)
Organised Crime Group (OCG)	(Note that OCG definitions vary in the UK and US) An organised group, or enterprise, of people who engage in criminality (transnationally, nationally or locally) for profit or political ends
Ghetto	A part of a city or neighbourhood in which minority group members live (often due to legal or unofficial segregation). Individuals living in these areas commonly experience high levels of poverty.
Barrio	A Spanish term that translates to 'quarter' or 'neighbourhood' but is commonly associated with a part of a US city or neighbourhood in which minority group members live (often due to legal or unofficial segregation). Individuals living in these areas commonly experience high levels of poverty.
Housing Projects	A form of public housing, usually owned by the government, which is intended to be affordable for low-income communities
Stop and Search	The police process of stopping and searching individuals on the basis that there are 'reasonable grounds' to suspect that they are (or have been) engaging in criminality
Gang Injunction	A court order that prevents an individual from engaging in certain activities (such as visiting certain areas, associating with certain people etc.) because they are suspected gang members or affiliates

Glossary

Term	Definition
Prevention	The action of stopping something from happening. In the case of gang prevention, it refers to the action of stopping someone from joining (or forming) a gang
Intervention	The action of stepping into an existing problem and altering the outcome. In the case of gang intervention, it refers to intervening by assisting the individual in leaving and ceasing engagement in associated criminality.
Rehabilitation	The action of restoring an individual to normal life after ceasing engagement in criminality. In the case of gang rehabilitation, it refers to reforming and helping the individual to remain free from criminality and gang membership.
Reintegration	The action of helping an individual to re-enter and reintegrate into society following the cessation of criminal activity and/or gang membership
Recidivism	The act of reoffending or repeating a behaviour that is criminal or deviant
Anti-gang enforcement	Political and legal strategies aimed at reducing gang engagement and criminality, through legislation and policy
Restraining Order	A court order that prevents an individual from contacting or being near a person who has filed for said order
Contempt of Court	An act of wrongful conduct that involves disobeying orders from a court, which could result in interference of a trial or court case
Civil order	A court order that prevents an individual from engaging in certain activities because they are suspected of criminality
Racial profiling	The discriminatory police process of targeting minority groups and assuming criminality based on their race or ethnicity
Push and pull factors	The influences that push and pull people out of gang membership

Resource One Overview

Topic   How do we research gangs safely and reliably?

A-level Modules   Research methods in Sociology

Objectives   By the end of this resource, you will be able to:

✓ Identify the differences between qualitative and quantitative, and primary and secondary data

✓ Understand ethical considerations in sociological research

✓ Provide a rationale for your choice of research method in a gang study

Instructions
1. Read the data source
2. Complete the activities
3. Explore the further reading

Resource One
Data Source

Section A

Qualitative and quantitative data

When undertaking sociological research, it is imperative that we understand the distinction between **quantitative** and **qualitative data**, and the advantages and disadvantages of their use.

An effective way of remembering the difference between the two is by referring to the first part of the words, '*quant*' and '*qual*'. The former refers to 'quantity' (numbers) and the latter refers to 'quality' meaning that the data is likely more rich and in-depth (non-numerical i.e. interviews, focus groups, observation etc.). This does not mean, however, that the use of **qualitative data** is always a more effective choice of method.

Quantitative data

Quantitative data is objective. It is statistical and numerical in nature. This type of data is used in sociological research to determine trends and answer the following questions:

Who? When? Where? How many?

Qualitative data

Qualitative data is subjective. It is more descriptive in nature and provides more in-depth information. This type of data is used in sociological research to gain a deeper understanding of a topic and answer the following questions:

How? Why?

Mixed Methods

A mixed-methods approach is the combinational use of both quantitative and **qualitative data**.

Resource One
Data Source

Critical Thinking

Types of qualitative and quantitative data

Qualitative	Quantitative
Open-ended interviews, surveys and questionnaires	Closed-ended surveys (i.e. Census), questionnaires and polls
Observation	Secondary statistics (from the Home Office, police and court records etc.)
Narrative analysis (autobiographies, news reports etc.)	Structured social experiments

Data Interpretation

Advantages and disadvantages of using quantitative data
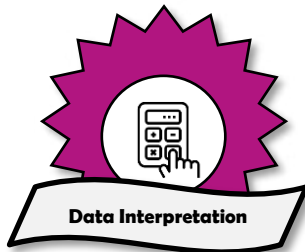
Advantages	Disadvantages
Effectively tests theories and hypotheses	Can be unreliable due to 'dark figure' of crime (see below)
Provides information on trends and numbers	Does not provide in-depth information
Can (usually) be replicated and tested	Can be expensive and time-consuming depending on **sample** size

Advantages and disadvantages of using qualitative data

Providing Evidence

Advantages	Disadvantages
Provides detailed in-depth descriptive information about the human experience	Difficult to analyse and generalise data
Identifies themes and patterns and explains 'why'	Open to bias on part of researcher
Can be cost-efficient	Can be time-consuming

Resource One
Data Source

Section B

Primary and secondary data

What is the distinction between primary and secondary data?

Primary data is collected by the author themselves in an original study.

Secondary data is data that already exists and is used by the author for reference, review or analysis.

The data used in a gang study in which the author interviews gang members would be **primary.**

The data used in a gang study in which the author analyses a report by a gang **intervention** charity would be **secondary.**

The data used in a gang study in which the author produces a survey to find out how many gang members are in London would be **primary and quantitative** (original and numerical).

The data used in a gang study in which the author analyses the content of a gang autobiography (**narrative analysis**) would be **secondary and qualitative** (already existing and more in-depth/descriptive).

The 'dark figure' of crime

Sociologists and criminologists commonly use the term the 'dark figure' of crime when explaining why crime statistics **(quantitative data)** can be unreliable. The 'dark figure' refers to the unknown number of crimes that have occurred but are not included in statistics because they are not reported or recorded. This can happen for any of the following reasons:

Critical Thinking

The victim's allegation was not taken seriously	The victim does not know/understand that what occurred was a crime
The crime was not witnessed	The victim does not feel comfortable/safe enough to report
Human error	The victim is incapable of reporting the crime (i.e. a child/disabled person)
A conscious decision by law enforcement not to record the crime	The crime was not legally a crime at the time it was committed

Resource One
Data Source

Section C

Ethical Considerations

One of the main questions to keep in mind when carrying out sociological research is:

Is my research ethical?

Ethics are an incredibly important part of sociological research and the safety and wellbeing of the researcher and participants should be at the forefront of all primary research studies at all times.

Figure 1

Image taken from British Sociological Association's Statement of Ethical Practice (2017)

Sociologists have a responsibility to ensure that the physical, social and psychological well-being of research participants is not adversely affected by the research.

The British Sociological Association's Statement of Ethical Practice (2017) is an excellent place to start learning about ethical responsibility in sociological study. The BSA's statement covers the following issues:

✓ Consent

✓ Anonymity and confidentiality

✓ Research with vulnerable people and groups

✓ Data storage and archiving

✓ Distribution and publication of research

✓ Legal rights to information

Any sociological research that you may undertake at University is subject to ethical approval from your department. You will be expected to complete an ethical approval form that demonstrates your understanding of the importance of ethical standards and how your proposed study will adhere to these.

Resource One
Data Source

Section D

Appropriate research methods in gang studies

Gang studies are a particularly difficult area of sociological and criminological research due to the nature of topic. The use of **primary data** in gang studies raises many ethical concerns including the safety and wellbeing of the researcher and participants, the vulnerability of the participants, legal issues, and the anonymity, confidentiality and privacy rights of the participants. The gathering of **primary data**, particularly from active gang members, often proves impractical due to safety issues and difficulties with co-operation and trust.

The following are extracts from two pieces of gang research by myself demonstrating appropriate research methods in gang studies, and outlining the **rationale** for them.

Figure 2

Extract from: Preston, K. (2020). Anti-gang Enforcement as a Tool to Aid in Street Gang Desistance. MSc Dissertation. University of Essex.

Active Reading

Methods

This research project takes a qualitative approach and utilises secondary research from narrative criminology, namely autobiographical accounts from those with first-hand experience desisting from criminal activity and street gangs. It is constructivist in nature and makes use of peoples lived experiences in order to gain a broader understanding of the contributing factors in gang joining and desistance. Crime, and redemption, is a topic with enduring popularity. Crime features prominently in literature, both fictional and non-fictional, and has been a popular focus of written works since the late seventeenth century. It can be difficult for the layman to identify what is, and is not, factually accurate criminological data. Philip Rawlings, in his book *Drunks, Whores and Idle Apprentices* (2005)*,* discusses the manner in which narrative accounts of crime have been overlooked by academics in favour of largely quantitative data such as 'official' inquiries and statistics. This dismissal of narrative criminology is rooted in the idea that there is a distinguishable line between fact and fiction and, as such, narrative accounts should not be trusted because of their subjectivity (Rawlings, 2005). However, narrative criminological accounts can provide rich qualitative data where a quantitative approach cannot, as evidenced by the important, and relevant, narrative contributions of Maruna (1997) whose study makes use of twenty published autobiographical accounts of the life stories of ex-convicts to gain a deeper understanding of the process of desistance.

Resource One
Data Source

Active Reading

Methods

The qualitative methods utilised in this proposed research project will be in the form of both primary research; observation, informal conversations and semi-structured individual interviews with ex-gang members, and secondary research in the form of narrative analysis. The observation, informal conversations and interviews with successfully desisted gang members will be achieved by contacting two non-profit gang prevention and intervention organisations in both Los Angeles and London. The proposed organisations to be contacted for interviews are Homeboy Industries in Los Angeles and Catch 22 in London, specifically their London Gang Exit (LGE) programme.

The secondary research methods utilised in this project take the form of the narrative analysis of autobiographical accounts of gang (and ex-gang) members. The analysis of the written word of people's lived experiences can provide rich qualitative data about a range of topics that speak to the one at hand. Thus, I intend to develop my narrative analysis skills further in this project and to make use of narrative criminology in the comparison of the lived experiences of street gang members in Los Angeles and London.

Critical Thinking

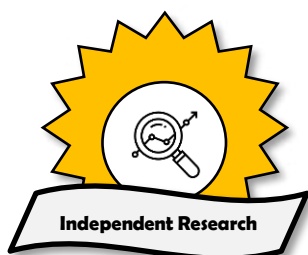So, when creating a research design, the following things must be considered:

✓ Will it be **quantitative** or **qualitative**?

✓ Will you make use of **primary** and/or **secondary data**?

✓ Is the study ethical, as per the BSA?

✓ Do you have a strong rationale for your choice of methods?

Resource One
Activities

Activities

1. Explain the difference between qualitative and quantitative data.
2. List the advantages and disadvantages of quantitative data.
3. Is narrative analysis a form of primary or secondary research method? Explain why.
4. What is the dark figure of crime?
5. Create a research design using the subheadings below for a study titled 'The Female Experience in a Los Angeles Street Gang'.

Research design

✓ **Methods** (explain your choice of methods and the type of data you will gather)
✓ **Rationale** (explain your reasons for these choices)
✓ **Access** (explain how you will access your data)
✓ **Ethical considerations** (outline the ethical concerns in your research and how you will tackle this)

Independent Research

Creativity

Resource One
Further Reading

Explore   Aldridge, J., Medina, J. and Ralphs, R., (2008). Dangers and problems of doing 'gang' research in the UK. *Street gangs, migration and ethnicity*, pp.31-46.

Bulmer, M. ed., 1977. *Sociological research methods*. Transaction Publishers.

Marshall, A., and Batten, S. (2004). Researching Across Cultures: Issues of Ethics and Power. Forum: Qualitative Social Research. 5 (3).

Noy, C. (2008) 'Sampling Knowledge: The Hermeneutics of Snowball Sampling in Qualitative Research'. International Journal of Social Research Methodology. 11(4), pp. 327–344.

Papachristos, A.V., (2006). Social network analysis and gang research: Theory and methods. *Studying youth gangs*, pp.99-116.

References   American Sociological Association (1999). Code of Ethics. https://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/savvy/images/asa/docs/pdf/CodeofEthics.pdf

British Sociological Association (2017). BSA Statement of Ethical Practice. https://www.britsoc.co.uk/media/24310/bsa_statement_of_ethical_practice.pdf

Preston, K. (2020). Anti-gang Enforcement as a Tool to Aid in Street Gang Desistance. MSc Dissertation. University of Essex

Resource Two Overview

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Topic

What is a street gang?

A-level Modules

Crime and deviance (social order and social control, prevention and punishment, the role of the criminal justice system and other agencies, culture and identity)

Objectives

By the end of this resource, you will be able to:

✓ Reference US and UK legal definitions of street gangs

✓ Explain the problems with defining street gangs

✓ Critically review the sociological use of legal definitions

Instructions

1. Read the data source
2. Complete the activities
3. Explore the further reading

Resource Two
Data Source

Section A

Legal definitions of street gangs in the US and UK

Legal definitions exist so that law enforcement have 'indicators' to help them decide if someone is a gang member. An important part of sociological research is the critical review of information. The legal definitions provided to us are not decisive, as this chapter will demonstrate.

When you read a definition. Question the following things:
1. Who is creating this definition?
2. What is the aim of this definition?
3. What can be gained from this definition?
4. Do you agree with this definition?

Active Reading

US legal definition

The definition for street gangs in the United States originates from the 1988 California Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act (STEP). This act is the first piece of anti-gang legislation to be passed in the US and defines a street gang as:

A group of three or more persons ... having a common name or common identifying sign or symbol, and whose members individually or collectively engage in, or have engaged in, a pattern of criminal gang activity
(Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act, 1988)

Deep Dive
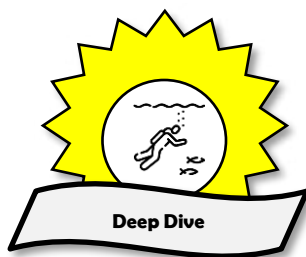
These common identifying signs/symbols used by law enforcement to determine gang membership include, but are not limited to:

Style and colour of clothing

Tattoos

The use of a gang hand symbol/sign

The frequenting of certain areas

Resource Two
Data Source

UK legal definition

Active Reading

The legal definition for street gangs in the United Kingdom has been amended several times since it was first introduced in the Serious Crime Act 2009. The most recent amendment to this act defines a street gang as:

A group which consists of at least three people, has one or more characteristics that enable its members to be identified by others as a group and engages in gang-related violence or is involved in the illegal drug market
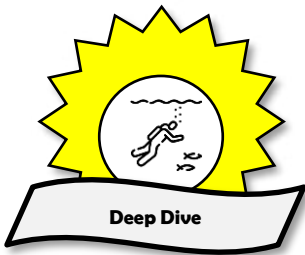(Serious Crime Act, 2015, Section 34)

These characteristics 'may but need not relate to':

A common name, emblem or colour

Association with a particular area

Involvement with a particular unlawful activity

A leadership or command structure

Deep Dive

A 2011 Home Office produced cross-government report called 'Ending Gang and Youth Violence', acknowledges the shortcomings of the UK legal definitions and goes as far as making use of a non-profit organisational definition in place of the legal one.

Figure 4

Extract from cross-government report on gang violence (Home Office, online, 2011)

Definitions of 'gangs' vary widely and there has been some criticism that government has failed to establish a single definition that can guide its approach. To help draw a clear distinction between our strategies on organised crime groups and the more disorganised and local street gangs we propose to adopt the definition set out in the Centre for Social Justice's 2009 Report, *Dying to Belong*[8] as our definition of a street gang:

Resource Two
Data Source

Section B

Sociological definitions of street gangs

Critical Thinking

Deep Dive

Active Reading

Whilst the legal definitions are often used as the main point of reference in understanding what constitutes a street gang, there is **no universally accepted definition** within the study of sociology. In fact, many sociologists and criminologists condemn the legal definitions on the basis that they are too vague and allow law enforcement too much discretion in deciding who may or may not be a gang member.

The Eurogang Project

A team of US and UK based sociologists created the 'Eurogang Network' in order to investigate whether street gangs existed in Europe. After concluding that they did, indeed, exist in many European countries including the United Kingdom, they created a definition of street gangs that they hoped would be more useful than the legal definitions and applicable to the context of the US and Europe. They define a street gang as:

'any durable, street-oriented youth group whose involvement in illegal activity is part of its group identity'
(Weerman et al, 2009)
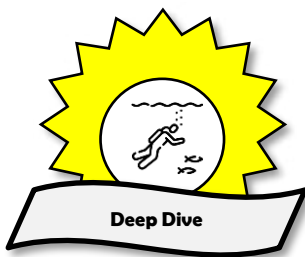
This definition is used in many sociological gang studies. This is not to say that it should not be critiqued, however. Some sociologists argue that, firstly, the term 'street-oriented' is not appropriate as there are many gangs that do not spend much of their time on the streets. Secondly, the term 'youth group' is not appropriate as many have older members. Thirdly, the term 'group identity' is too vague and should be explained further in order to understand what exactly is meant by this. Fourthly, and finally, this definition neglects to mention violence, or the threat of violence, which many gang experts consider to be a vital component of a street gang.

Evidently, defining street gangs is no easy feat. Most sociologists find and use a definition that they deem to be most appropriate, and provide a **rationale** as to why.

Resource Two
Data Source

Section C

Gang activities and organisation

The academic literature suggests that street gangs may be involved in the following (legal and illegal) activities:

Drug dealing/trafficking
Weapons dealing/trafficking
Prostitution
Anti-social behaviour (loitering etc)
Robbery and theft
Weapon-based violence
Substance abuse
Extortion
Property damage/vandalism
Intimidation

Active Reading

Contrary to popular belief, the academic literature finds that street gangs do not generally have a clear hierarchical organisational structure. Instead, they are disorganised in nature. Though there will be strong leaders within certain gangs, they are generally structured very differently from an **organised crime group (OCG).** Street gangs tend to be more opportunistic in their criminality than OCGs.

Los Angeles is home to some of the most notorious street gangs. The following are some of the largest LA gangs:

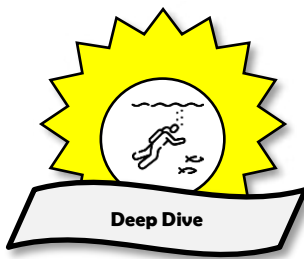✓ The Crips and The Bloods (rival gangs)

✓ MS-13

✓ Sureños

✓ 18th Street

Resource Two
Data Source

Section D

The social context of street gangs

Deep Dive

In order to understand street gangs it is also essential to look at the factors that have historically led to gang formation.

Gang formation in the US is significantly linked to mass immigration and migration. It is interconnected with **social and cultural isolation** – meaning the poverty, poor living conditions, poor education, and lack of opportunities that have all befallen upon **minority groups** as a result of racial discrimination and **segregation**. This is not to say, however, that all gangs are made up of minority groups. In fact, there are many active white gangs in Los Angeles such as Aryan Brotherhood and the Nazi Low Riders, both nationalist **white supremacist** gangs. Racial discrimination is sociologically cited as the leading factor in gang formation in the United States. The '**ghettos**' and '**barrios**' that became home to **minority groups** following mass immigration and migration bred poverty, crime, and eventually gangs.

In the UK, street gangs are less understood and studied. However, gang formation in the UK appears to be linked to many of the same factors as the aforementioned, particularly racial discrimination and **social and cultural isolation.**

There are a wide range of reasons that individuals join gangs but the academic literature finds that **a lack of alternative opportunities** is one of the main factors.

Identity and culture is also a huge part of gang formation and membership. Studies show that individuals with 'weak social identities', often due to the social climate that forces **minority groups** to suppress their cultural norms and values, are at a high-risk of joining a gang.

Resource Two
Activities

Activities

1. Complete the following paragraph by filling the gaps with the words below:

The first piece of anti-gang legislation in California was passed in (1)_____. The most recent amendment to the UK Serious Crime Act, from which a definition of gangs can be found was in (2)_____. Legal definitions of street gangs are criticized for being too (3) _____. One aspect of gangs that sociologists believe to be a vital component of gangs that is missing from given definitions is (4)_____. US gang formation is linked to the social and cultural isolation of minority groups. This is interconnected with racial (5)_____ and _____. One of the main reasons that individuals join gangs is because of a (6)_____.

1. 1968   1998   1988
2. 1988   2015   2009
3. Vague   Clear   Complicated
4. Drug-dealing   Violence   Knife-crime
5. Integration and inclusion   Segregation and discrimination   Assimilation and perception
6. Lack of other opportunities   abundance of other opportunities   failure to find other opportunities

Resource Two
Activities

Activities

2. Research the Bloods and the Crips. Create a list of indicators of gang membership for each gang and compare these (style of clothing, colour of clothing, gang hand symbols, tattoos, activities etc.).

3. Look at the definition provided by the California STEP Act. Keeping in mind the importance of critical review in sociology, reflect on the following questions:

'A group of three or more persons ... having a common name or common identifying sign or symbol, and whose members individually or collectively engage in, or have engaged in, a pattern of criminal gang activity'

(Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act, 1988)

✓ Who is creating this definition?

✓ What is the aim of this definition?

✓ Could the use of this definition be open to bias?

✓ Do you agree with this definition?
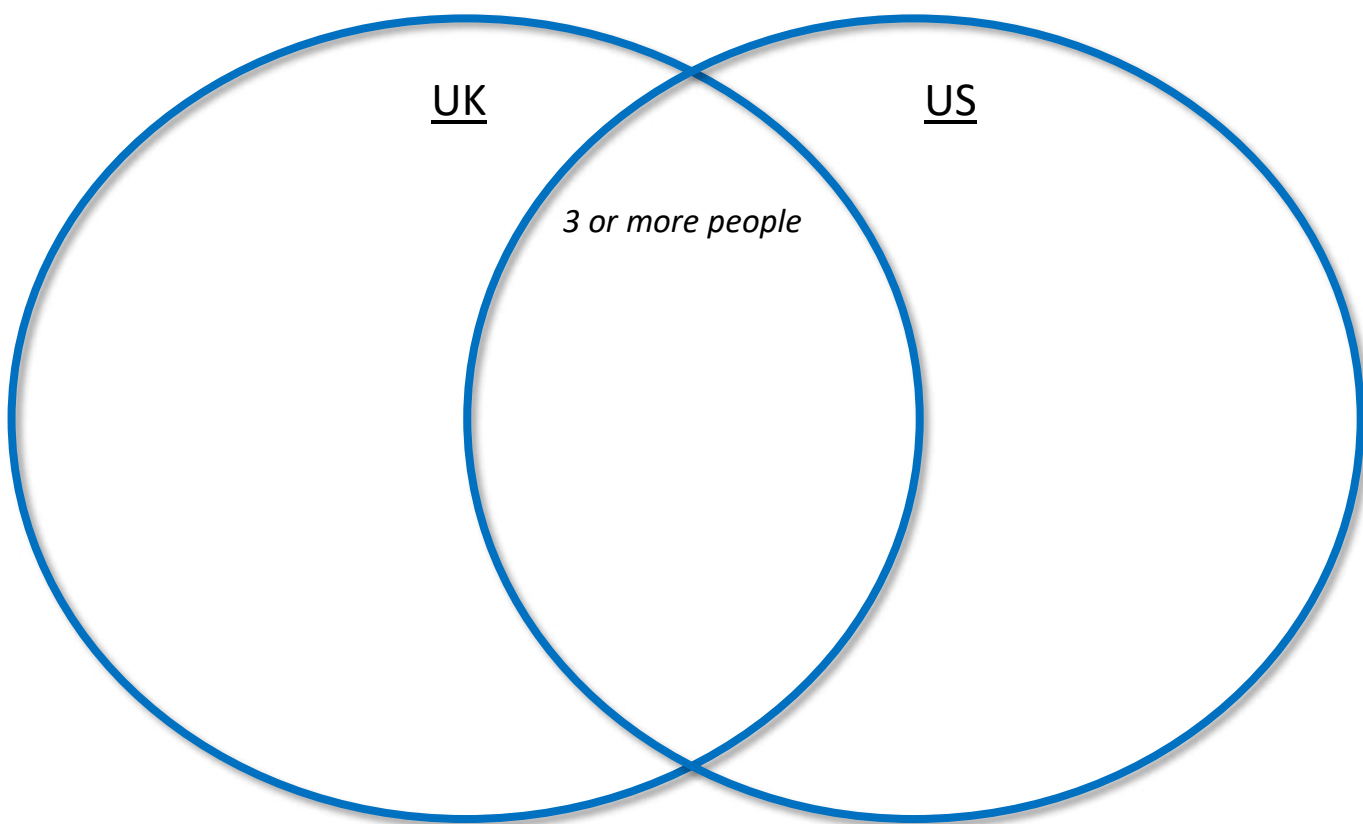
4. What is meant by social and cultural isolation?

Resource Two
Activities

Activities 5. Complete the Venn diagram below:

Legal definitions of street gangs

UK   US

3 or more people

Resource Two
Further Reading

Explore

The Eurogang Project/Network –
https://eurogangproject.com/

Alarcón, D. (2015). How Do You Define a Gang Member?. Available: https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/31/magazine/how-do-you-define-a-gang-member.html. Last accessed 01-08-2018.

Howell, J.C (2015). The History of Street Gangs in the United States: Their Origins and Transformations. Maryland: Lexington Books.

Howell, J. C. (1998). Youth gangs: An overview. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Smith C.F., Rush, J. & Burton, C.E. (2013). Street Gangs, Organized Crime Groups, and Terrorists: Differentiating Criminal Organizations. Investigative Sciences Journal. 5 (1).

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Home Office. (2011). *Ending Gang and Youth Violence.* Available: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97862/gang-violence-detailreport.pdf.

Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act, 1988 [186.20 – 186.36], c.11. Available at: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=PEN&division=&title=7.&part=1.&chapter=11.&article=

Preston, K (2017). 'Female Desistance from Street Gangs: A Los Angeles Case Study', BA Dissertation, University of Essex, United Kingdom.

Resource Three Overview

Topic

Straight outta Compton? Media and political representations of gangs

A-level Modules

Media language, Media representation

Crime and Deviance

Objectives

By the end of this resource, you will be able to:

- ✓ Identify and dispute three popular media myths about gangs
- ✓ Understand language and negative stereotypes about gangs and minority youth in the media
- ✓ Understand sociological debates about political representations of gangs in the US and UK

Instructions

1. Read the data source
2. Complete the activities
3. Explore the further reading

Resource Three
Data Source

Section A

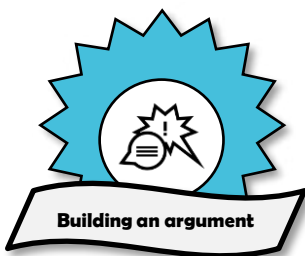### TV and movie representations of gangs and streett culture

Figure 5

Movie and TV show posters for 'Top Boy', 'Boyz n the Hood', 'The Wire', 'Straight Outta Compton', 'Power', and 'Kidulthood'

Building an argument

Since the 1980's, there has been an increase in TV shows and movies about street gangs and street culture as a whole. Many of these shows have faced criticism for glorifying violence and gang membership, and perpetuating racial stereotypes.

Movies such as 'Boyz n the Hood' are often taken at face value in their representation of street gangs and are used as a reference point for audiences' understanding of what a street gang looks like. However, whilst entertaining, gang members and minority youth are often misrepresented in the media through the construction of inaccurate identities.

Resource Three
Data Source

Section B

Debunking popular myths found in media representations of gangs

Critical Thinking

Myth 1 – Gang members live luxurious lives with expensive clothes, cars, houses and so forth.

Gangs, historically, have formed in areas with very high levels of poverty and deprivation. As we have previously discussed, one of the main reasons that individuals join gangs is because of a lack of alternative options.

My previous study 'Female **Desistance** from Street Gangs: A Los Angeles Case Study' found that street gangs do not live luxurious lifestyles and, in actuality, live incredibly deprived lives. One of the ex-gang members I spoke with told me that she had been forced to visit food banks and use food stamps in order to eat. Others spoke about their experiences selling drugs or engaging in prostitution to make enough money to survive. Many street gangs are formed, and thrive, in poverty-stricken urban areas known as 'barrios' or 'ghettos', and reside in **housing projects** with many people under one roof. The conditions that gang members live in often results in substance abuse which, in turn, leads to addiction and increased financial difficulties due to a reliance on drugs as a coping mechanism,

Figure 6

Image depicting 'Pueblo del Rio' a housing development in South Los Angeles, home to many LA-based gang members

Resource Three
Data Source

Myth 2 – There are no female gang members

Figure 7
Extract from gang
autobiography 'Blue
Rage, Black Redemption'
about the female
auxiliary gang connected
to the notorious LA
'Crips', the 'Cripettes'
(Williams, 2007).

> (The Cripettes) gained notoriety for their indiscriminate attacks on both female and male opponents, overwhelming them with numbers and jacking them for their possessions (Williams, 2007:101).

Contrary to media representations of gangs as strictly male-based, female gangs do exist. A 2011 study by the National Gang Center found that females made up around 10% of the gang population in Los Angeles and around 7% of the gang population in the US as a whole (National Gang Center, online, 2011).There are three types of female gang:

- ✓ Auxiliary: a female gang that accompanies, or is a sub-set of, a male gang (i.e. the Cripettes).
- ✓ Independent: an autonomous female gang that exists separate to any male gang.
- ✓ Co-ed: a male-dominated gang that accepts female members.

Myth 3 – Most street gang members are young, Black males

Figure 8
Chart depicting the
Race/Ethnicity of Gang
Members in the US from
1996-2011 (National Gang
Center, online, 2011).

Race/Ethnicity of Gang Members, 1996–2011

Providing Evidence
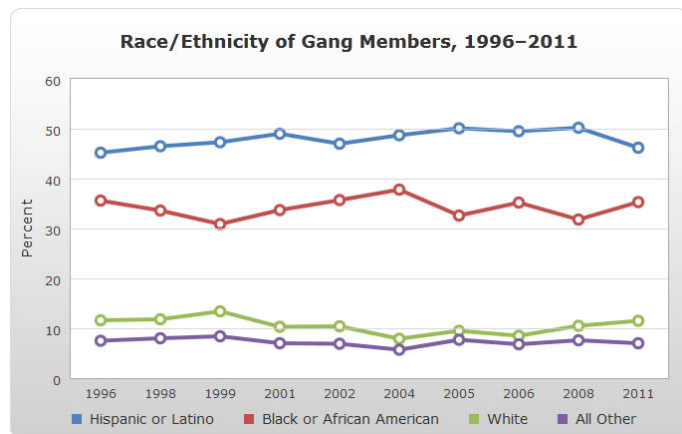
Although media depictions of street gangs commonly portray street gang members as young, Black males, gangs in the US are mostly made up of members of the Hispanic community. Negative stereotypes about young, Black men in the media have created a discourse about their involvement in gangs at a higher rate which is simply not true.

Resource Three
Data Source

Section C

Political representations of gangs in the UK

There was significant social unrest in London and other parts of the UK in August 2011 following the fatal shooting of Mark Duggan, a young Black man, by police. Beginning as peaceful protests against police brutality and racism, the unrest became violent and politicians and the media largely publicly blamed street gangs for the arson, looting and property damage that ensued. Then prime minister, David Cameron, claimed that 'gangs were at the heart of the protests and have been behind the coordinated attacks' (Wintour, online, 2011).

Figure 9

Images of the 2011 Riots (BBC, online, 2011; Stott et al, online, 2016).

Figure 10

Quote from 'PM's speech on the fightback after the riots' (Cabinet Office, online, 2011).

> It's time for something else too.
>
> A concerted, all-out war on gangs and gang culture.
>
> This isn't some side issue.
>
> It is a major criminal disease that has infected streets and estates across our country.
>
> Stamping out these gangs is a new national priority.
>
> Last week I set up a cross-government programme to look at every aspect of this problem.
>
> We will fight back against gangs, crime and the thugs who make people's lives hell and we will fight back hard.
>
> The last front in that fight is proper punishment.

Active Reading

Many sociologists have strongly condemned the political response to the riots, arguing that there is no empirical evidence that street gangs were to blame for the unrest. Hallsworth (2013) calls it a 'conspiracy discourse', meaning that politicians have simply used gangs as a way to explain away social problems rather than tackle them head-on. A UK riots analysis report in 2011 supported this argument, finding that 'gangs did not play a pivotal role in the August riots' (Travis, online, 2011).

Resource Three
Data Source

Critical Thinking

It is important to note the language used when discussing gangs and the punitive, rather than rehabilitative, political approach that emerged within the media to fully understand the impact of negative stereotypes and representation.

The following phrases and words were used to describe gangs following their alleged involvement in the 2011 riots:

✓ From 'troubled' and 'problem' families
✓ 'Territorial, hierarchical and incredibly violent'
✓ From a 'culture of disruption and irresponsibility'
✓ 'Nihilistic' and 'mindless' thugs'
✓ 'Yobs who have nothing but contempt for decent law-abiding people'
✓ 'Hooded mobs'
✓ 'Savagery'
✓ 'Outsiders'

Figure 11

Image from the 'I am not my stereotype' visual campaign by the 56 Black Men campaign (56 Black Men, online, 2021).

There is a criminological theory by David Garland known as the 'Criminology of the Other'. Garland describes this as a narrative used in politics and the media that demonises offenders (or in this case, gang members) as:

'the threatening outcast, the fearsome stranger .. to excite popular fears and hostilities, and to promote support for state punishment.'
(Garland, 1996)

Active Reading

The above phrases and words used in the narrative about gang involvement in the 2011 riots adhere to this theory of othering. Negative stereotypes such as 'hooded mobs' and 'mindless thugs' have been used in politics and the media for years to create a discourse about (largely minority) youth who dress in a certain style or come from a working-class background. The 'hoodie' has become synonymous with criminality in the UK and US and is strongly connected to the identification of gang members.

Resource Three
Data Source

Section D

Political representations of gangs in the US

Active Reading

Critical Thinking

There has been much political attention on street gangs since the 1980's and a 'war on gangs' was promised to tackle the 'gang problem' in the US. The movement Black Lives Matter (BLM) have condemned racialised notions of gang members and the unequal enforcement of **stop and search** and **gang injunctions** on Black youth.

An example of the way in which street gangs are racialized in the US is the case of the 'Bird Rock Bandits' in San Diego. Five men widely known within the community to belong to the white street gang, the 'Bird Rock Bandits', were arrested for the murder of a 24-year old surfer in 2007. San Diego law enforcement had previously identified the men as gang members following their use of gang graffiti tagging and gang hand signs. When the prosecution tried to increase their sentences under the STEP Act, as is the case with any gang-related crime in California, the judge disputed this. He argued that he did not believe the men to belong to a gang, even though they met the definition and evidence had been providing in court of them using gang hand signs and posting on social media about their gang membership. The defence claimed that they did not meet the definition of a gang and they were 'not the Bloods and the Crips' (Aguirre, online, 2008). This is clearly racially discriminatory and highlights the way in which the STEP Act is unequally applied based on race.

Figure 12

Image from the trial of the 'Bird Rock Bandits' murder of Emery Kauanui (Surfer, online, 2010).

Resource Three
Data Source

Active Reading

The following phrases and words were used to describe gang members by President Trump at a political rally in 2019:

❑ Demented
❑ Sick
❑ Vicious
❑ Vile
❑ Animals

President Trump also conflated Mexican immigrants with gang members, referring to those who illegally cross the border as 'animals' not people, in a bid to gain public support for his strict border control policies. He argued that illegal immigrants from Mexico were actually members of the gang MS-13 and were incredibly violent and dangerous. He also referred to Mexican immigrants as 'rapists' and 'criminals'. This conflation of immigrants with criminality creates a negative stereotype of members of the Hispanic community.

Figure 13

Quote from a law-and-order speech by President Trump in 2017 (Kopan, online, 2017).

"They kidnap. They extort. They rape and they rob," Trump said. "They stomp on their victims. They beat them with clubs, they slash them with machetes, and they stab them with knives. They have transformed peaceful parks and beautiful quiet neighborhoods into bloodstained killing fields. They're animals."

The language of the STEP Act, such as referring to street gang activity as 'terrorism' and gang members as 'terrorists' also serves as a political misrepresentation of gang members. These terms are morally loaded and the use of them in the American context serves to increase punitive responses to gang membership. My study 'The STEP Act: an unethical and ineffective approach to reducing gang criminality in California' finds that the political language used by the STEP Act is prejudicial because of its racial connotations and the detrimental effect it can have on those accused of gang criminality at trial.

Providing Evidence

Resource Three
Activities

Activities

Activity 1. Watch one of the movies and/or an episode of one of the TV shows listed on page one of this resource. Create a list of negative stereotypes of minority youth and/or gang members used.

Activity 2. Find three media articles about Mark Duggan, the young man who was killed by police prior to the 2011 riots in the UK. Write a critical review of these articles, outlining the depiction of him and his alleged gang membership. Use the following to guide your writing:
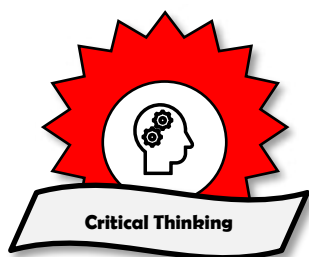
❑ How was Mark Duggan portrayed by the British media?

❑ Were positive or negative stereotypes used in descriptions of Mark Duggan?

❑ What myths about gangs did you find in your research?

❑ Describe the media language used in the articles.

Critical Thinking
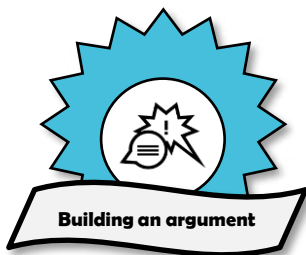
Resource Three
Activities

Activities

Activity 3. Using Google Scholar, find some relevant journal articles or academic works about female street gangs. List the activities that the academic literature finds female street gang members to engage in.

Activity 4. What is meant by the 'Criminology of the Other?'

Providing Evidence

Activity 5. Watch the movie 'This is England' (or research it if you do not have access). Would you identify the characters to be gang members? Why, or why not? Justify your response by referring to the definition below (from the STEP Act):

A group of three or more persons ... having a common name or common identifying sign or symbol, and whose members individually or collectively engage in, or have engaged in, a pattern of criminal gang activity

Building an argument

Resource Three
Further Reading

Explore
Trailer for 'The Wire'
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9qK-VGjMr8g

'This is England' movie
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pm3roVvKMpo

Abraham, L., 2003. Media Stereotypes of African Americans. *Images that injure: Pictorial stereotypes in the media*, pp.87-92.

Behm-Morawitz, E. and Ortiz, M., 2013. Race, ethnicity, and the media. *The Oxford handbook of media psychology*, pp.252-266.

Beres, L.S. and Griffith, T.D., 2003. Gangs, schools and stereotypes. *Loy. LAL Rev.*, *37*, p.935.

Charmaraman, L., 2008. Media Gangs of Social Resistance: Urban Adolescents Take Back Their Images and Their Streets through Media Production. *Afterschool Matters*, *7*, pp.23-33.

Reny, T. and Manzano, S., 2016. The negative effects of mass media stereotypes of Latinos and immigrants. *Media and Minorities*, *4*, pp.195-212.

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56 Black Men. (2021). *I am not my stereotype.* Available: https://www.56blackmen.com/iamnotmystereotype.

BBC UK. (2011). *England riots: Maps and timeline.* Available: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-14436499X

Cabinet Office. (2011). *PM's speech on the fightback after the riots.* Available: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-speech-on-the-fightback-after-the-riots.

Garland, D., 1996. The Limits of the Sovereign State. Strategies of Crime Control in Contemporary Society. *The British journal of criminology*, *36*(4), pp.445-471.

Gold, S. (2009). *At an impoverished housing complex, a reflection of South L.A..* Available: https://www.latimes.com/local/la-me-southla-pueblos14-2009jul14-story.html.

Resource Three
Further Reading

References

Kopan, T. (2017). *Trump: 'We're going to destroy' MS-13.* Available: https://edition.cnn.com/2017/07/28/politics/donald-trump-ms-13/index.html.

Preston, K (2017). 'Female Desistance from Street Gangs: A Los Angeles Case Study', BA Dissertation, University of Essex, United Kingdom.

Surfer. (2010). *Bird Rock Bandits Case: Preliminary Hearing Decision This Week.* Available: https://www.surfer.com/features/brb-prlinhearing-may08/.

Travis, A. (2011). *UK riots analysis reveals gangs did not play pivotal role.* Available: https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2011/oct/24/riots-analysis-gangs-no-pivotal-role.

Stott, C., Reicher, S., Drury, J. (2016). *London's 2011 Riots: Report blames deprivation and poor policing – not mad, bad, dangerous people.* Available: https://www.keele.ac.uk/discover/news/2019/february/2011-riots-report/deprivation-poor-policing.php.

Wintour, P. (2011). *David Cameron announces moves to tackle gang culture.* Available: https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2011/aug/11/new-gangs-drive-signalled

Topic

What is **desistance**?

A-level Modules

Crime and deviance (social order and social control, prevention and punishment, the role of the criminal justice system and other agencies, culture and identity)

Objectives

✓ Explain what the term **desistance** means

✓ Understand how gang **desistance** differs to general crime **desistance**

✓ Examine how successful anti-gang enforcement approaches are in promoting **desistance**

Instructions

1. Read the data source
2. Complete the activities
3. Explore the further reading

Resource Four
Data Source

Section A

Desistance from crime

University Ready

Critical Thinking

When understanding what **desistance** is, it is useful to think of the word 'desist' which essentially means to 'stop' something. **Desistance** from crime then, put simply, occurs when an individuals ceases engagement in a pattern of criminal activity. However, the nature of **desistance** is more complex than simply choosing to stop engaging in criminality. It should be viewed as more of a journey or a process that occurs gradually and at different rates for different people.

There are many factors that affect an individual's **desistance** journey but it is imperative that the person **wants to desist.**

<u>Push and pull factors in desistance</u>

The academic literature finds that there are many **push and pull factors** that contribute to an individual's desire to desist from crime. These factors **push** and **pull** individuals out of patterns of criminality.

Push Factors	Pull Factors
Aging ('growing out of crime')	Family and marital ties
Traumatic experiences occurring during crime commission	Opportunities ('turning points') such as gaining employment, education, hobbies etc.
Disillusionment	Finding religion

Desistance processes differ hugely depending on:

❑ The type of criminal behaviour

❑ The length of time spent engaged in criminality

❑ The characteristics of the individual (personality type, social class and background, race, gender etc.)

❑ Whether or not the individual has a criminal record/has spent time incarcerated

❑ Opportunities for **rehabilitation/reintegration**

Resource Four
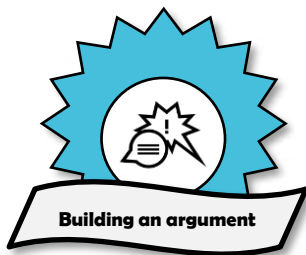# Data Source

Section B

Gang desistance

Gang desistance occurs when an individual leaves the gang and ceases engagement in gang-related activities and behaviours.

My study 'Anti-gang Enforcement as a Tool to Aid in Street Gang Desistance: A case study of the California Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act (STEP)' found the following three factors to be most important to successful **desistance:**

University Ready

❑ Transformation of identity

❑ Social and emotional relationships

❑ **Rehabilitation** and opportunities

Social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986) suggests that belonging to a group or organisation has significant effects on a person's behaviour and self-identification. The person may refer to their social identity ('we') rather than their personal identity ('I') which can affect their decisions profoundly. Studies have found that gang members commonly develop a social identity that provides them with 'positively valued distinctiveness'. This essentially means that the gang makes them feel as though they are a part of something that is completely distinct to other groups, a shared identity with their fellow gang members. This displays itself most commonly through the 'us versus them' mentality whereby gang members put the gangs needs above all else and believe other social groups to be the enemy (i.e., other gangs, law enforcement etc.)

Building an argument

Resource Four
Data Source

Building an argument
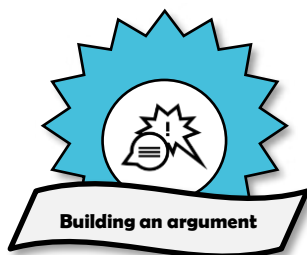
The social identity that gang membership provides plays a huge part in **desistance**. The transformation from a 'we' identity to an 'I' identity is essential. There are many ways that individuals begin their identity transformation, with gang tattoo removal being one of these.

The social and emotional relationships that exist between gang members can be detrimental to the **desistance** process. Many gang members are blood relatives and those who are not view each other as family, so distancing from them can be incredibly difficult. The creation of social and emotional relationships outside of the gang are a huge contributing factor to a member's desire to desist. These relationships can be romantic, friendships or even with professionals such as probation officers. Parenthood also plays a significant role in **desistance**, particularly in female gang members.

Individuals who are not rehabilitated or reintegrated into society will fall back into a lifestyle of reoffending and gang membership due to a lack of other opportunities. A gang member wanting to desist will face many obstacles in gaining employment due to criminal records and discrimination. However, gaining employment or other positive opportunities is one of the most successful ways to assist a gang member in their **desistance** journey.

Resource Four
Data Source

Section C

Prevention, intervention and rehabilitation

Critical Thinking

Three of the main factors essential to tackling gang criminality are:

Future gang membership

- **Prevention** – understanding the root of gang membership and working to stop people from joining gangs in the first instance
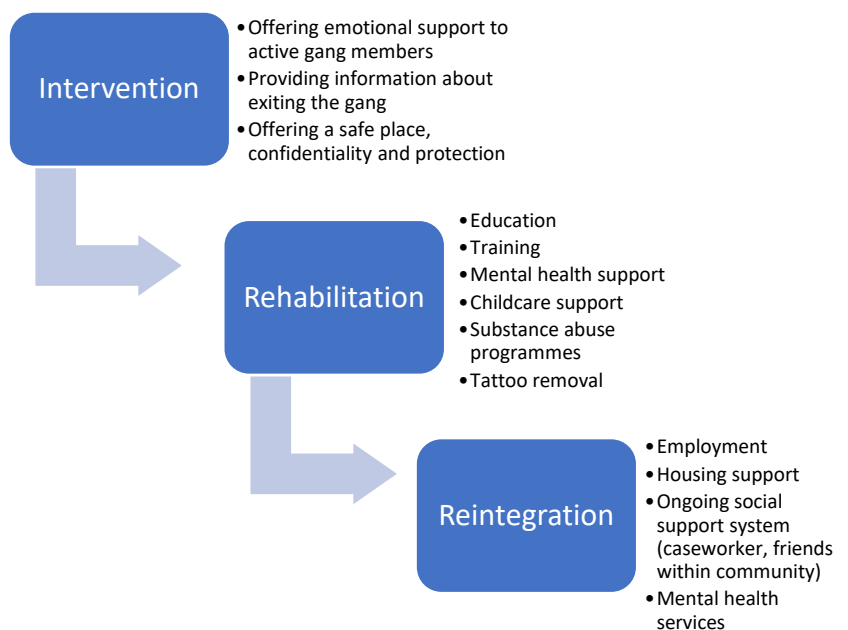
Current gang membership

- **Intervention** – stepping in to an existing issue (gang membership) to prevent it from continuing or worsening

Past gang membership

- **Rehabilitation** – restoring and reintegrating an individual back into society and life outside of the gang

An example of how to support a gang member's desistance journey :

Intervention
- Offering emotional support to active gang members
- Providing information about exiting the gang
- Offering a safe place, confidentiality and protection

Rehabilitation
- Education
- Training
- Mental health support
- Childcare support
- Substance abuse programmes
- Tattoo removal

Reintegration
- Employment
- Housing support
- Ongoing social support system (caseworker, friends within community)
- Mental health services

Resource Four
Data Source

Section C

Prevention, intervention and rehabilitation

Some sociologists consider desistance to have been unsuccessful if an offender reoffends whereas others have a more flexible approach and consider the desistance journey to be successful even if there have been periods of **recidivism** (reoffending).

Critical Thinking

Resource Four
Data Source

Section D

Street gangs and non-profit organisations

There are many non-profit organisations designed not only to intervene and aid gang members in their **desistance** journeys but to rehabilitate and reintegrate them back into society. We can learn a lot about gang members by speaking and listening to those who have successfully desisted with the help of non-profits such as Homeboy Industries in the US and Catch 22 (London Gang Exit) in the UK.

Figure 14

Logos for the non-profit organisations Homeboy Industries and Catch 22.

Homeboy Industries, based in Los Angeles, intervenes by providing active gang members (many of whom are approached whilst in prison) with a wide range of opportunities and support, including education, training and employment within the organisation.

Figure 15

Testimonial from a Homeboy Industries programme graduate

Catch 22 (London Gang Exit), covering all 32 London boroughs, similarly intervenes by providing one to one support for gang members upon release from prison. Over a six month period, the individuals are provided a caseworker who assists with mental health support, housing advocacy and employment support.

Active Reading

In my study 'Female Desistance from Street Gangs: A Los Angeles Case Study' I carried out primary research in the form of observation, informal conversations and semi-structured interviews with ex-gang members and two gang experts. This study found that many gang members find gang life incredibly difficult and **want** to desist (quit) but are prevented from doing so due to the many obstacles they face. The findings of this study indicate that a support system is essential to successful **desistance**, and the services and kinship offered by Homeboy Industries are hugely important factors in the **desistance** journey.

Resource Four
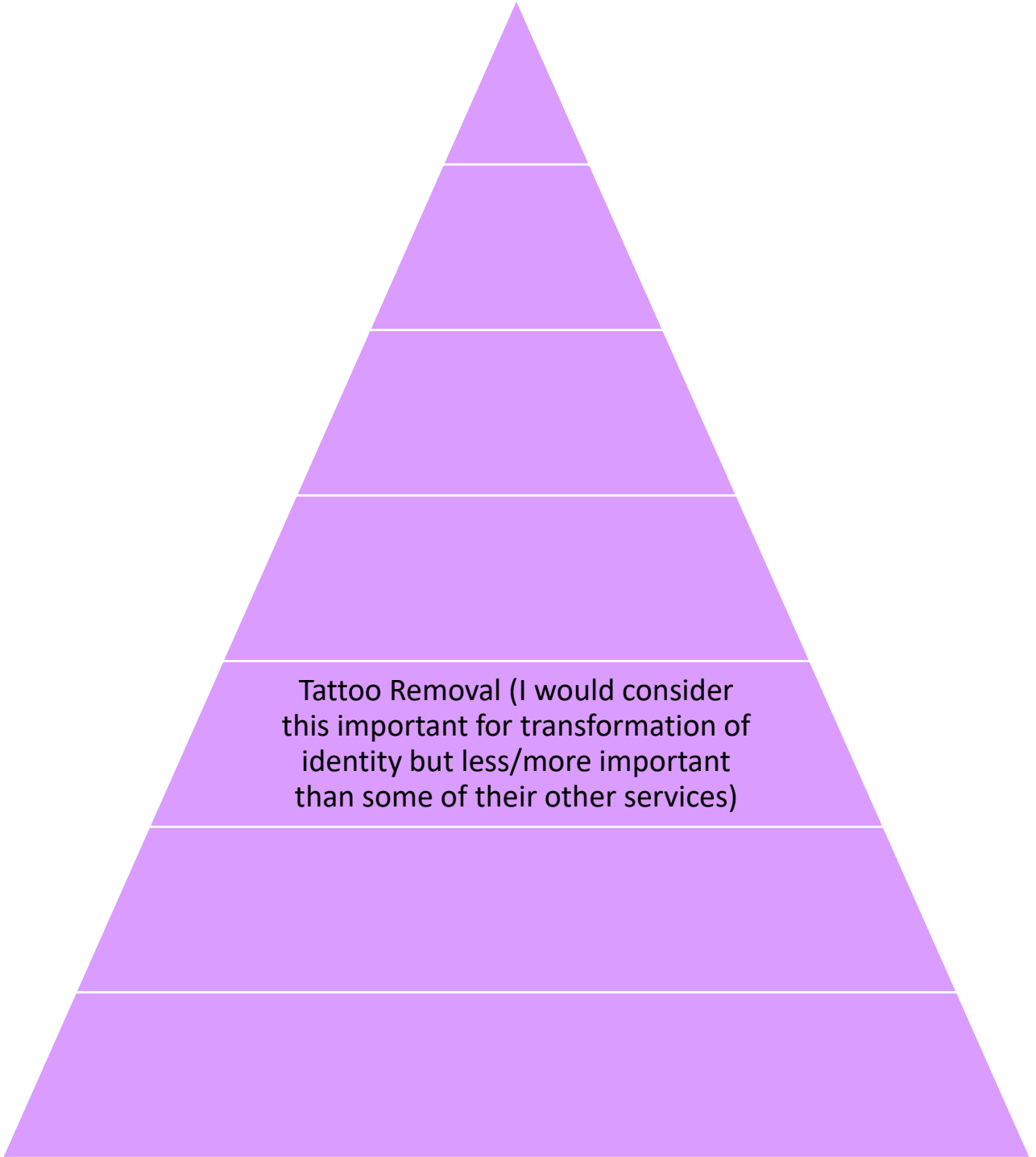# Activities

Activities

Activity 1. Why do you think 'aging/growing out' of crime is an important push factor? Why do you think aging increases the individual's desire to desist? List 4 factors of aging that you believe positively influence desistance and explain why.

Activity 2. Why do you think religion is an important pull factor? Which factor do you think religion relates to? (Transformation of identity, social and emotional relationships, rehabilitation and opportunities?) Explain why.

Activity 3. Imagine an individual quits their gang, ceases engagement in criminality and gains employment. That individual loses their employment and falls back into the gang lifestyle and criminality. They then reach out to Homeboy Industries for help quitting the gang. Would you consider this successful or unsuccessful desistance? Why?

Activity 4. Research Homeboy Industries at www.homeboyindustries.org and fill out the hierarchy graph on the following page with some of the services the organization provides, in order of what you deem most important to successful gang desistance.

Resource Four
Activities

Tattoo Removal (I would consider this important for transformation of identity but less/more important than some of their other services)

Resource Four
Further Reading

Explore

Boyle, G., 2011. Tattoos on the heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion. Simon and Schuster.

Calverley, A (2013). Cultures of Desistance: Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Ethnic Minorities. London: Routledge.

Farrall, S., Hunter, B., Sharpe, G. and Calverley, A. (2014). Criminal Careers in Transition: The Social Context of Desistance from Crime. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Laub, J.H., and Sampson, R.J. (2001). Understanding desistance from crime. In Crime and Justice: A Review of Research. Vol. 28. 1–69. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Maruna, S. (2001). Making good: How ex-convicts reform and rebuild their lives. Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

Meisenhelder, T., 1977. An exploratory study of exiting from criminal careers. Criminology, 15(3), pp.319-334.

Pyrooz, D.C. and Decker, S.H., 2011. Motives and methods for leaving the gang: Understanding the process of gang desistance. Journal of Criminal Justice, 39(5), pp.417- 425.

Pyrooz, D.C., McGloin, J.M. and Decker, S.H., 2017. Parenthood as a turning point in the life course for male and female gang members: a study of within-individual changes in gang membership and criminal behaviour. Criminology, 55(4), pp.869-899.

Turner, J.C. and Oakes, P.J., 1986. The significance of the social identity concept for social psychology with reference to individualism, interactionism and social influence. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *25*(3), pp.237-252.

Worchel; W. G. Austin (eds.). Psychology of Intergroup Relations. Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hall. pp. 7–24.

Williams, S.T., 2007. Blue Rage, Black Redemption: A Memoir. Simon and Schuster.

Shakur, S., 2007. Monster: The Autobiography of an LA gang Member. Grove/Atlantic, Inc

Resource Four
Further Reading

The following three books (listed in the above recommended readings) are strongly recommended if you want to know more about gangs from the perspective of an ex-gang member and from the founder of Homeboy Industries):
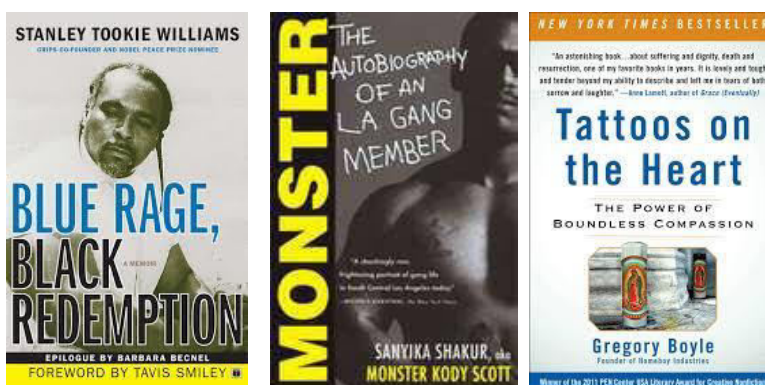
References

Tajfel, H.; Turner, J. C. (1986). "The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour". In Social Identity and Intergroup Relations. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Preston, K. (2020). Anti-gang Enforcement as a Tool to Aid in Street Gang Desistance. MSc Dissertation. University of Essex.

Preston, K (2017). 'Female Desistance from Street Gangs: A Los Angeles Case Study', BA Dissertation, University of Essex, United Kingdom.

Resource Five Overview

Topic
Anti-gang enforcement approaches in the US

A-level Modules
Crime and deviance (social order and social control, prevention and punishment, the role of the criminal justice system and other agencies, culture and identity)

Objectives
By the end of this resource, you will be able to:

✓ Explain what a gang injunction is/does

✓ Understand the role of gang databases and why they are controversial/ineffective

✓ Identify the ethical issues with US anti-gang enforcement approaches

Instructions
1. Read the data source
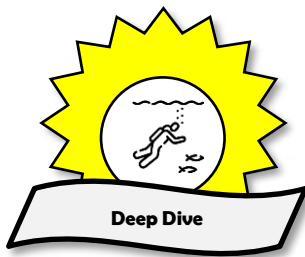2. Complete the activities
3. Explore the further reading

Resource Five
Data Source

Section A

US anti-gang enforcement

Deep Dive

Los Angeles developed a zero tolerance approach to street gangs in the 1960's with a task force known as 'Operation Safe Streets'. This involved a small team of law enforcement officers tracking and informing on groups that they suspected to be street gangs. In the 1970's, the Los Angeles Police Department(LAPD) put more funding **into anti-gang enforcement** and created the controversially named 'Community Resources Against Street Hoodlums' (CRASH). This was a much bigger task force that carried out raids across Los Angeles, making a huge number of arrests. As well as the name of CRASH being controversial, their practices were found to be unethical and corrupt during the 'Rampart Scandal' whereby a report concluded that they had engaged in **racial profiling**, the targeting of people of colour and police brutality.
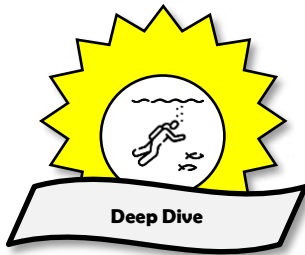
Gang Injunctions

Civil **gang injunctions** came into effect in Los Angeles following the disbandment of CRASH. A civil gang injunction is essentially a **restraining order** that prohibits individuals from engaging in certain activities that are deemed by law enforcement to be gang-related. These activities include:

❑ Associating with (alleged) gang members and their 'associates'

❑ Being outside between 10pm and sunrise

❑ Waving at people in cars

❑ Possessing a cell phone

❑ Possessing a felt tip marker

Active Reading

Resource Five
Data Source

Deep Dive

Breaches to these injunctions

Any person found to be in violation of these civil **gang injunctions** would be served with a written notice and any or all of the following can occur:

❑ Prosecution for **contempt of court**

❑ Served a sentence of up to six months

❑ Issued a fine (usually around $1000)

Much like with CRASH, civil **gang injunction**s were strongly condemned for allowing law enforcement too much discretion and being used to racially profile individuals and significantly affect their freedom of expression and movement. In March 2018, civil **gang injunction**s in Los Angeles were ceased in a court order that found them to be unethical and unconstitutional.

The STEP Act

The STEP Act 1988 does not only provide a definition for street gangs in the US, it criminalises gang membership and the activities associated with it. The act allows sentences to be significantly increased if they are deemed to be gang-related (if the individual involved appears to fit the given definition of a gang member). The act does not aim to rehabilitate gang members or aid in their **desistance** (quitting the gang), but is designed simply to deter and punish.

Figure 16

Extract from the Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act, 1988. [186.20 – 186.360 c.11.

'It is the intent of the Legislature in enacting this chapter to seek the eradication of criminal activity by street gangs by focusing upon patterns of criminal gang activity and upon the organized nature of street gangs, which together, are the chief source of terror created by street gangs. The Legislature further finds that an effective means of punishing and deterring the criminal activities of street gangs is through forfeiture of the profits, proceeds, and instrumentalities acquired, accumulated, or used by street gangs' (Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act, 1988)

Resource Five
# Data Source

Data Interpretation
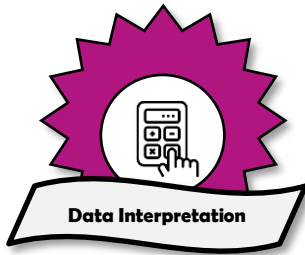
CalGang

If an individual is deemed to be a gang member, using the indicators set out by the STEP Act, their details are loaded and stored on to a database called CalGang. This has been highly controversial due to the high number of **minority groups** listed as gang members on this database. A 2016 state audit found that there were 42 members of the Black community aged only 1 year who were listed as active gang members (California State Auditor, online, 2016).

Figure 17

Chart showing the number of individuals in CalGang in 2018 by race and ethnicity. (Department of Justice, online, 2018)

Total Number of Individuals in the System by Race
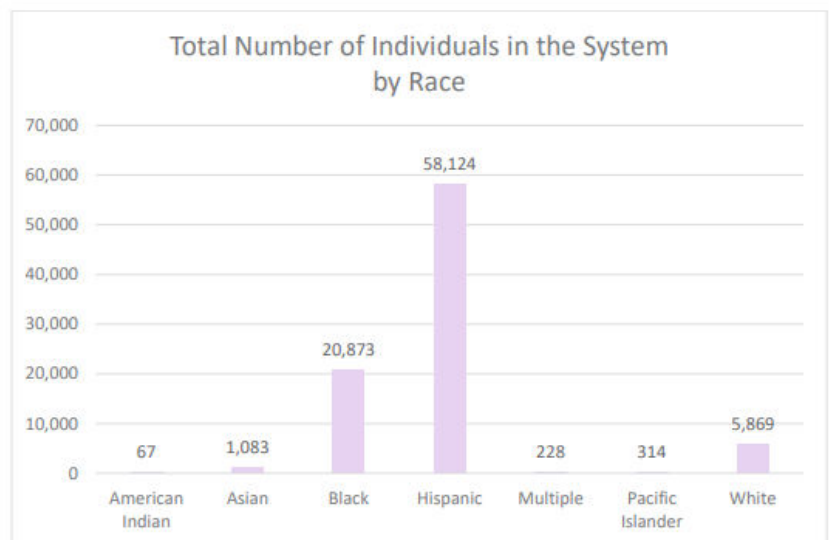
2,112 records with unreported race

Proposition 21

In 2000, the STEP Act was amended to included 'Proposition 21' also known as 'The Gang Violence and Juvenile Crime Prevention Act'. Proposition 21 made it legal to charge juveniles (individuals under the age of 18) as adults, made surveillance techniques such as 'wire-tapping' permissible, and further increased the sentences of individuals under the STEP Act.

Resource Five
Data Source

Figure 18

Table outlining the changes in STEP Act sentencing under Proposition 21

Crime	STEP Act	Proposition 21
'Active participation' in a street gang	16 months	2-3 years
'Serious' gang-related offence	2-4 years	5-10 years

Active Reading

Most importantly, the STEP Act states that:

'it is not necessary for the prosecution to prove that the person devotes all, or a substantial part, of his or her time or efforts to the criminal gang, nor is it necessary to prove that the person is a member of the criminal street gang'.
(Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act, 1988).

Essentially, then, **anti-gang enforcement** in Los Angeles is using a contested definition of street gangs to prosecute suspected gang members even with **no criminal evidence.**

Anti-gang enforcement in Los Angeles is rife with ethical issues and has proven to be inefficient in achieving its aims of reducing gang criminality in the city.

In a previous study by myself titled 'The Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act: An unethical and ineffective approach to reducing gang criminality in California' I offered three ethical objections to the STEP Act:

1. It violates the principle of **equality** because it is applied to minority youth at a disproportionate rate

2. It violates the principle of **fairness** because the language is prejudicial (street terrorism/terrorist)

3. It violates the principle of **justice** because it is excessive and the punishment is disproportionate to the crime

Resource Five
Activities

Activities

Activity 1. Do some independent research on the Rampart Scandal. Imagine you are overseeing the training of new police officers to ensure that another similar scandal does not occur. Outline some ideas for their training that you would introduce.

Activity 2. How many years can a (STEP Act enforced) sentence be increased by under Proposition 21 for the following crimes:

❑ Active participation in a street gang:

❑ A 'Serious' gang-related offence:

Activity 3. What does CRASH stand for? Reflecting on the previous chapter about political representations of gangs, why do you think that name is controversial/harmful?

Activity 4. What are the punishments for breaching a US civil gang injunction?

Activity 5. Statistics taken from the CalGang database indicate that street gangs are mostly made up of Black and Hispanic people. Why do you think that is? Do you think these statistics are reliable?

Resource Five
Further Reading

Explore
- Bjerregaard, B. (2003). Antigang Legislation and Its Potential Impact: The Promises and the Pitfalls. Criminal Justice Policy Review. 14 (2), 171-192.

- Bjerregaard, B. (1998). The Constitutionality of Anti-Gang Legislation. Campbell Law Review. 21 (1), 0.

References
- California State Auditor. (2016). *The CalGang Criminal Intelligence System.* Available: https://www.auditor.ca.gov/pdfs/reports/2015-130.pdf. Last accessed 26-07-2020.

- Department of Justice. (2018). *Attorney General's Annual Report on CalGang.* Available: https://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/calgang/ag-annual-report-calgang-2018.pdf.

- Preston, K. (2020). Anti-gang Enforcement as a Tool to Aid in Street Gang Desistance. MSc Dissertation. University of Essex.

Resource Six Overview

MAKE — HAPPEN

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Topic

Anti-gang enforcement approaches in the UK

A-level Modules

Crime and deviance (social order and social control, prevention and punishment, the role of the criminal justice system and other agencies, culture and identity)

Objectives

By the end of this resource, you will be able to:

✓ Draw connections between the 'knife-crime epidemic' and street gangs

✓ Identify the ethical issues with UK anti-gang enforcement approaches

✓ Make comparisons between UK and US anti-gang approaches

Instructions

1. Read the data source
2. Complete the activities
3. Explore the further reading

Resource Six
Data Source

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UK anti-gang enforcement

Active Reading

Gang Injunctions

The Policing and Crime Act 2009, which takes its definition of street gangs from the Serious Crime Act 2009 (amended 2015), similarly criminalises gang membership and enforces **gang injunctions** in the UK. These injunctions prohibit individuals suspected of being gang members from:

❑ Associating with certain people

❑ Visiting certain locations/areas

❑ Owning certain breeds of 'dangerous dog'

❑ (In some cases) using the internet

Individuals found to be in breach of these injunctions can be served a fine and/or a prison sentence. The goal, again, is to deter and punish not to intervene or rehabilitate.

Gangs Matrix

Those identified as being gang members under the Serious Crime Act 2015 are added to a database called the Gangs Matrix. Much like with CalGang, it has faced much criticism for being racially discriminatory and including high numbers of minority youth, some of whom are as young as 12 years old.

Figure 19

Quote from Amnesty UK report on Gangs Matrix (Amnesty International UK, online, 2020).

'The matrix is not fit for purpose, never has been, never will. It feeds an industry based on violence reduction... distorted to fit a narrative: all knife crime is committed by young black men in gangs'
Martin Griffiths, Trauma Surgeon at Royal London Hospital and Advocate for Violence Reduction

Resource Six
Data Source

The Gangs Matrix scores the individuals listed on the database and labels them as either 'Red, Amber or Green'. This scoring and labelling system is designed to identify the risk posed by the individual and to prevent them from committing serious and violent crime. A 'Red' individual would have increased police resources allocated to them and would be at an increased risk of stop-and-search, arrest, and prosecution. Individuals listed on the database are also subject to social media surveillance. This means that law enforcement officers will observe and record their social media use. Posts deemed to be gang related can later be used in court.

Figure 20

Quote from Stop Watch report on the Gangs Matrix (Williams, online, 2018).

"I got stopped one time, and they said, 'Ah, he's got...' I think they said 'a red mark by his name'. I don't know what that means...I didn't know what that meant at the time, and then I went into my school police officer and said, 'Why have I got marks against my name?' And she said to me, 'Ah, it's because they think that you are gang related'. I don't know, like, the police officers, after they heard that, they just started treating me differently. They just started being rude to me, giving me attitude for no reason. You see, with me, I don't give police officers attitude, because, if I don't give them attitude, it just means I can be on my way quicker." [Nigel]

Resource Six
Data Source

Section B

The knife-crime epidemic and anti-gang enforcement

Since 1997, there has been an increased focus on knife-crime legislation in the UK. Political officials often refer to the levels of knife-crime as an 'epidemic' and many have come to the conclusion that street gangs are to blame for this. Then Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, commented in 2019 that legislation was being passed in order to prevent gang members from carrying knives. Boris Johnson, then London mayor, also conflated knife crime and gang culture in 2008 suggesting that gang members were carrying knives at a high rate due to a 'bogus atmosphere of glamour' (Sparrow, online, 2008). This narrative led to an increase in police stop-and-search practices and further injunctions.

Knife Crime Prevention Orders (KCPO's)

There is a significant overlap between knife-crime laws and UK **gang injunctions**, particularly in the case of Knife Crime Prevention Orders (KCPO's).

A KCPO is a **civil order** that can be enforced upon any UK person over the age of 12 who law enforcement believe to be regularly carrying a blade. These orders prohibit individuals suspected of being involved in knife-crime from:

❑ Associating with certain people

❑ Visiting certain locations/areas

❑ Being on the street during 'curfew' hours

Many sociologists dispute the conflation of knife-crime and street gangs and find that the epidemic has been somewhat overstated. A study by Squires et al (2008) finds that levels of knife crime during the 'epidemic' were fairly consistent and not increasing at such a rapid rate to justify the policy changes. As well as this, the study found that though the statistics suggest that knife carrying had increased between 2003-2008, this was likely due simply to increased police stop-and-search practices.

Resource Six
Data Source

Active Reading

The Trident Gang Command

In 2012, one thousand Metropolitan police officers were deployed in London under the 'Trident Gang Command'. This task force carried out raids of suspected gang members and was designed to tackle 'serious youth crime' including weapon-based violence. This specialist police unit was provided with funding to increase stop-and-search practices.

Figure 21

Image of Metropolitan police engaging in a stop-and-search (Gayle, online, 2018)

Unlike in the case of the STEP Act in the US, **anti-gang enforcement** in the UK pays more attention to providing evidence that the suspect and the crime is, in fact, gang-related.

Providing Evidence

'Where the prosecution case focuses on gang activity, it will be necessary to prove the existence of the gang and explain its relevance to the circumstances of the case.' (Crown Prosecution Service, online, 2020).

However, anti-gang enforcement in the UK, much like in the US, is rife with issues of racial discrimination and **racial profiling**. Though the CPS claim to consider proof of gang membership as essential, it is important to remember that this proof is based on highly contested definitions of what constitutes a gang member.

Figure 22

Quote from Amnesty UK report on Gangs Matrix (Amnesty International UK, online, 2018).

'If you're black and born on an estate, nowadays the system automatically sees you as being in a gang.'
Stafford Scott, The Monitoring Group (Tottenham)

Resource Six
Activities

Activities

Activity 1. What are the punishments for breaching a UK civil gang injunction?

Activity 2. What could happen to an individual who is assigned a 'Red' label on the Gangs Matrix?

Activity 3. Why do you think that government statistics indicated that the UK was (and continues to be) experiencing a knife-crime epidemic and how do you think UK anti-gang enforcement approaches affect these statistics?

Activity 4. The UK has increased stop-and-search practices many times in its anti-gang enforcement approaches. Do you think this is a useful gang intervention technique? Why or why not?

Activity 5. How are KCPO's similar to gang injunctions?

Resource Six
Activities

Activities

Activity 6. We know that the three approaches to tackling gang membership and criminality are **prevention**, **intervention**, and **rehabilitation**. Which of these do the following UK anti-gang enforcement approaches tackle? Circle the appropriate choice and explain your reasons below.

Gang injunctions:

Prevention   Intervention   Rehabilitation

Gangs Matrix:

Prevention   Intervention   Rehabilitation

KCPOs:

Prevention   Intervention   Rehabilitation

Trident Gang Command:

Prevention   Intervention   Rehabilitation

Extension Activity: Using Google Scholar, do some independent research on 'dangerous dogs' and gangs. Do you think the breeding and use of dangerous dogs is a true indicator of gang membership. Why or why not? Some useful articles to get you started can be found in the explore section on the following page.

Resource Six
Further Reading

Explore

Maher, J. and Pierpoint, H., 2011. Friends, status symbols and weapons: the use of dogs by youth groups and youth gangs. *Crime, law and social change*, *55*(5), pp.405-420.

Hallsworth, S., 2011. Then they came for the dogs!. *Crime, law and social change*, *55*(5), pp.391-403.

Hallsworth, S., 2014. Gang talking criminologists: A rejoinder to John Pitts. *Youth and Policy*, *112*, pp.35-43.

Independent Research

References

Amnesty International UK. (2020). *What is the Gangs Matrix?*. Available: https://www.amnesty.org.uk/london-trident-gangs-matrix-metropolitan-police.

Amnesty International UK. (2018). *Trapped in the Gangs Matrix*. Available: https://www.amnesty.org.uk/trapped-gangs-matrix.

Gayle, D. (2018). *Rise in proportion of BAME suspects on Met's gangs matrix*. Available: https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/may/29/rise-in-proportion-bame-suspects-met-police-gangs-matrix.

Williams, P., 2018. Being matrixed: the (over) policing of gang suspects in London.

Final
Reflection Activity

Deep Dive
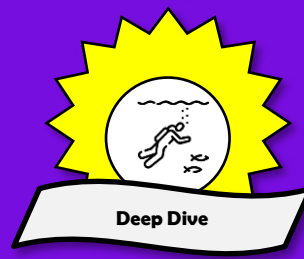
Choose either London or Los Angeles as a case study. Identify alternative anti-gang enforcement approaches (think about the services provided by Homeboy Industries, Catch 22 etc.). In your chosen location, choose one (or more) approaches and/or services that you think would be more suitable and effective than the current anti-gang enforcement strategies in place. Use the following headers to explain why and how this approach would be more successful.

Prevention

Intervention

Rehabilitation

Part 3 – Study Skills, Tips & Guidance

This section includes helpful tips to help you complete this pack, as well as improve your study skills for any courses you take next year.

It also includes a few fantastic easy-to-use resources on what to do next if you are hoping to go to university in the next few years, like UCAS advice and web links to more academic opportunities.

In this section:

University Study Skills:
- ✓ Cornell Notes
- ✓ Key Instruction Words
- ✓ Academic Writing
- ✓ Referencing
- ✓ Evaluating Your Sources

University Guidance:
- ✓ What next?

Subject Guidance:
- ✓ More on studying your subject

University Study Skills
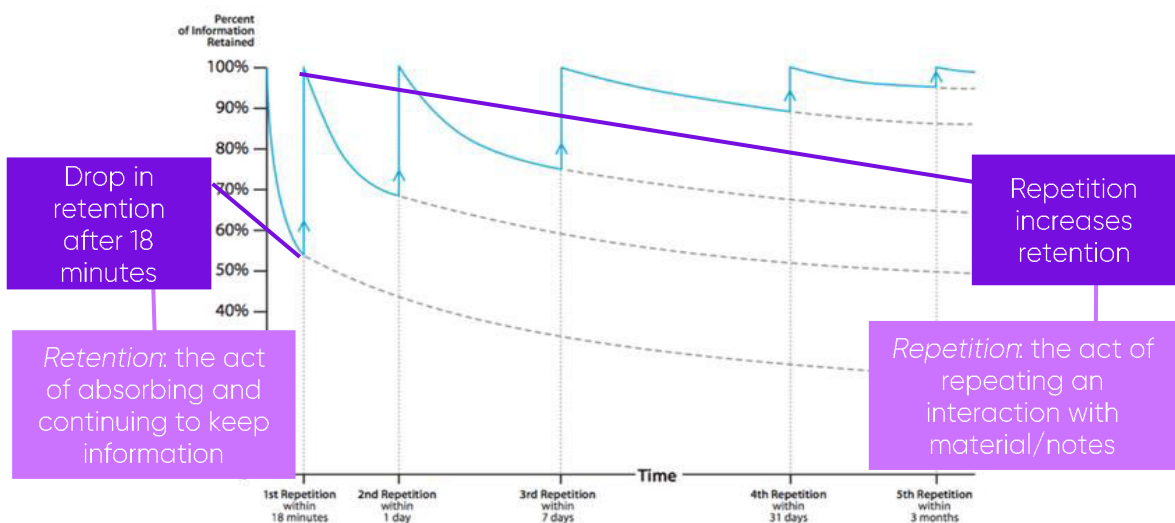# Cornell Notes

University Ready

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Why is good note-taking important?

If it feels like you forget new information almost as quickly as you hear it, even if you write it down, that's because we tend to lose almost 40% of new information within the first 24 hours of first reading or hearing it.

If we take notes effectively, however, we can retain and retrieve almost 100% of the information we receive. Consider this graph on the rate of forgetting with study/repetition:

Drop in retention after 18 minutes

Retention: the act of absorbing and continuing to keep information

Repetition increases retention

Repetition: the act of repeating an interaction with material/notes

Learning a new system

The Cornell Note System was developed in the 1950s at the University of Cornell in the USA. The system includes interacting with your notes and is suitable for all subjects. There are three steps to the Cornell Note System.

Step 1: Note-Taking
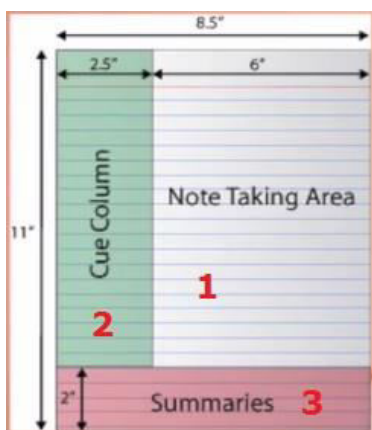
1. **Create Format:** Notes are set up in the Cornell Way. This means creating 3 boxes like the ones on the left. You should put your name, date and topic at the top of the page.

2. **Write and Organise:** You then take your notes in the 'note taking' area on the right hand side of the page. You should organise these notes by keeping a line or a space between 'chunks'/main ideas of information. You can also use bullet points for lists of information to help organise your notes.

University Study Skills
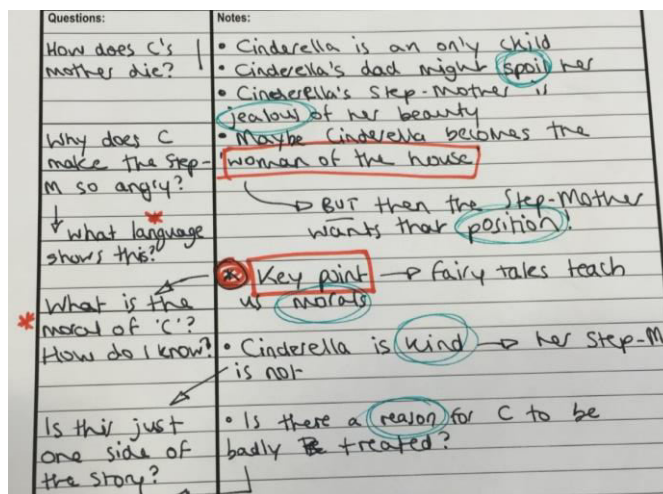# Cornell Notes

University Ready

Step 2: Note-Making

1. **Revise and Edit Notes:** Go back to box 1, the note-taking area and spend some time revising and editing. You can do this by: highlighting 'chunks' of information with a number or a colour; circling all key words in a different colour; highlighting main ideas; adding new information in another colour.

2. **Note Key Idea:** Go to box 2 on the left hand side of the page and develop some questions about the main ideas in your notes. The questions should be 'high level'. This means they should encourage you to think deeper about the ideas. Example 'high level' questions would be:
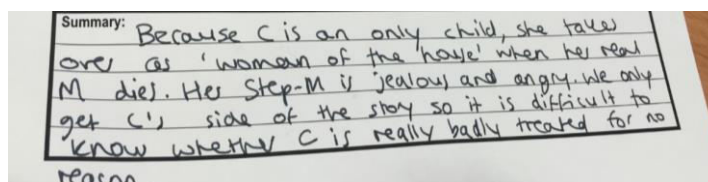- Which is the most important/significant reason for...
- To what extent...
- How does the (data/text/ideas) support the viewpoint?
- How do we know that...

Here is an example of step 1 and step 2 for notes on the story of Cinderella:

Step 3: Note-Interacting

Summary: Go to box 3 at the bottom of the page and summarise the main ideas in box 1 and answer the essential questions in box 2.

Give the Cornell Note Taking System a try and see if it works for you!

University Study Skills
Key Instruction Words

University Ready

These words will often be used when university tutors set you essay questions - it is a good idea to carefully read instruction words before attempting to answer the question.

Analyse – When you analyse something, you consider it carefully and in detail in order to understand and explain it. To analyse, identify the main parts or ideas of a subject and examine or interpret the connections between them.

Comment – When you comment on a subject or the ideas in a subject, you say something that gives your opinion about it or an explanation for it.

Compare – To compare things means to point out the differences or similarities between them. A comparison essay would involve examining qualities/characteristics of a subject and emphasising the similarities and differences.

Contrast – When you contrast two subjects, you show how they differ when compared with each other. A contrast essay should emphasise striking differences between two elements.

Compare and contrast – To write a compare and contrast essay, you would examine the similarities and differences between two subjects.

Criticise – When you criticise, you make judgments about a subject after thinking about it carefully and deeply. Express your judgement with respect to the correctness or merit of the factors under consideration. Give the results of your own analysis and discuss the limitations and contributions of the factors in question. Support your judgement with evidence.

Define – When you define something, you show, describe, or state clearly what it is and what it is like. You can also say what its limits are. Do not include details but do include what distinguishes it from the other related things, sometimes by giving examples.

Describe – To describe in an essay requires you to give a detailed account of characteristics, properties or qualities of a subject.

Discuss – To discuss in an essay, consider your subject from different points of view. Examine, analyse and present considerations for and against the problem or statement.

University Study Skills
Key Instruction Words

University Ready

Continued

Evaluate – When you evaluate in an essay, decide on your subject's significance, value or quality after carefully studying its good and bad features. Use authoritative (e.g. from established authors or theorists in the field) and, to some extent, personal appraisal of both contributions and limitations of the subject. Similar to **assess**.

Illustrate – If asked to illustrate in an essay, explain the points that you are making clearly by using examples, diagrams, statistics etc.

Interpret – In an essay that requires you to interpret, you should translate, solve, give examples, or comment upon the subject and evaluate it in terms of your judgement or reaction. In other words, give an explanation of what your subject means. Similar to **explain**.

Justify – When asked to justify a statement in an essay, you should provide the reasons and grounds for the conclusions you draw from the statement. Present your evidence in a form that will convince your reader.

Outline – Outlining requires that you explain ideas, plans, or theories in a general way, without giving all the details. Organise and systematically describe the main points or general principles. Use essential supplementary material but omit minor details.

Prove – When proving a statement, experiment or theory in an essay, you must confirm or verify it. You are expected to evaluate the material and present experimental evidence and/or logical argument.

Relate – To relate two things, you should state or claim the connection or link between them. Show the relationship by emphasising these connections and associations.

Review – When you review, critically examine, analyse and comment on the major points of a subject in an organised manner

University Study Skills
Academic Writing

University Ready

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What is academic writing?

'Academic writing' is a special way of writing when talking about research or a point of view.

It has a logical structure and uses formal language. Various sources of information are also used to support what is being said.

Academic writing: how to guide

- Use words you know and are confident using, making sure that what you write makes sense and is clear.
- Do not use contractions, like 'don't' or 'can't'. Instead, write these out fully: 'do not', 'cannot'.
- Do not use colloquialisms, meaning words or phrases that are not formal and that you would use when you speak. Examples include 'ace', 'brilliant', 'like chalk and cheese', etc.
- Do not use slang or jargon, for example 'daft', 'bloke', 'dodgy'.

Expressing your opinion in academic writing

In academic writing, it is best to express an opinion without writing in the first person. Your work should show that it is supported by specific evidence and facts, rather than your personal intuition.

Therefore, rather than saying 'In my opinion, this proves that', you can express the outcome of your reasoning in other ways:
- 'This indicates that...';
- 'The aforementioned problems in Smith's argument reveal that...';
- 'Such weaknesses ultimately mean that...', and so on.

Signposting

Signposting guides your reader through different sections of your writing. It tells them what is being discussed and why, and when your piece is moving from one part to another. It links ideas together and helps with the flow of your writing. Below are some examples of using signposting to:

- Expand on a previous idea:
  - 'Building on from the idea that...' (mention previous idea), 'this section illustrates that...' (introduce your new idea).
  - 'To further understand the role of...' (your topic/previous idea) this section explores the idea that... (introduce your new idea).

- Present a contrasting view:
  - 'However, another angle in this debate suggests that... (introduce your contrasting idea)
  - 'However, not all research shows that...' (mention your previous idea). 'Some evidence agrees that...'

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Referencing

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What is a reference or referencing?

A reference is just a note in your assignment that tells your reader where specific ideas, information or opinions that you have used from another source have come from. It can be done through 'citations' or a 'bibliography'.

When you get to university, you will need to include references in the assignments that you write. As well as being academic good practice, referencing is very important, because it will help you to avoid plagiarism.

Plagiarism is when you take someone else's work or ideas and pass them off as your own. **Whether plagiarism is deliberate or accidental, the consequences can be severe.** You must be careful to reference your sources correctly.

Why should I reference?

Referencing is important in your work for the following reasons:

- It gives credit to the authors of any sources you have referred to or been influenced by.
- It supports the arguments you make in your assignments.
- It demonstrates the variety of sources you have used.
- It helps to prevent you from losing marks, or failing, due to plagiarism.

When should I use a reference?

You should use a reference when you:

- Quote directly from another source.
- Summarise or rephrase another piece of work.
- Include a specific statistic or fact from a source.

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Is it a source worth citing?

Question your sources before referencing using these tips:

Currency: the timelines of the information
- When was it published or posted? Has it been revised or updated? Does your topic require current information, or will older sources work as well?

Relevance: the importance of the information for your needs
- Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question? Who is the intended audience? Have you looked at a variety of sources?

Authority: the source of the information
- Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor? What are the author's credentials? Is the author qualified to write on the topic?

Accuracy: the reliability and correctness of the source
- Is the information supported by evidence? Has the information been reviewed or refereed? Can you verify whether it is a personal or professional source? Are there errors?

Purpose: the reason the information exists
- Does the author make their intentions/purpose clear? Is the information fact, opinion or propaganda? Are there are biases? Does the viewpoint appear objective?

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How do I reference?

There are a number of different ways of referencing. However, most universities use what is called the Harvard Referencing Style. Talk to your tutor about which style they want you to use – the most important thing is that you remain consistent!

The two main aspects of referencing you need to be aware of are:

1. In-text citations

These are used when directly quoting a source. They should be located in the body of your work, after you have referred to your source in your writing. They contain the surname of the author of the source and the year it was published in brackets.

Example: *Daisy describes her hopes for her infant daughter, stating "I hope she'll be a fool — that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool."* **(Fitzgerald, 2004).**

2. Bibliography

This is a list of all the sources you have referenced in your assignment. In the bibliography, you list your references by the numbers you have used and include as much information as you have about the reference. The list below gives what should be included for different sources.

- Websites – Author (if possible), *'title of the web page'*, 'Available at:' website address, [Accessed: date you accessed it].

  Example: *'How did so many soldiers survive the trenches?'*, Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/z3kgjxs#zg2dtfr [Accessed: 11 July 2019].

- Books – Author surname, author first initial, (year published), *title of book*, publisher

  Example: Dubner S. and Levitt, S., (2007), *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything*, Penguin Books

- Articles – Author, *'title of the article'*, where the article comes from (newspaper, journal etc.), date of the article.

  Example: Maev Kennedy, *'The lights to go out across the UK to mark First World War's centenary'*, The Guardian Newspaper, 10 July 2014.

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Evaluating sources

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Knowing about the different types of sources and what makes them worth using is important for academic work.

When doing research you will come across a lot of information from different types of sources. How do you decide which source to use? From newspaper articles to books to tweets, this provides a brief description of each type of source, and breaks down things to consider when selecting a source.

Tweets

A platform for millions of very short messages on a variety of topics.

Blogs

Blogs (e.g. Tumbler) are used for sharing both developed and unpublished ideas and interests with a niche community.

YouTube

A collection of millions of educational, inspirational, eye-opening and entertaining videos.

Newspaper

A reporting and recording of cultural and political happenings that keep the general public informed. Opinions and public commentaries can also be included.

Journals

A collection of analytics reports that outline the objectives, background, methods, results and limitations of new research written for and by scholars in a niche field.

Academic book

The information presented is supported by clearly identified sources. Sometimes each chapter has a different author.

Encyclopaedia

Books or online – giving information on many different subjects. Some are intended as an entry point into research, some provide detailed information and onwards references.
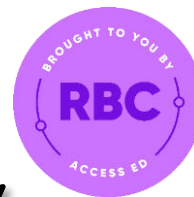
Popular books

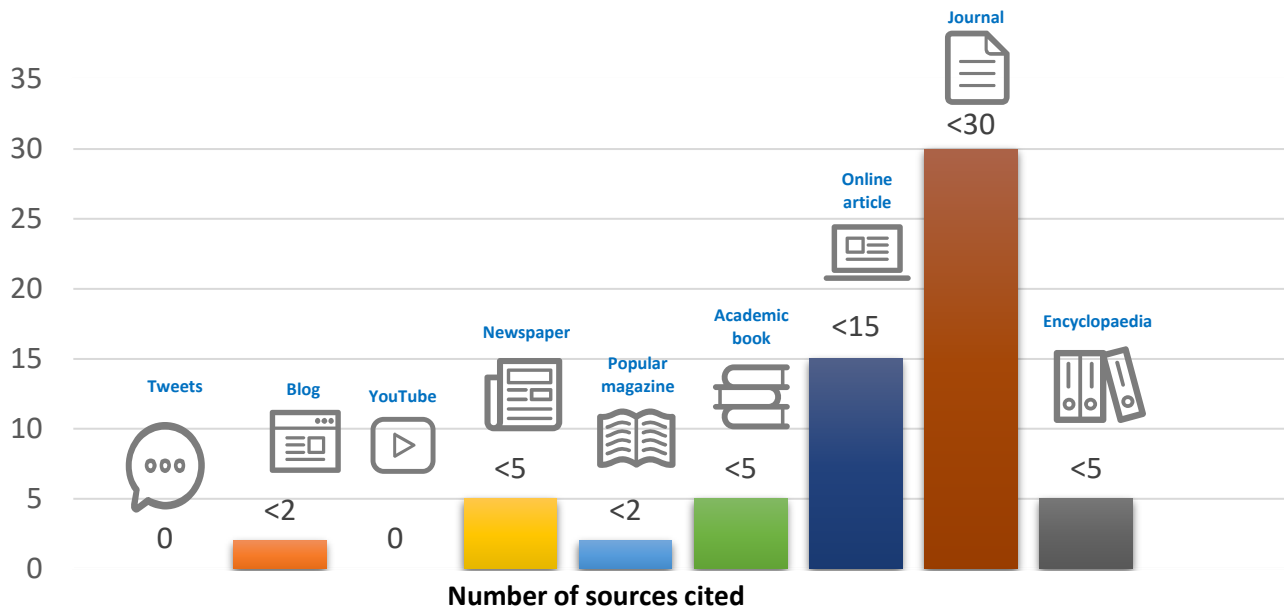A glossy compilation of stories with unique themes intended for specific interests.

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Number of outside sources

When an author used many outside sources in their writing, they demonstrate familiarity with ideas beyond their own. As more unique viewpoints are pulled into a source, it becomes more comprehensive and reliable. This shows the typical number of outside sources used in each type of publication.

Journal <30
Online article <15
Encyclopaedia <5
Newspaper <5
Academic book <5
Popular magazine <2
Tweets 0
Blog <2
YouTube 0

Number of sources cited

Degree of review before a source is published

Two factors contribute to the amount of inspection that a source receives before it might be published: the number of reviewers fact-checking the written ideas, and the total time spent by reviewers as they fact-check. The more people involved in the review process and the longer the review process takes, the more credible the source is likely to be.

Number of reviewers

Time in review

0 reviewers

seconds   minutes   minutes

1-2 reviewers

hours   days   days

3-4 reviewers

2-3 months   6-12 months   3-5 years

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University Guidance

Different people go to university for different reasons. You might have a particular job in mind or just want to study a subject you are passionate about. Whatever your motivations, going to university can help improve your career prospects, as well as develop your confidence, independence and academic skills.

Choosing a course and university

Choosing the right course to study is an important decision so make sure you take time to research the different options available to you. Here are some top tips:

✓ You don't have to choose a course which you have already studied, there are lots of courses which don't require prior knowledge of the subject. You can apply skills gained from school studies to a new field.

✓ The same subject can be taught very differently depending on the course and university you choose. Take a look at university websites to find out more about the course content, teaching styles and types of assessment.

✓ When choosing a university, think about what other factors are important to you. Do you want to study at a campus university or be based in a city centre? What accommodation options are there? Does the university have facilities for any extracurricular activities you're involved in?

✓ To research your options, have a look at university leaflets and websites, and check if there are opportunities to speak to current students who can give you a real insight in to what life is like there.

MAKE HAPPEN

Take a look at the Make Happen website, makehappen.org/guides, for some really useful basic guides and videos on a range of subjects – from being the first in your family to go to university, to what it all costs, university life, where to live, and more! You can also follow us on Twitter @MakeHappenEssex, at //Facebook.com/MakeHappenEssex and on Instagram @makehappenessex.

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Exploring Careers and Subject Options

- ✓ Find job descriptions, salaries and hours, routes into different careers, and more at: https://www.startprofile.com/
- ✓ Research career and study choices, and see videos of those who have pursued various routes at: http://www.careerpilot.org.uk/
- ✓ See videos about what it's like to work in different jobs and for different organisations at: https://www.careersbox.co.uk/
- ✓ Find out where different degrees could lead to, how to choose the right course for you, and how to apply for courses and student finance at: https://www.prospects.ac.uk/
- ✓ Explore job descriptions and career options, and contact careers advisers at: https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/
- ✓ Discover which subjects and qualifications (not just A-levels) lead to different degrees, and what careers these degrees can lead to at: http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/media/5457/informed-choices-2016.pdf

Comparing Universities

Use our platform ThinkUni.org to take a short quiz about your preferences and interests to find out which universities might be a great fit for you.

Other popular resources:
https://www.ucas.com/
https://www.whatuni.com/
http://unistats.direct.gov.uk/
https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/
https://www.opendays.com/

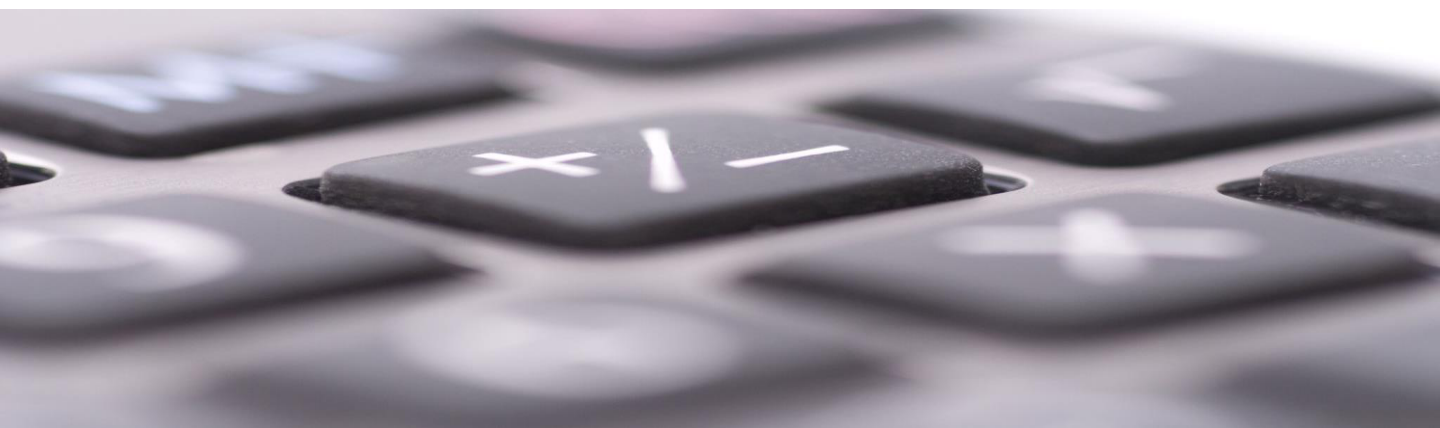# University Guidance
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UCAS and the university application process

All applications for UK degree programmes are made through UCAS. There is lots of information on the UCAS website to guide you through the process and what you need to do at each stage.

These are the main steps you can expect:

✓ Applications **open in September** the year before you plan to start university.
✓ You can apply for up to **five courses.**
✓ The deadline for most courses is **15 January**, though there is an earlier deadline of **15 October** for Oxford and Cambridge, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine/Science and Dentistry.

✓ Some courses may require an interview, portfolio or admissions test in addition to the UCAS application. Check individual university websites for details.
✓ Check UCAS Track which will be updated with decisions from the universities you have applied for and to see your deadline for replying to any offers.
✓ You should choose a first and second choice university in case you don't get your first choice. If you already have your exam results or a university thinks your application is particularly strong, you might receive an **unconditional offer.**

✓ On the other hand, if you're holding a **conditional offer** then you will need to wait until you receive your exam results to have your place confirmed.
✓ Clearing & Adjustment allows you to apply to courses which still have vacancies if you didn't meet the conditions of your offer, have changed your mind about what or where you want to study, or have met and exceeded the conditions of your offer and would like to look at alternative options.

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Personal Statements

A really important part of your application is the Personal Statement. It gives you the opportunity to tell universities why they should offer you a place.

✓ You can only submit one Personal Statement so it's important that you are consistent in your course choices. Make sure you have done your research to show your understanding of the subject area and passion for it.

✓ Start by brainstorming all your skills, experience and attributes. Once you have everything written down, you can begin to be selective – you only have 47 lines so won't be able to include everything.

Here a few top tips for making your Personal Statement stand out:

• Explain why you want to study your chosen subject

• Say what area of your chosen subject fascinates you

• Demonstrate your interest by mentioning what you have recently read, watched or listened to, and how they helped your understanding of the subject

• Mention activities or practical work you have completed which helped to develop any subject-related skills

• Describe how your school or individual work has equipped you with the necessary knowledge and ability to be a successful student in that subject.

Useful resources

✓ Key dates and deadlines: www.access-ed.ngo/timelines-for-applying-to-university

✓ Get tutor advice on writing a UCAS personal statement at: www.access-ed.ngo/writing-your-ucas-personal-statement

✓ An easy template to start practising your personal statement: https://www.ucas.com/sites/default/files/ucas-personal-statement-worksheet.pdf

✓ Untangle UCAS terminology at: https://www.ucas.com/corporate/about-us/who-we-are/ucas-terms-explained

✓ **Discover more about the** application process including when to apply and how to fill in your application on the UCAS website.

✓ Read more useful advice about what to include in your personal statement on UCAS, the Complete University Guide and The Student Room.

✓ Attend one of our virtual sessions to find out more about applying and personal statements.

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Student Finance

Concerns about money should not be a barrier to accessing higher education. There are lots of different forms of financial support available to you, including government loans and grants, as well as a range of scholarships and bursaries.

Key facts to remember

- You do not have to pay tuition fees upfront. If you are eligible for funding through Student Finance authorities, which most students will be, then you can apply for a loan which covers the full tuition fee and is paid directly to universities.
- You can also apply for a living cost loan to help with costs such as accommodation, travel and food. How much you receive will depend on your household income and where you choose to live and study.
- Repayments don't start until the April after you finish or leave your course and only if your income is over the repayment threshold. The amount you repay is based on your income, not how much you borrow, and any outstanding amount is written off after 30 years.
- There are additional forms of support available depending on your individual circumstances including Disabled Students' Allowances and grants for students with adult or child dependants. These grants do not normally have to be repaid.
- Universities and other organisations will also offer bursaries, scholarships and other forms of financial support so make sure you research all the funding available to you.

Useful resources

- ✓ Get the key facts and figures about Student Finance from: https://www.gov.uk/student-finance.
- ✓ Check how much you could be eligible to receive using the Student Finance Calculator.
- ✓ Find out more about Student Finance England support on the Student Room's Finance Zone.
- ✓ Check your money ready for university with this online course.

More on studying this subject

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A deeper look Into Helping US and UK gang members leave gangs.

Read:

✓ Valdez, A., 2009. *Gangs: A guide to understanding street gangs*. Law Tech Publishing.

✓ Decker, S.H. and Pyrooz, D.C. eds., 2015. *The handbook of gangs*. John Wiley & Sons.

✓ Pyrooz, D.C. and Densley, J.A., 2018. On public protest, violence, and street gangs. *Society*, *55*(3), pp.229-236.

✓ Mitchell, M.M., Fahmy, C., Pyrooz, D.C. and Decker, S.H., 2017. Criminal crews, codes, and contexts: Differences and similarities across the code of the street, convict code, street gangs, and prison gangs. *Deviant behavior*, *38*(10), pp.1197-1222.

✓ Howell, J.C., 2015. *The history of street gangs in the United States: Their origins and transformations*. Lexington Books.

✓ Shakur, S., 1993. Monster. *New York: Penguin Books*.

✓ Williams, S.T., 2007. *Blue rage, black redemption: A memoir*. Simon and Schuster.

Watch:

✓ The documentary 'G-Dog' about the founder of Homeboy Industries – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6k3dbfmTQ7g

✓ The following movies and TV shows to better understand representation (and misrepresentation) of gangs, gang culture and youth culture:

• Top Boy

• Power

• Kidulthood/Adulthood

• The Wire

• Straight Outta Compton

• Boyz n the Hood

More on studying this subject

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Listen:

✓ Podcast by The Guardian about gang culture
https://www.theguardian.com/news/audio/2019/dec/24/growing-up-with-gangs-poverty-and-knife-a-look-back

US Hip-Hop and rap and UK drill music have been controversial due to the glamorisation of gangs and weapon-based violence. However, we can learn a lot about gang culture and youth culture from these genres of music. The following artists/songs also speak to the topic:

- Dave – 'Black', 'Environment', 'Question Time',

- TuPac – 'Changes'

- Kendrick Lamar – 'The Blacker the Berry'

- The West Coast Rap All Stars– 'We're all in the same gang'

- Kanye West & Jay-Z– 'Murder to Excellence'

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