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What are the difference between sociology and anthropology

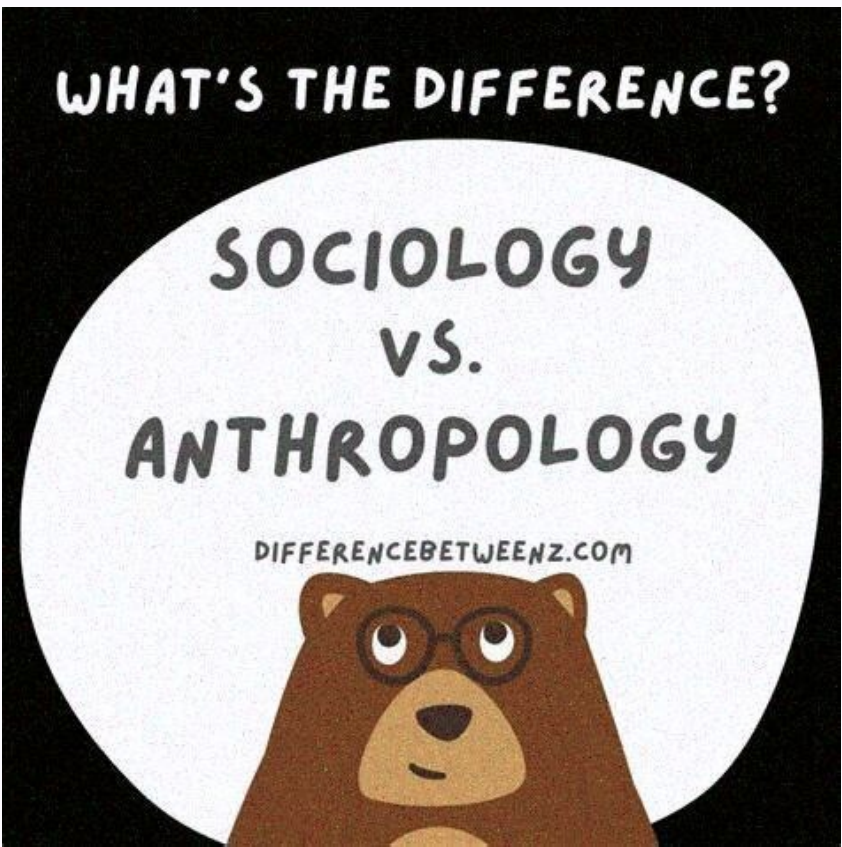
What is a major difference between sociology and anthropology. Is anthropology and sociology the same. Which is better sociology or anthropology. What are the difference between cultural anthropology and sociology. What are the difference between anthropology sociology and political science.

Sociology and Anthropology are both fields that study the human society and the human being. The main difference between sociology and anthropology is the approach adopted in each discipline. Anthropology studies human societies and cultures and their development. Sociology studies the development, structure, and functions of the human society. What is Sociology Sociology is an academic field that focuses on human interactions, social structure, and social organization. Areas like development, structures, organizations, units, institutions and social roles of individuals, etc. are studied under this field.



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Difference Between Sociology and Anthropology

1. Sociology is the study of people living together, their behavioral patterns, and reactions, while anthropology is the study of how people have evolved in various terms over the past years.	
2. Sociology deals with group behavior of people and their relations with society and institutions, while anthropology analyses people at a more micro and individual level.	
3. The major methodology for the study used by Sociologists is Quantitative methods like survey and sampling, while anthropologists use methods like ethnography and other qualitative methods to analyze and infer.	
4. The main difference between Sociology and Anthropology is that sociology focuses on things at a macro-level while, anthropology does that at a micro-level.	
5. Sociology is more solution-oriented and tries fixing social problems, while anthropology tries to understand cultural diversities.	
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Relation v/s. differences between Sociology and Anthropology	
Sociology	Anthropology
⇒Mainly a study of modern communities	⇒Mainly a study of ancient communities
⇒Makes use of documents and statistical methods	⇒Makes use of the functional methods
⇒Social science	⇒Natural science
⇒Methods of social science	⇒Methods of natural science

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Linguistic anthropology focuses on the influence of language on society. Biological anthropology is a scientific discipline that focuses on the biological and behavioral aspects of human beings. Anthropology mainly uses qualitative data since it studies the culture and communities. Anthropology traditionally focused on non-western countries, but this practice is changing now. Definition Sociology is the study of the development, structure, and functioning of human society. Anthropology is the study of human societies and cultures and their development. Focus Sociology focuses on social problems and institutions. Anthropology focuses on culture and community. Data Sociology uses quantitative and qualitative data. Anthropology uses qualitative data. Areas Sociology studies areas like social class, social stratification, social mobility, law, etc. Anthropology studies areas like art, gender, language, and religion. History Sociology traditionally focused on western societies. Anthropology traditionally focused on non-western societies. Sub-fields Sociology is divided into different sub-fields such as gender studies, criminology, social work, etc. Anthropology is divided into different sub-fields such as linguistic anthropology, archaeology, forensic anthropology, etc. Image Courtesy: “Sociology” by By Tamarici1997 - Concretozero zero, (CC BY-SA 4.0) via Commons Wikimedia “Anthropology” by Antony Stanley from Gloucester, UK - Coalitue Statue in National Museum of Anthropology, Mexico City (CC BY-SA 2.0) via Commons Wikimedia Anthropology and sociology are both social sciences fields that focus on understanding human behavior, societies, and cultures. While anthropology focuses on rich and detailed explorations of cultures in the past and present, sociology typically focuses specifically on the social structures of contemporary societies, with a modern emphasis on injustices and social stratification. Here are two simple definitions: Anthropology is the study of human beings in relation to physical character, environmental and social relations, and culture (Bernard, 2017; Delaney, 2017). It's often characterized by extremely detailed and nuanced fieldwork. Sociology is the scientific study of society, including patterns of social relationships, social interaction, and culture (Park & Burgess, 2019; Tomley et al., 2019). While these two fields share many similarities, they also have unique elements as a result of their individual foci. However, because each field is so extensive, each of the following examples have obvious exceptions, and the overlaps are significant. In fact, the main difference between the two is their traditions and the central debates within the fields, as I'll explain as we go. Anthropology can be understood as the systematic and scientific study of humans, their evolution, culture, beliefs, and social interactions (Pountney & Maric, 2021). The term is derived etymologically from Greek, ‘Anthrops’ representing ‘human’ and ‘logy’ implying ‘study’. It can be viewed as the study of humans in totality, encompassing past, present, and future. Anthropology is a discipline of extensive scope. It considers humankind from a variety of perspectives: biological, social, cultural, and linguistic, among others. It believes that the intersection of varying elements of human experiences, including but not limited to society, biology, language, and culture, results in a complex interconnected network (Ingold, 2018). The discipline not just limits itself to understanding human behavior or tracing their evolution, but expands to include cultural practices, beliefs, societal norms, and languages, amongst the numerous other facets of human societies and cultures (Nanda & Warm, 2019). Features of anthropology include: Study of Human Life: Anthropology strives to examine every aspect of a human being – the way one speaks, dresses, eats, interacts, and thinks (Ingold, 2018). It appreciates humanity in its entirety without focusing on an isolated attribute or specialty. Participant Observation: Participant observation involves immersing oneself in the culture or society being studied, offering an intimate understanding of the given subject (Bernard, 2017; Nanda & Warm, 2019). To illustrate, cultural anthropologists often live within communities, adopting their lifestyle to fully understand their customs and norms. Comparative Method: This analysis of societies and cultures, comparing one with another, aids in drawing out similarities and variances in human experiences across geographical regions (Pountney & Maric, 2021). For instance, comparing marriage customs across different cultures helps identify their unique characteristics as well as common themes. Qualitative Focus: Anthropology is well known for its qualitative research methods, and many of the in-depth qualitative research methodologies, like ethnography and thick description, come straight from anthropological research methods (Bernard, 2017). Cross-Disciplinarity and Eclecticism: Anthropology does not focus solely on human culture or societal forms; it interlinks different disciplines like biology, geography, history, and linguistics to present a comprehensive picture of human evolution and society (Bernard, 2017).

Sociology is the scientific examination of behavior, interactions, and collective phenomena within social groups (Little, 2016; Park & Burgess, 2019). It primarily addresses the analysis of various societal elements such as social behavior, culture, and structure. Early sociologists focused on social structures and institutions, ranging from the family unit to major institutions such as government bodies, education, and religion, and examined how they helped hold together cohesive societies. Later, conflict theorists pivoted to exploring the power structures inherent in social institutions. Their concern was with how societies distributed privileges and marginalized others (Park & Burgess, 2019; Tomley et al., 2019). Subsequent sociologists like Max Weber introduced the sociological paradigm of symbolic interactionism, which studies the ways language, symbols, and everyday social interactions structured society and identities. The main practical implication of sociology is that it gives policy makers a scientific view into how their policies impact their societies. At its best, it gives societies a scientific basis for developing equitable social policies (Plummer, 2021; Hickey & Thompson, 2016). Features of sociology include: Study of Societies: While anthropology may delve deeper into holistic features of ancient and modern cultures, sociology tends to keep its eye on societies and how they are formed. Contemporary Focus: Sociology focuses more on modern societies, studying complex social structures such as governments, economies, and families (Tomley et al., 2019). Policy Focus: If we were to look at a key outcome of sociological analysis, we would likely identify its impact on policy and politics. This cannot be said to the same extent about anthropology (Little, 2016). Clear Theoretical Traditions: A key difference between anthropology and sociology is their theoretical traditions. Sociology emerges from three key paradigms: structural-functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism. Anthropology tends to be far more eclectic, borrowing significantly from the humanities. Critical Approach: Lastly, sociology is characterized by its critical approach (Park & Burgess, 2019). It does not simply accept societal norms, but rather questions them. In doing so, it encourages individuals to break free from conventional thinking and promotes a broader, more critical view of the world around us. Study human societies and behavior: Both fields consider how societies form, function, and evolve over time (Panopio & Rolda, 2007). They explore how individuals and groups interact within these societies and the implications of these interactions. In addition, both anthropology and sociology scrutinize various societal roles, statuses, and shared behaviors, and the impact these have on human relations, societal dynamics, and social change (Park & Burgess, 2019). Use both qualitative and quantitative methods: These social sciences approach their subjects of study with a mix of methods. Qualitative research, involving detailed observations, interviews, and document analysis, allows anthropologists and sociologists to gain profound insights into human and social behavior. On the other hand, quantitative approaches, like surveys and statistical analyses, measure the breadth of social phenomena and patterns of human behavior (Panopio & Rolda, 2007). Analyze culture and social structures: Both anthropology and sociology delve deeply into the study of culture, examining customs, rituals, norms, and the social order that govern societies. Furthermore, they explore how these cultural factors shape, and are shaped by, the structures and systems of societies, with particular interest in power dynamics, role differentiation, and the development of social institutions (Pountney & Maric, 2021). Interested in norms, values, and beliefs: Anthropologists and sociologists show considerable interest in understanding norms (the accepted behaviors), values (what's deemed important in a society), and beliefs (shared perspectives about the world). Through their lens, these social constructs are not rigid, but rather dynamic and adaptive, changing across time, space, and cultures (Panopio & Rolda, 2007). Both disciplines consider individual and collective behaviors: Anthropology and sociology offer unique insights into both the individual's behavior and collective actions within societies (Panopio & Rolda, 2007). They endeavor to unravel the profound interconnections between personal choices and social contexts while examining the span from individual micro-level behavior to the behavior of larger social aggregates. Sociology focuses on modern societies: Sociology predominantly centers around contemporary societies, exploring current societal structures, cultural practices, and social behaviors (Plummer, 2021). It also examines the impact of modern institutions like the government, education, and religion have on societies. Emphasis is given to finding solutions to modern-day social issues, such as inequality, discrimination, and conflict. Anthropology studies past and present: Anthropology is unique in its propensity to analyze human societies across different time-frames (Nanda & Warm, 2019). It encompasses studying early human societies to understand the evolution of cultural systems, alongside examining contemporary societies. Its focus is broader, spanning the breadth of human existence, offering a long-term perspective on cultural, social, and biological changes. Sociology often uses statistical analysis: Sociology frequently incorporates empirical and extensive statistical analysis in its research (Thompson, 2016). Using rigorous data analysis, sociology aims at extrapolating broader tendencies and generalizable patterns from individual cases to better understand social structures, norms, and behaviors on a macro scale. Anthropology relies heavily on fieldwork: Anthropology distinguishes itself through its strong emphasis on intensive fieldwork and participant observation (Delaney, 2017). Anthropologists often immerse themselves in cultures and societies under study, living with local communities to get an in-depth perspective and understanding of their customs, practices, and ways of life. Anthropology includes biological and archaeological subfields: Anthropology goes beyond just studying human societies and culture to include biological anthropology, focusing on the evolutionary aspects of humans and their ancestors, and archaeology, that uncovers past societies and their artifacts (Bernard, 2017; Delaney, 2017; Pountney & Maric, 2021). This broad reach, encompassing biology and the past, adds a unique dimension to anthropology. AspectSociologyAnthropologyDefinitionSociology is the study of human social relationships and institutions. It seeks to understand the ways in which human actions and consciousness shape and are shaped by surrounding cultural and social structures.Anthropology is the scientific study of humans, human behavior and societies in the past and present. It tends to focus on the culture, evolution, behavior, beliefs, and social system of humans (Bernard, 2017; Delaney, 2017; Ingold, 2018).ScopeSociology focuses more on modern societies, studying complex social structures such as governments, economies, and families (Little, 2016). Anthropology has a broader scope, studying human societies across time and space. This includes not only modern human societies, but also ancient civilizations and even non-human primates (Pountney & Maric, 2021).MethodsSociology often relies on quantitative methods, such as surveys and statistical analysis (Plummer, 2021). However, qualitative methods like interviews, fieldwork, or textual analysis are also used.Anthropology traditionally leans more toward ethnography, participant observation, interviews, and artifact analysis. However, it can also use quantitative methods, particularly in areas like biological or archaeological anthropology (Ingold, 2018; Nanda & Warm, 2019).SubfieldsMajor subfields of sociology include Social Organization, Sociological Social Psychology, Social Change, and Criminology (Park & Burgess, 2019).Major subfields of anthropology include Cultural Anthropology, Linguistic Anthropology, Biological/Physical Anthropology, and Archaeology (Delaney, 2017).GoalsSociology's main goal is to understand how societies work and how they can be improved (Plummer, 2021). It examines how individuals and groups interact within their social framework.The goal of anthropology is to understand the full range of human cultural and biological diversity, past and present. It seeks to understand what it means to be human (Ingold, 2018).Key ConceptsKey concepts in sociology include social structure, social function, conflict, social class, culture, and socialization (Little, 2016).Key concepts in anthropology include culture, cultural relativism, ethnocentrism, cultural evolution, cultural adaptation, thick description, and ethnography (Bernard, 2017; Ingold, 2018).The main distinguishing difference between sociology and anthropology is in their traditions: anthropology has a rich tradition of detailed qualitative fieldwork, and the comparative study of cultures, past and present. By contrast, sociology has a strong tradition of debating social structures, especially as demonstrated in the ongoing sociological debate about the role of social institutions (functionalism vs conflict theory) and between structure and agency (functionalism and conflict theory vs symbolic interactionism).

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Tomley, S., Hobbs, M., Todd, M. & Weeks, M. (2019) The Sociology Book: Big Ideas Simply Explained. London: DK Publishing. Synopsis: Although the two domains are closely related to each other, Sociology and Anthropology are two distinct fields of study. Differences that exist between the two disciplines provide them such distinction from one another. At the same time, both the subjects have much in common. This article explores the two areas of Anthropology and Sociology, their differences and similarities, and possible careers in each sphere.Brief Introduction to Anthropology:Often termed the ‘science of humanity’ (Feeley-Harnik et al., 2020), Anthropology is the discipline that engages in the study of humankind. In simple words, Anthropology studies every aspect of human life. To go into a little more detail, the study of Anthropology involves the study of biological science or life science of humans, the behaviors and actions of people, and all that their cultures and societies encompass. This analysis is not limited only to the present world-Anthropologists are also concerned with matters of the past i.e., the history and evolution of humanity and the life of human beings in the past. Anthropology falls under the broader domain of Social Sciences.Anthropology was established as a field of study primarily in Europe and North America in 1950. The process of studying it, however, had already commenced and had been underway by the 1860s. Charles Darwin’s theories in his books ‘The Origin of Species’ published in 1859 and ‘The Descent of Man’ published in 1871, along with important discoveries of fossils and remnants of previous humans, fueled the interest in examining humanity. Richard Francis Burton, James Hunt, Edward Burnett Tylor, and Alfred Tylor emerged as the pioneers of the discipline, followed by James George Frazer, Rudolph Virchow, and later by Franz Boas, Bronislaw Malinowski, and Margaret Mead. Several associations concentrated on the development of the subject matter were also established.Prominent in academia today, Anthropology encompasses several methodologies to study humankind: (i) ethnography (as found in descriptive anthropology), which entails examining a specific cultural group; (ii) observation, which involves joining the group which one wants to observe, and actively engaging in their activities to gain the knowledge of that group or activity directly from the source through personal experience (known as ‘participant observation’); (iii) disinterring or excavating specific sites to inspect certain material objects of humans from the past.The comprehensiveness of anthropology i.e., the manner in which it incorporates within itself the several and varied aspects of human life renders it important to divide anthropology into specific branches which can focus on each feature of humankind separately. As a result, several subdivisions have emerged over the years within the area of study. They are: Cultural or social (or Sociocultural) Anthropology; Archaeology; Psychological Anthropology; Linguistic Anthropology; and Physical or Biological AnthropologyAnother type, World anthropology, can also be included in the mix.Brief Introduction to Sociology:Sociology also belongs to the larger groups of social sciences. It is the area of interest which focuses on the examination and analysis of the social life of human being and all that it entails. This includes human societies, human communication and interdependence, social behaviors and activities of humans, and the institutions that govern people. Different components of human societies, such as gender, age groups, race, communities, and populations, etc. are explored under this subject. Broader areas of discussion under Sociology include culture, socialization, social structure, and social interaction, bureaucracies and formal social institutions, social stratification (both in the local as well global context), economy, politics, education, ethnicity and race, sex & gender, education, religion, etc. Any aspect of human societies which renders humans different from animals and rather ‘social creatures’, thereby influencing their decisions, actions, behaviors, ideals, and lives, is studied under Sociology.Analysis of societies and humankind dates far back in history. Some known people who engaged in such analysis were Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Although the word was coined by Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès, French philosopher Auguste Comte was the first to use ‘Sociology’ and define it. Although Sociology as a discipline was established much after his death, Karl Marx is considered a pioneer figure and classical thinker of the field of study. Herbert Spencer, Max Weber, Georg Simmel, Emile Durkheim, George Herbert Mead, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman are other early sociologists. Sociology as an academic discipline was developed between the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Modern sociologists following these pioneers include C. Wright Mills, Michel Foucault, Anthony Giddens, Zygmunt Bauman, and Peter L. Berger.There are three primary theories in Sociology that are used to examine societies and their different facets: Structural Functionalism, Conflict Theory, and Symbolic Interactionism. Accordingly, the levels of analysis in sociology are divided into two categories: micro and macro. Any aspect of human societies can be explored through either one or a mix of all three theoretical perspectives in Sociology.The first fundamental feature which differentiates and distinguishes the two fields of Anthropology and Sociology is the subject matter which they cover, and which each of the disciplines focuses on. Anthropology studies human beings and human cultures. It is the science that concerns itself with the specific examination of human beings and everything that is associated with humans. Any aspect of humanity is of interest to anthropologists. The subject is mainly concerned with discovering and examining human evolution, which it does with the help of analyzing the past, the biological aspects of human beings, the effect that their environment and surroundings have, and the cultural and community factors which drive humankind. As such, anthropologists emphasize the need to study the human body, human cultures, human relations-in essence, all things human. Sociology, on the other hand, concentrates on the scientific study of human societies. In its essence, it is the study of how human societies have developed, how they facilitate and dictate human interactions and inter-relations, how institutions, social classes, and other various structures of societies over the history of humankind work, and what effects they have on human societies. In other words, Sociology is the investigation and examination of organized group behavior of people. Sociologists deal with the problems that arise within these groups, the significance of institutions within them, and how they operate in general. Anthropologists focus on human experiences. Sociologists deal with the overarching structures that determine these experiences and try to identify the deeper implications that each facet of human societies has.We can now arrive at the scope of these subjects, or the level of study of each of the disciplines. Anthropology has a micro-level focus, i.e., it studies and addresses micro-level aspects of humankind. In other words, Anthropology studies individuals, and specific families, cultures, and communities. Anthropologists explore how individual units interact with the larger social aspects. Sociology, on the other hand, uses a macro-level approach to the study of humankind.

It studies the broader concepts of societies and institutions. Sociologists examine how the wide-ranging society and various social facets within it affect the individual units. To put it otherwise, Sociology uses a top-down approach (from society to individual) while Anthropology uses a bottom-up approach (from individual to society).Next, we can examine the basis of each field of study. Sociology originated from an interest in understanding the social phenomenon, and its focus on industrialized societies of the West was a key feature. These societies were the ones that were considered the so-called ‘modern’ societies. Hence, Sociology originated as an area of interest in Western societies, and the people who pursued it studied, in essence, the societies of their own. Contemporary sociological practice, however, has broadened its scope. Anthropology originated in Western countries, but the focus of the study was the ‘outside’ world. Anthropologists considered those societies which were not Western and were not affected by Western influences to be ‘primitive’. The subject, therefore, started from an interest to study the so-called ‘exotic species’ of human beings which had characteristics different from their own. Due to its origins and focus, the discipline of Anthropology has faced severe criticisms, and current anthropological undertakings have widened their base as well.Due to its connection with the biology of humans, Anthropology serves as a bridge between the natural sciences and the social sciences. It includes within itself all the material and physical aspects of any human culture, which requires the aid of the natural sciences to enable a deeper understanding. Sociology, however, has little, if any, connection with the natural sciences. Instead, it brings together several other subjects under social sciences to the study of human societies. Because economics, politics, history, law, and geography are all important to humans and their interactions with each other, and Sociology finds its roots in the study of human societies, it is a given that it unites all these subjects.The methodology applied by both disciplines in their respective domains of study also varies. Anthropology primarily uses a more qualitative approach because it focuses on the micro-level analysis. Anthropologists are usually deeply involved in the community and practices which they aim to study. It is more field-based, utilizing techniques such as participant observation, material collection directly from the sources (such as in archaeology), etc. The sample sizes are smaller and more local. Sociology, being a macro-level form of analysis, tends to look at the bigger picture, and therefore engages a more quantitative model. The information databases are larger and more widespread. Analysis of questionnaires, surveys, etc. is usually involved in Sociology. The sample sizes are much larger and more expansive.One can also differentiate the two disciplines regarding their goals. Anthropology aims to understand the diversity of human nature and cultures. It often engages in a comparative study of individuals and single cultures. The main purpose of Sociology is to understand the problems as they occur in human societies and find policy solutions to resolve these social issues.At their core, Anthropology and Sociology are considered quite similar to one another. For both disciplines, an interest in understanding human beings – who they are and what they do – is integral, and it forms the basis for the origination and existence of both Sociology and Anthropology. As a result, both are closely related to one another. More specifically, that part of anthropology that deals with cultures and communities of people, i.e., social/cultural anthropology, has a close connection to Sociology. The study of History is also crucial to both Sociology and Anthropology. Although their extent and type of focus vary, people engaged with Sociology and Anthropology both use events of the human past to understand how human beings have come to exist as they do now. Because they are both concerned with humans and their lives, culture forms an integral part of Anthropology as well as Sociology. Norms, beliefs, customs, institutions, and all other social aspects within the cultural context are important areas of consideration under both disciplines. In contemporary practice, both Anthropology and Sociology use a mixture of science-based and humanistic approaches to the study of humankind. As they are undertaken now, the use of methodologies, area of focus, and practice of both Sociology and Anthropology have become much alike. The likes of E. Adamson Hoebel, James George Frazer, and Evans Pritchard have likened the two subjects, and the works of several anthropologists have been found useful in sociology as well.Despite the similarities between the two, Sociology and Anthropology are offered as different subjects of interest in educational institutions today. Both Sociology and Anthropology studies have a broad range of career options from which they can choose. Even some career opportunities for students of Anthropology and Sociology are similar. Sociology students can go into Social Services (social work, administration), Teaching (any level), Publishing (writing, research), Law (criminal justice), Community Services (advocacy, non-profits), Business (public relations, human resources), and such. Anthropology students also have access to these careers, with additional prospects in those fields where knowledge in natural science (specifically life science or Biology) can be of importance (such as forensics).Also Read: Relationship Between Sociology and Other Social SciencesReferencesBaines, K. (2015, November 3). What is the difference between anthropology and sociology? Cool Anthropology. R. (2019). Anthropology vs. sociology: What’s the difference? ThoughtCo. R. E. L., & Form, W. (2019). Sociology. In Encyclopædia Britannica. C. (2013). What careers are available for a BA in sociology? Education - Seattle PI. P., Spencer, J. R., Robotham, D. K., Hopkins, N. S., Nicholas, R. W., Feeley-Harnik, G., Seeger, A., Östör, Á., Kuper, A. J., Varenne, H., Aronoff, M. J., Keyes, C. F., Smith, E. A., Fernandez, J. W., Hanchett, S. L., Kolata, A. L., Tuttle, R. H., Lomnitz, C., Schildkrout, E., . . . Hannerz, U. (2020, December 9). Anthropology. Encyclopedia Britannica.