



# Data-driven learning and teaching

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UK Data Service

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## Real data bring learning to life

Using real-world data in teaching is an invaluable way for learners to confront complex social research questions.

Data from the UK Data Service:

- are well documented, enabling students to critically engage with real-world surveys and statistics
- provide rewarding raw material to teach data analysis
- can be used to enrich substantive teaching with historical and up-to-date evidence that can be interrogated

We can help you access and use all types of data:

- quantitative and qualitative
- UK, international and cross-national
- longitudinal and cross-sectional
- in raw and summary forms

Our large collection is diverse, encompassing time series, longitudinal surveys, historical and contemporary censuses, and interviews from classic and contemporary studies.

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## Datasets made for teaching

Most of our data are available for teaching purposes. To help get students started, we also produce cut-down versions which make them easier for learners to use.

UK Data Service also has a small but growing number of open data collections which can be accessed without registration, for example:

- 2011 and 2001 Census aggregate statistics
- teaching dataset from the Well-Being Module of the 2011 ONS Opinions Survey
- World Bank global development indicators
- teaching resources including data on interview and non-interview methods

You can browse and download all teaching datasets from our website.

See:  
[ukdataservice.ac.uk/use-data/teaching](http://ukdataservice.ac.uk/use-data/teaching)

## Types of data in our collection

Our collection includes data used by policymakers and often reported in the news:

- census data are used in national planning and resource allocation
- the Crime Survey for England and Wales is used to estimate the extent of crime experienced by people
- World Development Indicators, made available by the World Bank, contain statistical data for over 900 development indicators covering more than 200 economies

Our collection includes key datasets produced by, and for, social scientists, for example:

*Understanding Society* is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council to understand socio-economic change at the individual and household level.

*Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion: a Critical Investigation, 2003-2005* is one of many studies deposited by academic researchers. This mixed-methods study is by the ESRC Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Changes.

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## Teaching resources

You can find a range of resources on the UK Data Service website which have been developed in consultation with teachers. All can be downloaded or used online, either for self-directed learning or teaching in the classroom.

They include:

- online teaching resources to guide students in using and collecting research data
- hands-on workbooks containing worked examples, which can be used as learners gain experience with secondary data
- resources for teachers, providing practical advice and plans

## Popular resources

*Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The creation of the Mods and Rockers*, a teaching resource based on Stan Cohen's pioneering sociological study into youth culture. Suited to A-Level or undergraduate social science courses, for self-directed learning or as an assessment.

*Analysing the Fear of Crime using the British Crime Survey*, a substantial workbook for dissertation students which uses teaching datasets to lead undergraduates through the steps necessary to undertake a straightforward secondary analysis.

To learn more, see: [ukdataservice.ac.uk/use-data/teaching/teaching-resources](https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/use-data/teaching/teaching-resources)

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## It's not just about methods teaching...

Our data are excellent for teaching research methods and data analysis and can be used to embed real-world examples in methods courses.

But with the increasing emphasis on embedding evidence in teaching, our data are also at home in substantive courses.





The UK Data Service makes it easy to access data on almost every imaginable debate in contemporary social science, making it an essential resource for teaching any subject.

'Real data' are not only more attractive to students, they also give them a much better understanding of how research is done, and the difference between evidence and armchair philosophy.

*John MacInnes, University of Edinburgh*



The UK Data Service is a goldmine of social data with which to enliven methods teaching and make it relevant to the interests of social science students.... The huge range of data resources available makes it possible to carefully match data to the disciplinary background and substantive interests of the students.

From a student's perspective, this helps enliven the experience of learning how to do quantitative research, and makes it relevant and connected to the substantive content of their degree programme.

*Mark Brown, University of Manchester*



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## Learning and teaching guides

We have a wide variety of guides, all available online:

- topic guides which identify data available for a particular theme such as crime or housing
- guides about specific datasets, such as the OECD migration statistics or census flow data
- methods and software guides such as 'What is Weighting?'
- guides to exploring data online using tools such as UKDS.Stat to access and visualise international time series data, and Nesstar to explore survey datasets

Discover our guides:

[ukdataservice.ac.uk/use-data/teaching/teaching-resources](http://ukdataservice.ac.uk/use-data/teaching/teaching-resources)

## Video tutorials

Where appropriate, we produce video tutorials to provide click-by-click demonstrations of how to make use of our data and resources.

Browse our video guides collection at:

[www.youtube.com/user/UKDataService](http://www.youtube.com/user/UKDataService)







It is very rewarding to see how students take existing datasets and apply their own understanding and interpretation to rich, complex data in rigorous and creative ways.

Jo Haynes, University of Bristol



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## Resources for teachers – by teachers

We collate and share examples of teaching with data through our case studies. These can be browsed by data type, course level and subject. New teachers can benefit from hearing how others are using data. Experienced teachers can gain wider visibility for their methods and data-led subject-based resources.

Examples of current case studies:

- connecting data to subjects that inspire students
- introducing students to politics through real data
- introducing sociology students to quantitative research methods
- getting sociology students into archived qualitative data
- statistics training without an A-level in maths
- understanding the global economy using real-world data
- preparing students for that final year project
- learning research methods at an ESRC doctoral training centre

See: [ukdataservice.ac.uk/use-data/teaching/teaching-ideas](https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/use-data/teaching/teaching-ideas)

## Demonstrating the impact of data-driven teaching

If you are willing to share your teaching experiences, methods and materials, we can feature your work on the website in a teaching case study .

Get in touch at:

[comms@ukdataservice.ac.uk](mailto:comms@ukdataservice.ac.uk)

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## Training for students and teachers

Our programme of training events complements other training provided through national organisations such as the National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM).

Sessions include general introductions to research data management and to using data such as large-scale UK surveys and census tables.

We also periodically run events specifically for teachers and for students at different stages of their studies.

Training is available through face-to-face workshops and webinars (live online seminars), most of which are recorded and made available on our website.

You can browse our current training events at:

[ukdataservice.ac.uk/news-and-events/events](https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/news-and-events/events)

For a small fee, we can also provide presenters or content for other events.

Please get in touch:

[comms@ukdataservice.ac.uk](mailto:comms@ukdataservice.ac.uk)

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## We are listening

If you need guidance or support, we can help.

Our FAQs include a comprehensive list of answers to the most common questions and problems faced by teachers and researchers who use secondary data:

[ukdataservice.ac.uk/help/faq.aspx](https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/help/faq.aspx)

Our helpdesk of data experts can support you and your students if you hit a problem:

We also conduct periodic consultations and listen to feedback on an ongoing basis.

Please contact the helpdesk to share your comments and suggestions about our data, training and resources.

[ukdataservice.ac.uk/help/get-in-touch](https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/help/get-in-touch)



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