

Chapter 6 Project

Purpose

Our lives are defined by the groups that surround us and the groups we are a part of. They provide a way for us to better understand and define ourselves and others. **The purpose of this project is to allow you to better define, understand, and examine the purpose and function of groups in American society.**

Directions

Find a group of individuals gathering in a public place and conduct a sociological observation of the group for at least twenty minutes. Take notes and answer the following questions:

1. Where did you find the group?
2. What were the characteristics of the people in the group?
3. What were the characteristics of the collective group (not the individual people in the group)? For instance, the group may be a club, a regular gathering of friends, or coworkers.
4. What is happening in this space? Describe the ambience, atmosphere, environment, and physical characteristics of the setting.
5. How were the people arranged in the physical environment? (You may include a diagram or illustration.)
6. How were the members interacting with each other?
7. How did the group use body language and/or symbols to interact?
8. Could you discern any of the group's norms, roles, status hierarchy, or communication patterns?
9. Did the group seem unified? How could you tell?
10. Do you think the members shared a sense of identity with one another? Explain your answer.
11. What was the group's purpose? How could you tell?
12. Was the aggregate you observed a group in the sociological sense of the word? How could you tell?
13. Did anything about the group puzzle or surprise you? Were there any group interactions or characteristics that you expected to observe but didn't? Did your observation raise questions that could be answered through research?
14. Critique your own study of the group. How could you have increased the scientific value of your observations?

Your answers to these questions should fill two to three pages. Your reflection should include well-organized, cohesive paragraphs, and there should be no spelling or grammatical errors.

Materials

Note-taking materials

Checklist

- ☐ Observe a group in a public place for twenty minutes
- ☐ Take notes
- ☐ Two- to three-page reflection
 - Answer all given questions
 - Well-organized, cohesive paragraphs
 - No spelling or grammatical errors



Chapter 6 Writing Assignment

Purpose

Studying groups and the ways we organize ourselves can help us define and identify aspects of life. **The purpose of this writing assignment is to examine the impact, influence, and importance of groups in society, in the social environment, and in our personal lives.**

Directions

Consider the influence of groups on your life by analyzing the groups to which you belong and the groups that influence you.

First, make a list of all the groups you belong to. List as many groups as possible, considering family, clubs, sports teams, classes, social groups, friends, work groups, and social categories that are meaningful to you.

Then, answer the following questions in a two- to three-page reflection. Make sure your reflection is well-organized, well-developed, and does not include any errors in spelling or grammar.

- Do any of the groups you belong to transform members into a unit that is greater than the sum of its parts? How so? If it does, what additional group qualities developed because of that organization?
- Which of the groups you belong to has changed the most over time? Describe this change.
- What are the norms, hierarchies, rituals, and/or communication patterns of your groups?
- In what ways does your group membership make you feel a sense of inclusion?
- In what ways do the groups you belong to serve your emotional needs?
- Which group has influenced you, as an individual, the most? Explain this influence.
- Identify five groups that you do not belong to but that have influenced you in some way. Of these groups, which one influenced you the most in regard to your behaviors, emotions, and/or actions?
- Have you ever felt excluded from a group? If so, describe that experience.

Materials

None required



Checklist

- ☐ A list of all the groups you belong to
- ☐ Two- to three-page reflection
 - Answers all given questions
 - Well-organized, well-developed paragraphs
 - No spelling or grammatical errors