

Sociology – Reaction Paper

REACTION PAPER –

- Paper must be **two – three (2 – 3) full pages** in length
 - .5” margins, 1.5” spacing and typed
 - size 12 font, creative title {size 20 font}
 - name and date are handwritten on the back of the last page, along with # of option chosen
- You must choose any two (2) topics from which to construct a reaction.
- You may turn these papers in at any time, but at least one (1) must be completed **within the first nine weeks**.
- Use footnotes to cite all sources and a complete bibliography at the end. {Follow ASA Tips Sheet}
- Use lecture discussions, textbook and/or assigned reading to make connections within your writing.
- **45 Points**
 - Grades based upon the following:
 - **Focus:** awareness of task about a specific topic
 - **Content:** presence of ideas developed through facts, examples, statistics and/or explanations
 - **Organization:** order developed and sustained within and across paragraphs using transitional devices and including introduction and conclusion
 - **Style:** choice, use and arrangement of words and sentence structures that create tone and voice
 - **Conventions:** grammar, spelling, mechanics, usage and sentence formation
 - **Citation Page (5 points)**

OPTIONS:

1. Have you ever experienced culture shock? Share an instance or instances when your cultural assumptions were challenged by an encounter with a different culture. Consider vacations, school trips, or if your family has moved in the past. In which ways did the cultural shock force you to reevaluate or change your own ways of thinking? Did the effects of the cultural shock lead to any long-lasting and/or profound changes in your own cultural attitudes and, if so, do you now view those changes as a positive or negative experience?

2. Choose one of the following sub/counter cultures on which to research and construct a report: The Amish, The Hell's Angels, The Mormons, The Hippies, Bodybuilders, Nudists, or some other group of your choice (pre-approved). Why are they a subculture or counterculture? How do their norms and values differ from the dominant culture? If possible, interview a member; include their personal experiences (use discretion).
3. Write an autobiography that reflects the people, places, and social institutions (i.e., family, education, the mass media, religion, etc.) that have strongly influenced and shaped your socialization. Specifically, what cultural values, social norms, and beliefs did you learn from them?
4. Are you a twin or are you friends with twins? Describe similarities and differences in dress, activities, friendships, and behaviors. Address the nature vs. nurture controversy based on the observations reported.
5. Discuss as many examples of gender stratification you can find in your school. These can include, for example, the percentage of male teachers to female teachers; the number of male sports teams versus female sports teams (any funding inequalities?), advertisements, posters, and/or graffiti that objectify or demean women. Any gender imbalances in different departments or programs? Critically analyze your examples summarize your findings and conclusions.
6. Discuss the following: Will there ever be complete equality between males and females in the United States? Should there be? What could constitute complete equality? Do you think the women's movement is stronger or weaker today than it was in the 1970s? In what ways? In challenging gender stratification, do you think that feminists sometimes over-exaggerate the problem of sexual inequality in the United States? If so, how? What is a feminist? Are you a feminist? Why or why not?
7. Attend a male sporting event and a female sport event. From your observations and your own experiences, what are the similarities and differences in the ways that male athletes and female athletes think about sports, play sports, and reap rewards from sports? What are the similarities and differences in the ways that coaches coach, fans support, and sports media cover male and female athletics and to what degree, if at all, do these shape the way that male athletes and female athletes experience sports? Finally, which of the two "sports experiences" do you prefer? What can male athletes learn from the way female athletes experience sports? What can female athletes learn from the way male athletes experience sports?
8. Identify all the statuses you currently occupy. Identify which statuses are ascribed and which ones are achieved. Which of the statuses on your list is the most prestigious? Least prestigious? What status symbols do you currently own or wear? What status symbols do you wish you had and why? How do you feel when you see someone else with a status symbol you want (towards them and yourself)? Why do you think Americans are so focused on status (or do you think they aren't)?
9. Attend a social gathering (the mall, a restaurant, a school dance) and report your observations of people interacting. Make note of norms guiding behavior, distance zones, eye contact, and any stereotypes present. Did you notice any gender differences? Did you pass any judgments or jump to any conclusions based solely on visible characteristics?

10. Imagine you are conducting research about date rape on university campuses. Answer the following questions in your paper: Which research method or methods would be most conducive or least conducive to such a study? Why? If you were to use interviews in your study, what would be the advantages and disadvantages of employing closed-ended questions? How about open-ended questions? In conducting the interviews, what would you do to try to establish good rapport with your subjects? Finally, no matter which research method you choose, what are some of the ways gender may affect the viability of your study? What, if anything, can you do to minimize its effects?
11. Describe the sanctions, both positive and negative, that teachers use to maintain social control of their classrooms. Of the various methods identified, discuss the specific purpose behind the sanction and its effectiveness. What is the best method of social control a teacher can use to ensure students arrive in class on time? What is the most appropriate sanction a teacher can use to encourage students who are not doing well in a course to improve? What is the best sanction a teacher can use to see that his or her class remains orderly?
12. What is the most deviant behavior you have ever experienced? Why was the act deviant? Did it harm anyone? How did observers react to the deviant act? Remember to use discretion when revealing any personal information.
13. Analyze both sides of a debate on why social stratification is universal. Describe the main arguments behind the functionalist view and conflict theory's view of social stratification. Include the following points: is social stratification necessary for societies to exist and prosper? Does the United States function overall as a meritocracy? Are human beings ever capable of creating and/or living in a classless society? In your conclusion state which side you support and why.
14. What are the problems and adjustments a couple must make when each member is from a significantly different social class, such as the son of a working-class electrician dating and marrying the daughter of a wealthy entrepreneur from a capitalist class family? What are the advantages and disadvantages for both the man and woman? What is the probability that such a relationship would occur in the first place? What is the probability that such a relationship can succeed over the long term? Are you aware of any such relationship? If so, share the reality of it (use discretion).
15. Visit a homeless shelter, food kitchen, or similar facility that provides services to the poor. Describe the various types of clients based on race, age, sex, and other characteristics. What are their most pressing needs and demands? Also visit an "exclusive" department store or their online site. What are some items sold and their prices? Record your observations and feelings at both establishments. What did you learn about social class based on your experiences?
16. You are getting married next week. Write up a prenuptial agreement that details your expectations for marriage and, more importantly, your partner's obligations in the marriage related to the following: 1) financial matters,

2) housework and 3) child rearing responsibilities. Also include ten characteristics that describe your ideal marital partner. How do you think your expectations would differ from someone of the opposite sex? Explain.

17. Surf the internet for racist propaganda. How easy or difficult was it to find racist material on the internet? Which particular hate groups are currently using cyberspace? How widespread are they, and how organized do they appear to be? Which minority groups are the most frequent targets of racist material on the Internet, and what are some of the common racist themes being used against them? Finally, which sociological theories seem to best address the prejudices of the individuals and groups that are currently disseminating racist material on the Internet?