

**Task: To observe a cultural setting and collect qualitative data on the culture of the people being observed.**

**Ideas of places that you can observe:**

|                   |                         |                                 |
|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Religious service | Safeway                 | A friend's house                |
| Funeral           | Coffee Shop             | SeaLife Center                  |
| Sporting event    | Playground/Skate-park   | Laundromat                      |
| Post office       | Arts and Music Festival | Harbor                          |
| Senior Center     | TYC                     | Celebration (Birthday, Wedding) |

*(Ideally, the setting will be one that you are not super familiar with and one you are interested in.)*

**Should I let people know that I'm observing, or it is supposed to be a secret?**

You should tell them. In some situations, no one will care. In others, though, you should ask them if it is OK for you to observe and use the data for your class assignment.

**Do I participate in any of the activities or just observe?**

Never participate in something that you do not feel comfortable with. Observing through participating and observing while not participating are both valid methods of data collection.

**Should I use people's names in my data or should they be anonymous?**

They should be anonymous. Do not record anyone's real names in the data.

**Should I take notes while I'm observing, or should I observe first and then write everything down later?**

Either one works. Taking notes while you are observing is ideal, because you will forget some things if you wait. Sometimes, though taking notes during an observation is distracting or may be considered rude. Use your best judgment.

**How should I behave while I'm observing?**

Be discreet. Don't stand out.

**How long should I observe for?**

Anthropologists can observe for any duration of time as long as they collect the data they need. I'd like you to observe for about an hour, but I'll be flexible, as long as you can collect enough data.

**What information should I include in my observations?**

Use the field notes guide on the back of this page to help you record your observations.

**What should I do when I have recorded all of my observations?**

Write a 1/2-1 page expanded field notes description of the culture you observed.

**How will I be graded?**

|   | 4  | 3   | 2  | 1   |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| History Standard A6: know how cultural elements influence human interaction | Through detailed notes and expanded field notes student identifies and describes cultural characteristics without bias. Clearly and accurately can observe and record qualitative data that describes with detail cultural elements that influence human interaction | Through general notes and expanded field notes student identifies and describes cultural characteristics. General observation and qualitative data recording skills are displayed that describes cultural elements that influence human interaction | Through basic or simple notes and/or expanded field notes student identifies cultural characteristics. Basic skills of data collections and observation are evident. | Demonstrates minimal ability to record qualitative data through field notes or expanded field notes. Demonstrates difficulty in connecting cultural elements with human interactions. |

| Category  | Description  | Field Notes |
|---|--|-------------|
| <b>Appearance</b><br>(clothing, age, physical appearance)   | Anything that might indicate membership in groups or in sub-populations of interest to the study, such as profession, social status, socioeconomic class, religion, or ethnicity                             |             |
| <b>Verbal Behavior/ Interactions</b><br>(who speaks to whom and for how long; who initiates interaction; languages, dialects spoken; tone of voice) | Gender, age, ethnicity, and profession of speakers; dynamics of interaction  |             |
| <b>Physical behavior and gestures</b><br>(What do people do? Who does what? Who interacts with whom? Who does not interact?)                        | How people use their bodies and voices to communicate different emotions; what individuals' behaviors indicate about their feelings toward one another, their social rank, or their profession               |             |
| <b>Personal Space</b><br>(how close do people stand?)   | What individuals' preferences concerning personal space suggest about their relationships  |             |
| <b>Human traffic</b> (people that enter, leave, and spend time at the observation site)   | Where people enter and exit; how long they stay; who they are (ethnicity, age, gender); whether they are alone or accompanied; number of people  |             |
| <b>People who stand out</b><br>(Describe people that seem to get a lot of attention from others)  | The characteristics of these individuals; what differentiates them from others; whether people consult them or they approach other people; whether they seem to be strangers or well known by others present |             |