

Chapter 2  
Studying the Social World

|            | True or False | Multiple Choice | Scenario Multiple Choice | Short Answer | Essay | Total Questions |
|------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------|-------|-----------------|
| Remember   | 19            | 40              | 0                        | 0            | 0     | 59              |
| Understand | 6             | 21              | 0                        | 7            | 0     | 34              |
| Apply      | 0             | 4               | 4                        | 5            | 2     | 15              |
| Analyze    | 0             | 0               | 2                        | 3            | 6     | 11              |
| Evaluate   | 0             | 0               | 4                        | 0            | 2     | 6               |
| Total      | 25            | 65              | 10                       | 15           | 10    | 125             |

True or False

1. Prisoners are not valid subjects for sociological research.  
(REMEMBER; answer: false; page 28; chapter opener)
2. Some sociologists have theorized that, if incarcerated women are able to raise their children in prison, the end effect will be positive for mothers and for their offspring.  
(REMEMBER; answer: true; page 28; chapter opener)
3. Ethnographers enter the everyday lives of those they study in the hopes of understanding how the systematic study of ethnic identity can be an end in itself.  
(REMEMBER; answer: false; page 28; chapter opener)
4. If two sociological research projects study similar subjects but produce different findings, each study invalidates the other.  
(UNDERSTAND; answer: false; page 28; chapter opener)
5. Qualitative research relies on statistical analysis of data, whereas quantitative research relies on observations, words, or pictures as data.  
(REMEMBER; answer: false; page 30; big question 1)
6. Narrowing and focusing research questions often simultaneously narrows them of their significance.  
(UNDERSTAND; answer: false; page 30; big question 1)
7. Many of the most unresearchable questions imply a kind of causality that cannot be substantiated with accessible data.  
(REMEMBER; answer: true; page 31; big question 1)
8. For a research question to have merit, it must be connected to existing social science literature.  
(REMEMBER; answer: true; page 32; big question 1)
9. Sociologists should never study subjects that they care about.  
(REMEMBER; answer: false; page 33; big question 1)
10. According to the code of ethics of the American Sociological Association, sociologists have an obligation to ensure that confidential information obtained in research is protected.  
(REMEMBER; answer: true; page 35; big question 1)

11. Sociology is unique within the social sciences in that it encompasses a wide range of acceptable research methods.  
(REMEMBER; answer: true; page 36; big question 2)
12. Sometimes sociologists decide that the best way to answer a research question is through a combination of different research methods.  
(REMEMBER; answer: true; page 36; big question 2)
13. What people say in an interview about what they do in a relationship may have nothing to do with how they really act.  
(REMEMBER; answer: true; page 37; big question 2)
14. Choosing the right research method to study motivation and behavior is complicated even though people act in ways that are entirely consistent with their stated ideas and opinions.  
(UNDERSTAND; answer: false; page 38; big question 2)
15. As sociologists are social scientists, careful adherence to the scientific method is critical in all sociological research.  
(UNDERSTAND; answer: false; page 39; big question 3)
16. All sociologists, regardless of preferred research method, tend to pay a great deal of attention to reliability and validity when collecting data.  
(REMEMBER; answer: true; page 39; big question 3)
17. Persons participating in a research survey or poll, who can be asked large numbers of questions, are called correspondents.  
(REMEMBER; answer: false; page 40; big question 3)
18. Different types of researchers have different types of accessibility-to-data problems.  
(UNDERSTAND; answer: true; pages 40-41; big question 3)
19. Historical research has always been part of the sociological tradition.  
(REMEMBER; answer: true; page 42; big question 3)
20. Income and education are very obvious examples of two social phenomena that "co-vary" with each other.  
(REMEMBER; answer: true; page 43; big question 3)
21. A positive correlation means that, as one variable increases (or decreases), the other variable does the opposite.  
(UNDERSTAND; answer: false; page 44; big question 3)
22. There are 50 welfare states in the United States, with each state determining the form and focus of its specific welfare program.  
(REMEMBER; answer: true; page 47; big question 3)
23. Like anthropologists, sociologists are most likely to conduct their fieldwork among foreign cultures.  
(REMEMBER; answer: false; page 49; big question 3)

24 The amount of work involved in data analysis is very consistent across research methods and projects.  
(REMEMBER; answer: false; page 51; big question 4)

25. Research memos, for those who think verbally, can serve a very similar purpose to data displays.  
(REMEMBER; answer: true; page 53; big question 4)

Multiple Choice

1. What percentage of incarcerated American women have children under the age of 18?

- a. 15 percent
- b. 50 percent
- c. 70 percent
- d. 90 percent

(REMEMBER; answer c; page 27; chapter opener)

2. After a statistical study of the rearrest records of women who had served their sentences in mommy/baby prisons, what did researchers find?

- a. Mommy/baby prisons proved completely ineffective.
- b. Inmates of mommy/baby prisons had slightly lower repeat arrest rates than conventionally imprisoned women.
- c. Inmates of mommy/baby prisons had slightly higher repeat arrest rates than conventionally imprisoned women.
- d. Over 90 percent of inmates of mommy/baby prisons had not been rearrested.

(REMEMBER; answer: b; page 28; chapter opener)

3. Which of the following definitions best defines *ethnography*?

- a. Ethnography is the study of everyday lives in hopes of understanding how those being studied navigate and give meaning to their social worlds.
- b. Ethnography is the systematic study of ethnicity and racial heritage for the purpose of understanding social identities.
- c. Ethnography is the statistical study of a person's day-to-day activity.
- d. Ethnography is the study of a culture dramatically different from one's own in order better to understand one's own culture.

(REMEMBER; answer: a; page 28; chapter opener)

4. According to Haney's account of her time in a women's prison that also housed the children of its inmates, how did incarceration impact those children?

- a. The children were undernourished and miserable.
- b. The children were well fed, well cared for, and well educated, and they had plenty of playmates.
- c. The children suffered psychologically from the loss of privacy and from the lack of father figures.
- d. The children were eventually separated from their mothers, because the mommy/baby prison program was terminated at the order of the governor of California.

(REMEMBER; answer: b; page 28; chapter opener)

5. How long have sociologists been studying the familial effects of maternal imprisonment?

- a. Sociologists have only recently begun to research these effects.
- b. Sociologists have been studying these effects for the last two decades.
- c. Sociologists have been studying these effects for the past 50 years.
- d. Sociologists have been studying these effects since the inception of the discipline.

(REMEMBER; answer: a; page 28; chapter opener)

6. Quantitative research relies on \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. interviews or surveys  
b. words, observations, or pictures  
c. statistical analysis of data  
d. extended cases

(REMEMBER; answer: c; page 30; big question 1)

7. Qualitative research relies on \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. interviews or surveys  
b. words, observations, or pictures  
c. statistical analysis of data  
d. extended cases

(REMEMBER; answer: b; page 30; big question 1)

8. Good research questions are both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. feasible; broad  
b. feasible; cross-sectional  
c. feasible; uncharted  
d. feasible; sociologically relevant

(UNDERSTAND; answer: d; page 30; big question 1)

9. The goal of social research is to \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. confirm what researchers already know  
b. shore up support for positions researchers already have  
c. ask new and interesting questions about the world  
d. find evidence that matches researchers' beliefs

(UNDERSTAND; answer: c; page 31; big question 1)

10. Which of the following questions is one of the six questions that sociologists should ask to determine the merit and feasibility of a research question?  
a. Is the question clear?  
b. Is the question interesting?  
c. Is the question applicable to interdisciplinary analysis?  
d. Is the question revealing of true values?

(REMEMBER; answer: a; pages 31-32; big question 1)

11. Sociologists decide what to research and what questions to ask once they are familiar with \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. what other sociologists have already discovered  
b. what sources of funding are available  
c. what mainstream Americans believe about sociologists  
d. what expenses they are likely to incur

(REMEMBER; answer: a; page 32; big question 1)

12. What is epistemology?  
a. Epistemology refers to the set of research methods used by a researcher.  
b. Epistemology refers to a researcher's outlook on what can and cannot be known about the world.  
c. Epistemology is a subdivision of sociology that focuses on social inequality.  
d. Epistemology refers to the ethical code that all sociologists must abide by,

(REMEMBER; answer b; page 33; big question 1)

13. Sociologists make a distinction between \_\_\_\_\_ epistemologies.
- a. realist and surrealist
  - b. modernist and postmodernist
  - c. Neolithic and Cretaceous
  - d. positivist and interpretivist

(REMEMBER; answer: d; page 34; big question 1)

14. Sociologists who claim to be skeptical about the ability of researchers to discern cause and effect in our complex world are expressing a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ difference with sociologists who insist that they can indeed figure out what causes our world to work as it does.
- a. professional
  - b. epistemological
  - c. socio-political
  - d. theoretical

(UNDERSTAND; answer: b; page 34; big question 1)

15. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a sociologist who believes that the only true way to gain knowledge about the world is to use the logic of natural science.
- a. positivist
  - b. interpretivist
  - c. functionalist
  - d. structuralist

(REMEMBER; answer: a; page 34; big question 1)

16. \_\_\_\_\_ see themselves as the interpreters of other people's own interpretations.
- a. Positivists
  - b. Conflict theorists
  - c. Modernists
  - d. Interpretivists

(REMEMBER; answer: d; page 34; big question 1)

17. Which statement is true regarding sociologists' epistemological tendencies?
- a. Most sociologists make their epistemological orientations obvious.
  - b. Most sociologists do not often discuss their epistemological orientations.
  - c. It is considered uncouth to talk about one's epistemological orientation.
  - d. Sociologists cannot be said to have epistemological orientations.

(UNDERSTAND; answer: b; page 34; big question 1)

18. Like epistemological orientations, sociologists use \_\_\_\_\_ as conceptual frameworks to imagine and make sense of the world.
- a. frames of reference
  - b. research methods
  - c. theoretical traditions
  - d. codes of ethics

(REMEMBER; answer: c; page 34; big question 1)

19. Which of the following men is NOT considered a prominent social science theorist?
- a. Max Weber

- b. George Orwell
- c. Karl Marx
- d. Michel Foucault

(REMEMBER; answer: b; page 34; big question 1)

20. What role do values play in sociological research?
- a. Values have no part in shaping the research interests of sociologists.
  - b. Values influence sociologists' research questions, but they do not determine findings.
  - c. Values determine findings almost exclusively in sociological research.
  - d. Values have very little influence on sociologists' research questions, but they impact findings in significant, albeit hidden, ways.

(UNDERSTAND; answer: b; page 34; big question 1)

21. Which of the following statements about values and sociological research is true?
- a. Sociologists' values may influence their research questions, but do not determine their findings.
  - b. Sociologists must not let their values determine any aspect of their research.
  - c. It is the duty of the sociologist to remember her values in determining findings.
  - d. Values are irrelevant in all aspects of sociological research.

(UNDERSTAND; answer: b; page 34; big question 1)

22. For which of the following reasons do sociologists and other social scientists abide by codes of ethics?
- a. Government regulations require all sociologists to abide by these standards.
  - b. Given the nature of their research, social scientists must commit to do no harm to those they study.
  - c. Codes of ethics are formalities and not actually in use among practicing sociologists.
  - d. Scientists, as a group, tend to be highly competitive and have always readily endorsed the usefulness of such codes in keeping other scientists in check.

(UNDERSTAND; answer: b; page 34; big question 1)

23. Along with informed consent, what other ethical obligation do sociologists have regarding their professional responsibilities and conduct?
- a. They must disclose their epistemological orientations.
  - b. They must disclose their identity as researchers.
  - c. They must disclose their theoretical traditions.
  - d. They must disclose the true identities of their subjects.

(UNDERSTAND; answer: b; page 34; big question 1)

24. Informed consent has two components. Research participants must understand that their participation is \_\_\_\_\_ and based on a full understanding of possible risks and benefits involved.
- a. compensated
  - b. not compensated
  - c. voluntary
  - d. involuntary

(REMEMBER; answer: c; page 34; big question 1)

25. \_\_\_\_\_ formed the research team responsible for the \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. Craig Haney and Phillip Zimbardo; Stanford Prison Experiment
  - b. Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti; Stanford Prison Experiment
  - c. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels; Milgram Electro-Shock Study
  - d. Michael Foucault and Liam Gallagher; Milgram Electro-Shock Study

(REMEMBER; answer: a; page 34; big question 1)

26. In hindsight, what was the primary flaw of the Stanford Prison Experiment conducted in the 1970s?
- a. Confidentiality of the participants was violated.
  - b. The experiment inflicted harm on its participants.
  - c. The researchers lacked professional competence.
  - d. The study did not draw on a proper sample.

(REMEMBER; answer: b; page 35; big question 1)

27. What is an institutional review board?
- a. a body that reviews colleges to assure that institutions sustain viable research
  - b. a body that reviews researchers' proposals before work begins in order to assess potential harm and possible benefits to participants
  - c. a body that certifies participants for research study inclusion
  - d. a body of sociologists that decides which research questions should be officially endorsed by the American Sociological Association

(UNDERSTAND; answer: b; page 35; big question 1)

28. Conflicts of interest arise when sociologists' \_\_\_\_\_ interests prevent them from performing their professional work in an unbiased manner.
- a. personal or confidential
  - b. financial or philosophical
  - c. epistemological or theoretical
  - d. personal or financial

(REMEMBER; answer: d; page 35; big question 1)

29. According to the code of ethics of the American Sociological Association, sociologists have a duty to be \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. competent and confidential
  - b. competent and competitive
  - c. confidential and caring
  - d. confidential and cost-conscious

(REMEMBER; answer: a; page 35; big question 1)

30. What does it mean to operationalize a research question?
- a. Operationalizing is finding out how research subjects will behave under test conditions.
  - b. Operationalizing is testing the research question to find out if it will work.
  - c. Operationalizing is determining the operations and techniques to be used to assess a research question's key concepts.
  - d. Operationalizing is making agreements with publishers to produce copies of research study results.

(UNDERSTAND; answer: c; page 36; big question 2)

31. Artificial situations that allow sociologists to watch how people respond to them are known as \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. social experiments
  - b. social surveys
  - c. ethnographies
  - d. social interactions

(REMEMBER; answer: a; page 36; big question 2)

32. How do sociological researchers define the term *dependent variable*?

- a. A dependent variable is the aspect of the hypothesis that researchers expect will have a positive correlation to other variables under study.
  - b. A dependent variable is the aspect of the hypothesis that researchers expect to fluctuate in relation to other variables under study.
  - c. A dependent variable is a variable that is artificially created by researchers to simulate real-life situations.
  - d. A dependent variable is a variable that does not exist in real life.
- (REMEMBER; answer: b; page 36; big question 2)
33. An independent variable is predicted to \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. exist separate from other variables
  - b. correlate positively with other variables
  - c. fluctuate in relation to other variables
  - d. invalidate the research question
- (REMEMBER; answer: a; page 36; big question 2)
34. In a hypothesis about crime that makes a causal claim that an increase in the level of inequality in society will result in an increase in the crime rate in that society, \_\_\_\_\_ is the independent variable.
- a. the crime rate
  - b. the level of equality
  - c. the level of inequality
  - d. the ratio of crime to inequality
- (UNDERSTAND; answer: c; page 36; big question 2)
35. In a hypothesis about crime that makes a causal claim that an increase in the level of inequality in society will result in an increase in the crime rate in that society, \_\_\_\_\_ is the dependent variable.
- a. the crime rate
  - b. the level of equality
  - c. the level of inequality
  - d. the ratio of crime to inequality
- (UNDERSTAND; answer: a; page 36; big question 2)
36. What type of research method uses standardized sets of questions asked of large groups of people?
- a. interviews
  - b. quantitative data analyses
  - c. surveys
  - d. experiments
- (REMEMBER; answer: c; page 36; big question 2)
37. Which of the following is NOT a widely used sociological research method?
- a. interviews
  - b. surveys
  - c. historical research
  - d. social manipulation
- (REMEMBER; answer: d; page 36; big question 2)
38. How is historical research best conducted?
- a. by surveying large numbers of people and comparing the responses of different groups
  - b. by talking directly to a subsample of people

- c. by observing historical reenactments
  - d. by looking at records and documents about different groups of people from other times and places
- (UNDERSTAND; answer: d; page 36; big question 2)

39. When research questions are about the thought processes that lead people to have certain opinions, what research method is usually best?

- a. a survey
- b. in-depth interviews
- c. ethnographic observation
- d. a social experiment

(UNDERSTAND; answer: b; page 37; big question 2)

40. When research questions center on patterns of behavior among large groups, what research method is usually best?

- a. a survey
- b. in-depth interviews
- c. ethnographic observation
- d. a social experiment

(UNDERSTAND; answer: a; page 37; big question 2)

41. When research questions have more to do with how people interact and less with how they say they interact, what research method is usually best?

- a. a survey
- b. in-depth interviews
- c. ethnographic observation
- d. a social experiment

(UNDERSTAND; answer: c; page 37; big question 2)

42. Why is studying motivation difficult?

- a. Simply looking at behavior doesn't allow researchers to say much about motivation.
- b. People act in largely consistent ways, making distinguishing among possible motivators difficult to discern.
- c. Reading motivations from actions takes years of practice.
- d. Rapport building, necessary to motivational studies, is expensive and time consuming.

(UNDERSTAND; answer: a; page 38; big question 2)

43. What is the first step in the scientific method?

- a. seek outside opinions
- b. collect data
- c. formulate a hypothesis
- d. operationalize variables

(REMEMBER; answer: c; page 39; big question 3)

44. In order to be deemed reliable, the results of a scientific study must be able to be \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. replicated
- b. rescinded
- c. recycled
- d. replaced

(REMEMBER; answer: a; page 39; big question 3)

45. Which of the following is NOT a type of data sampling used by sociologists?

- a. probability sampling
- b. gambit sampling
- c. random sampling
- d. representative sampling

(REMEMBER; answer: b; pages 39-40; big question 3)

46. Why do researchers use representative sampling versus random sampling?

- a. Representative sampling is considered more scientific than random sampling.
- b. Representative sampling is faster and easier than random sampling.
- c. Random sampling requires lists of entire populations, which researchers may not have access to.
- d. Random sampling, it is universally acknowledged, is reliable only 50 percent of the time.

(APPLY; answer: c; page 40; big question 3)

47. In terms of survey research, what is a respondent?

- a. an individual who fills out a survey
- b. an individual who conducts a survey
- c. an individual who is being studied in a survey
- d. an individual who is excluded from a survey

(REMEMBER; answer: a; page 40; big question 3)

48. Information on size, structure, or distribution of a population is called \_\_\_\_\_ data

- a. demographic
- b. democratic
- c. demonstrative
- d. dependable

(REMEMBER; answer: a; page 40; big question 3)

49. Data from which research method arguably takes the longest to acquire?

- a. comparative-historical data
- b. ethnographic data
- c. survey data
- d. experimental data

(REMEMBER; answer: b; page 41; big question 3)

50. Researchers whose research questions entail important time dimensions are likely to use which research method?

- a. demographic analysis
- b. comparative-historical perspective
- c. survey
- d. ethnography

(APPLY; answer: b; page 41; big question 3)

51. What are cross-national comparisons?

- a. a type of historical analysis that focuses on explaining differences between countries
- b. a type of survey that compares people from one part of a country with people who lived there at earlier points in history
- c. a type of demographic study that compares ethnic or racial groups in a single neighborhood
- d. a research methodology that combines features of different research methods into one

(UNDERSTAND; answer: a; page 42; big question 3)

52. In the classic comparative-historical study *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Max Weber found that \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. Protestant ideology encouraged the suppression of workers for the benefit of early capitalists  
b. capitalism was unknown in Europe until after the advent of Protestantism  
c. Protestants, who tended to be better educated, were also more financially responsible than members of other faiths  
d. certain Protestant ideologies embraced capitalism and contributed to an individual's financial success  
(REMEMBER; answer: d; page 42; big question 3)
53. In Theda Skocpol's study of revolutionary France, Russia, and China, which of the following factors did she identify as a condition necessary for revolution to occur?  
a. stability in governing institutions, but widespread unrest among peasants  
b. availability of revolutionary literature  
c. international pressure, either from failed wars or financial problems  
d. stability among the peasant class, but crisis in governing institutions  
(REMEMBER; answer: c; page 43; big question 3)
54. When is longitudinal data desirable?  
a. when studying a group of people who are hard to contact  
b. when studying a sample via survey over a prolonged period of time  
c. when studying a population that is spread out geographically  
d. when studying a group that historically provides unreliable data  
(APPLY; answer: b; page 45; big question 3)
55. What is a spurious relationship?  
a. an apparent relationship among three or more variables having causal relationships with each other  
b. an apparent relationship between two factors that has the appearance of linkage but, in reality, does not  
c. an apparent relationship between two factors with an established causal relationship  
d. an apparent relationship between two variables for which a causal link has yet to be established  
(UNDERSTAND; answer: b; page 45; big question 3)
56. Cross-sectional data is collected \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. at one point in time  
b. over a period of a few weeks  
c. over a period of several months  
d. at two points in time several decades apart  
(REMEMBER; answer: a; page 45; big question 3)
57. The U.S. census is a good example of what kind of interview?  
a. classic interview  
b. survey interview  
c. in-depth interview  
d. oral history interview  
(REMEMBER; answer: b; page 46; big question 3)
58. When do sociologists who work with survey data conduct data analysis?  
a. daily, as each new group of respondents completes their surveys  
b. at regular intervals throughout the survey period

- c. after all survey data has been collected, but not yet processed
  - d. after all survey data has been collected
- (REMEMBER; answer: d; page 51; big question 4)

59. What is data coding?
- a. ridding data of partial responses
  - b. organizing data according to key categories and concepts
  - c. transferring data to pictorial displays
  - d. encrypting data for purposes of confidentiality
- (REMEMBER; answer: b; pages 52-53; big question 4)

60. Primary-source data are data \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. collected by researchers themselves
  - b. collected from primary-source documents, such as diaries
  - c. expected to overturn previous findings
  - d. provided to the research community by the American Sociological Association
- (REMEMBER; answer: a; page 53; big question 4)

61. Data displays are \_\_\_\_\_ patterns in data.
- a. coded examples of
  - b. numerical references to
  - c. visual images of
  - d. pull-down menus that access
- (UNDERSTAND; answer: c; page 53; big question 4)

62. Research memos are to \_\_\_\_\_ thinkers as data displays are to \_\_\_\_\_ thinkers.
- a. quantitative; qualitative
  - b. verbal; visual
  - c. convergent; divergent
  - d. independent; dependent
- (REMEMBER; answer: b; page 53; big question 4)

63. How does *The Sociological Project* answer this question: Why is generalization, in terms of sociological research, so tricky?
- a. Sociologists do not want to limit their conclusions to what they study directly; they also want their conclusions to be reliable and valid if applied more generally.
  - b. Loose generalizations rarely capture the attention of scientists in other fields of study.
  - c. Conclusions that are too generalizable risk being sanctioned by the American Sociological Association.
  - d. When conclusions are not sufficiently generalizable, other sociologists cannot validate them.
- (APPLY; answer: a; page 53; big question 4)

64. What are two types of generalizability relevant to sociological research?
- a. qualitative and quantitative generalizability
  - b. political and analytical generalizability
  - c. experimental and historical generalizability
  - d. empirical and theoretical generalizability
- (REMEMBER; answer: d; page 53; big question 4)

65. Which of the following responses best encapsulates why some sociologists strive for empirical generalizability?

- a. Sociologists strive for empirical generalizability so that findings can be understood by those not well versed in sociological theory.
- b. Sociologists strive for empirical generalizability so that findings can be applied to populations larger than their sample set.
- c. Sociologists strive for empirical generalizability so that findings can be tested in physics laboratories.
- d. Sociologists strive for empirical generalizability so that findings will more easily meet constitutional mandates for greater transparency in publically funded enterprises.

(UNDERSTAND; answer: b; page 53; big question 4)

#### Scenario Multiple Choice

- 1. Which of the following potential projects studying convenience stores could be said to be utilizing a qualitative research method?
  - a. working at a convenience store and watching how people interact with the clerks
  - b. studying the inventory of a convenience store to determine which items are bought most often
  - c. using city population data to predict how many convenience stores should serve a given neighborhood
  - d. studying convenience store payrolls to determine if men are paid more than women for the same work

(ANALYZE; answer: a; page 30; big question 1)

- 2. Catherine is taking a research methods class in which the semester project involves conducting original research. Catherine is interested in finding out if viewing particular television programs has an impact on behavior. She wants to see if children are more likely to engage in aggressive behavior after they watch television shows that exhibit violent images. Catherine's tentative prediction is what scientists refer to as \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. an operational definition
  - b. a hypothesis
  - c. reliability
  - d. validity

(APPLY; answer: b; page 30; big question 1)

- 3. You believe that sociology is a social science and that it should live up to the title of science. Therefore, you believe that sociologists should distance themselves from whatever they study, use universal standards to advance truth claims, and determine cause and effect. Based on these beliefs, what kind of epistemology do you adhere to?
  - a. a realist epistemology
  - b. a postmodernist epistemology
  - c. an imperialist epistemology
  - d. a positivist epistemology

(EVALUATE; answer: d; page 34; big question 1)

- 4. You want to conduct a research study on the sexual behaviors of married couples in rural America. You plan on interviewing individuals using an in-depth survey method. After finding individuals to interview, but before you conduct the interviews, what is needed to make sure that this project is ethical?
  - a. approval from the American Sociological Association
  - b. approval from the chair of your sociology department
  - c. the informed consent of all participants
  - d. agreement from another researcher to conduct follow-up interviews with all respondents

(ANALYZE; answer: c; page 34; big question 1)

5. Kordell is interested in distributing questionnaires to college freshmen regarding their study habits. He has targeted several colleges where he wants to carry out the research. What must Kordell do first?
- Have students sign informed consent forms.
  - Submit his research proposal to each school's institutional review board (IRB).
  - Brief students on what he is interested in studying.
  - Identify which classes he wants to target.
- (APPLY; answer: b; page 35; big question 1)
6. You want to study a riot that occurred over 60 years ago. You have access to a handful of survivors, but they likely cannot provide all the information you need. Which two research methods should you use to complete the study?
- ethnography and interviews
  - interviews and historical research
  - surveys and ethnography
  - interviews and experiments
- (APPLY; answer: b; pages 36-37; big question 2)
7. You are about to conduct a survey. You want to select a sample to mirror the larger population you are studying and to reflect the demographics of that population. Which type of sampling should you use?
- probability sampling
  - ethical sampling
  - scientific sampling
  - replicated sampling
- (EVALUATE; answer: a; page 39; big question 3)
8. You want to understand how American views on violence in the media differ from the views of Germans. To complete your comparison of these two populations, what type of research should you conduct?
- ethnography
  - demographic analysis
  - comparative-historical research
  - cross-national comparison
- (APPLY; answer: d; page 42; big question 3)
9. You are studying homicide rates in a major city, and your data seem to be indicating something quite peculiar. You notice that ice cream consumption seems to be correlated with an increase in murder rates. Upon more careful reflection, you recall that murder rates tend to rise in the summer time, when people are outside more (and, consequently, eating more ice cream). Your first conclusion is an example of \_\_\_\_\_.
- a poor sample size
  - improper theoretical development
  - causality
  - a spurious relationship
- (EVALUATE; answer: d; page 45; big question 3)
10. You are an ethnographer studying poverty in Chicago. Over the course of your research, you live in a low-rent apartment, join a number of social clubs, and take several jobs in the community. The total time you spend on this project takes several years. Given what you know about ethnography and proper data analysis, when should you analyze your data?
- Ethnographers should analyze their data continually over the course of the project.

- b. Ethnographers should analyze their data only at the very conclusion of their projects.
  - c. Ethnographers should analyze their data at the midpoint and at the end of their projects.
  - d. Ethnographers should be able to predict the conclusions that their data will confirm and, therefore, let other researchers analyze their data for them.
- (EVALUATE; answer: a; page 51; big question 4)

#### Short Answer

1. Explain what is meant by this statement: One of the most common mistakes young researchers make is to assume that our own research "a-ha" moments are shared by others.  
(ANALYZE; pages 26-28; chapter opener)

The statement is a warning to young researchers about the importance of perspective. Just because you have a sociological epiphany, it does not necessarily mean that others share your perception or that it is even relevant, much less revelatory. This is not to say that your perceptions are inherently wrong, only that the work of other researchers on the matter should temper your own.

2. Before engaging in a study, why is it important for sociologists to first engage their sociological imaginations and then choose their research methods?  
(APPLY; page 28; chapter opener)

Research methods are tools. They are a means to an end, not an end in and of themselves. For this reason, sociologists should first come up with research questions that engage their imaginations. After they figure out what they want to ask, then they can go about figuring out the best way to answer their questions.

3. Why is it important to conduct a thorough literature review while developing a hypothesis?  
(UNDERSTAND; pages 30-31; big question 1)

If you do not conduct a thorough literature review, you cannot know what other social scientists before you have said on a subject. If their ideas were contrary to yours, you'd want to know that so that you can properly word your arguments. If their ideas complement yours, you'd want to know that so that you can fit your idea into the existing research. And it is certainly possible that someone else's research already answers the questions that interest you.

4. Why is it important to flesh out hidden assumptions implied in research questions?  
(APPLY; pages 31-32; big question 1)

Research questions are complex and clarity is essential. It is a common mistake for researchers not to make sure that their research questions are clear before they proceed beyond the early research stage. Without properly defining what exactly they wish to study, or without examining the true nature of causality in the phenomenon in question can prove greatly detrimental.

5. Why is it important for research questions to be tied to existing social scientific scholarship?  
(UNDERSTAND; page 32; big question 1)

Researchers should want to tie their work into existing social science scholarship primarily so that they can take advantage of the work of others who have come before them. By taking advantage of previous research, sociologists are able to make their work more meaningful. But it is important, also, for researchers to look for connections between their research and that of other sociologists so that they know how others debate the ideas that they are interested in and how those debates are structured.

6. Explain what it means to "balance the general and the specific" when formulating research questions. What is the impact on research questions of balancing the general and the specific?  
(ANALYZE; page 32; big question 1)

This statement stresses the importance of keeping research questions focused enough to be manageable. Overly broad questions lack the sorts of boundaries that cue researchers into the kinds of evidence needed to answer them. On the other hand, research questions should not be so narrow that they fail to interest anyone in the larger community.

7. Why is it important that sociologists care about the research they are conducting?  
(UNDERSTAND; page 33; big question 1)

Perhaps it is stating the obvious, but if sociologists do not care about their research questions, why should anyone else? Sociologists should not be in the business of producing useless information. On the flip side, too much unrestrained passion about one's work has its pitfalls. Unchecked biases and lack of critical distance are dangers to be avoided.

8. What is informed consent? Why is informed consent particularly important when working with human subjects?  
(UNDERSTAND; page 34; big question 1)

Informed consent is the act of making research subjects aware that they are being researched. Research subjects must be aware of the possible risks their participation could expose them to and what the researcher is doing to minimize them. Sociologists must also recognize the possibility of unduly pressuring human subjects to participate in studies owing to researchers' positions as expert authorities. All participation should be voluntary, not induced.

9. Why does the American Sociological Association have a code of ethics? What impact does it have on sociological researchers?  
(ANALYZE; page 35; big question 1)

The code of ethics of the American Sociological Association exists to make sure that human subjects are not harmed in the process of social research and to maintain the integrity of sociology as a discipline. The impact of the code on researchers is pervasive. Sociologists who adhere to the highest possible standards command the highest possible regard for their work.

10. Explain the nature of the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Why is this relationship important to sociologists?  
(APPLY; page 36; big question 2)

An independent variable is an aspect or phenomenon that exists in our social world that does not fluctuate in relation to other variables. A dependent variable is something that fluctuates in relation to other (independent) variables in the social world. If sociologists are able to connect independent and dependent variables, such that a change in one variable is a direct cause of change in another, they may be able to establish causality.

11. What are reliability and validity, and why are they important in sociological research?  
(APPLY; page 39; big question 3)

When sociologists talk about reliability, they want to know if they will be able to replicate the results of a study

if they use the same equipment or measurement processes. Validity is the extent to which the measurement a researcher uses accurately measures what it is intended to measure. A result can be reliable and but not valid if the measurement doesn't reflect what the sociologist is trying to understand about the social world.

12. What is the difference between a historian and a sociologist who uses the comparative historical perspective?

(UNDERSTAND; page 42; big question 3)

Historians conduct most of their research in archives, where they evaluate the written record left behind by important historical figures and ordinary citizens. Historians are typically experts in a particular time and place and most of their research centers on issues in their area of specialization. By contrast, sociologists who study history typically do so to make *comparisons* over time and context. They are not necessarily experts in any one time period or place.

13. What are cross-sectional and longitudinal data? Describe a situation in which it would be beneficial to use cross-sectional data to answer a research question. Describe a situation in which longitudinal data would be a better choice.

(APPLY; page 45; big question 3)

Cross-sectional data studies a large amount of data from one point in time, whereas longitudinal data is collected over a long period of time. Cross-sectional data would be useful for studying teenagers in 1980. Longitudinal data would be useful for studying people who were teenagers in 1980 and following them as they grow, form families, have children, and mature into old age.

14. What is thick description and how does it relate to ethnography?

(UNDERSTAND; page 49; big question 3)

A thick description is a rich and detailed description of the ways people make sense of their lives. Ethnography is a qualitative research method for studying the way of life of a group of people by close observation of them over a relatively long period of time. Ethnographers expect that their long commitment to their work will result in thick description.

15. What is the extended case method? Why is social theory important to the extended case method?

(UNDERSTAND; page 50; big question 3)

The extended case method is a method of conducting ethnography that emphasizes the contribution of research to social theory. An ethnographer using the extended case method starts from a theoretical problem or puzzle and studies a social environment over a prolonged period of time. This period can last three, five, or even ten years. During this time, ethnographers become very familiar with their subjects and the social forces in that environment.

Social theory is critical to the extended-case method for two primary reasons. First, the ethnographers must continually compare the social theory with their findings so that they may better make sense of their surroundings. Second, because the thick description produced by the extended case method is so specific, it is crucial for sociologists to be able to connect their findings to the broader scope of social theory.

#### ESSAY

1. What are qualitative and quantitative research methods? If you, as a researcher, were interested in the way-of-life details of a group of people, which type of research would you be more likely to conduct?

(EVALUATE; page 30; big question 1)

Qualitative research methods attempt to understand the social world through statistical and other numeric means. Qualitative research methods consider those aspects of our society that cannot easily be communicated in numbers, such as art, emotion, and irrationality, using words, observations, or pictures.

Researchers who are more interested in way-of-life details of a group of people, which are often difficult to capture numerically, would be more likely to conduct ethnographic research, a type of qualitative research that relies on close observation, rather than quantitative research.

2. How is research like a conversation?

(APPLY; page 32; big question 1)

Just like entering a conversation, there are many modes of contributing to the existing scholarship. Some sociologists read other scholarship for specific debates or conversations that interest them and then construct research questions and design research projects to resolve some aspect of those debates. Others look to scholarship to uncover questions other sociologists have ignored and then create research to fill the void. Although sociologists don't have to read everything before they form their research question, they need to have at least a general idea about the debates in the areas that they are interested in as well as the concepts and frameworks that structure those debates.

3. Why do sociologists occasionally use multiple research methods to answer their research questions?

(EVALUATE; page 36; big question 1)

Sociologists occasionally use multiple research methods to draw out the nuances and to accommodate for any limitations of the primary research method. Sometimes sociologists combine research methods, using different ones to obtain evidence related to different parts of their research questions.

4. What is the scientific method? Explain each step of the scientific method.

(ANALYZE; page 39; big question 3)

The scientific method is a method of collecting data. The scientific method has five steps. First, scientists formulate a research hypothesis based on existing scholarship. Second, they operationalize the variables key to their hypothesis and predict relationships. Then they collect data on the variables using a random sample. Next, they hold those other variables constant so they can determine if the relationship they hypothesized to exist between their key variables held up. At the end, they draw empirical and conceptual generalizations from their data.

5. Many scientists in the social sciences strictly follow the scientific method. However, some sociologists take a different approach. What is that approach and why do some sociologists choose to take it?

(APPLY; page 39; big question 3)

Those sociologists who choose not to adhere as strictly to the scientific method often do so for a variety of reasons. Some sociologists do not start their research with clear hypotheses, developing them instead as they conduct their research. Some sociologists find it impossible to operationalize the highly complex social world. Other sociologists may decide to collect data on a variety of interesting issues until they gather enough information to conduct a coherent study.

6. What is the difference between probability sampling and random sampling? When would you choose to use probability sampling over random sampling?

(ANALYZE; pages 39-40; big question 3)

Sampling is a technique for choosing participants for a research study. Probability sampling is the selection of samples to mirror the characteristics and dynamics of a larger population in which each person in the population is assigned a known and likely chance of being selected. Random sampling is a type of probability sampling in which each person in the population of interest has an equal chance of being chosen so that the random sample mirrors the larger population and reflects its characteristics and dynamics. Random sampling only works, however, when a researcher has a list of the entire population he or she wants to sample. Choosing individuals at random from a list of the total population, although considered scientifically sound, is often difficult, or even impossible, because it is not often possible to acquire a complete list of all individuals in a population. For this reason, social scientists use probability sampling. To properly conduct a probability sample, the social scientist need only gather a significant number of individuals, ensuring that the characteristics of the sample is representative of the greater population.

7. When determining correlations, sociologists sometimes fall victim to spurious relationships. What is a spurious relationship, and how did the Coleman Report demonstrate a spurious relationship between school resources and test scores?

(ANALYZE; pages 44-45; big question 3)

A spurious relationship is an apparent relationship between two variables that turns out to be false. When two factors seem to move in the same direction but both are themselves caused by something else (i.e., a third factor), sociologists refer to the apparent relationship between the first two factors as a spurious relationship.

The Coleman Report demonstrated that a relationship between school resources and student test scores was largely a spurious relationship. While it looked like one caused the other, in fact other factors—namely, family background and the racial composition of schools—were behind the relationship. If you wanted to reduce inequality in student testing outcomes, equalizing funding would not do much. Instead, one would have to begin to better racially integrate U.S. public schools so that the school peers of African American students more closely resembled those that a typical white student encountered in schools.

8. Sociologists, particularly those who use interviews and surveys, have long been aware of the tendency of respondents to be inconsistent in their reported behavior versus their actual behavior. How does ethnography help to alleviate this challenge?

(ANALYZE; page 49; big question 3)

Ethnographers gather their data by observing individuals in situations in which they normally live. Thus, if ethnographers are interested in a certain phenomenon, they can simply observe it happen. Direct observation of behavior is a significant advantage over interviews, which rely on the reported accounts of individuals and must be taken at face value.

9. Explain what is meant by this statement: Ethnography's main strength can also be its primary weakness.
- (ANALYZE; page 50; big question 3)

The greatest strength of ethnography is that it can produce incredibly detailed information on a certain time and place. By spending so much time with their subjects, sociologists are able to understand their subjects in minute detail. It is ironic that ethnography's main strength can also be its central weakness. In the process of producing thick descriptions of interesting aspects of social life, ethnography can sometimes lack analytical focus or theoretical relevance. Some ethnographers seem reluctant to conceptualize or theorize from their data. Other ethnographies are plagued with an inability to generalize beyond their specific fields. Indeed, generalizing from ethnographic data can be particularly thorny. Ethnographers can find it hard, if not

impossible, to claim that their cases are representative of a larger trend or issue. They can find it hard, if not impossible, to move beyond the everyday lives they are embedded in and to analyze them in terms that would seem foreign to those lives. And they can find it hard, if not impossible, to make broad points from the small, local contexts ethnographers tend to research. All of this can leave ethnographers wary of using their work to engage in the larger theoretical and conceptual debates of sociology.

10. Typically, sociologists who work with quantitative data (such as surveys) wait until after they have concluded their research before they engage in data analysis. However, ethnographers usually engage in data analysis while they are conducting their investigations. Is this behavior reasonable given the nature of these types of methods? Why?

(ANALYZE; page 51; big question 4)

The data collection period for quantitative research methods, relative to that of qualitative methods, is less lengthy. For this reason, the sociologist using quantitative methods is able to wait until after observations are complete to engage in data analysis, following the tenets of the scientific method. However, ethnographers are not able to take this route, as their data collect very slowly over extended periods of time. If ethnographers were to wait until the end of the observation period to engage in data analysis, they could easily be overwhelmed by reams of unanalyzed field notes and have lost valuable opportunities throughout the period of observation to apply analytical and theoretical frameworks to situations as they unfolded.