

AP Psych: Conduct Naturalistic Observation

Assignment: Conduct a naturalistic observation and write a 1 page paper (double spaced, 12-point font, 1 inch margins) detailing your observations and what you concluded. Your paper should include the following elements:

1. Subject (who or what are you observing? number of subjects? estimated age?)
2. Location
3. Date & time
4. Observations
5. Conclusion
6. How do your findings add to the understanding of humans or animals?

- *Attach your original observation notes to your paper as well!*

Objective: to observe participants interacting undisturbed in a natural setting in order to better understand human or animal behavior.

Description: Select a place frequented by people. Places to consider are shopping malls, playgrounds, parks, coffee shops, schools, colleges, beach, or zoo. Spend 30 minutes observing the interactions of your subjects and write down what you observe happening. Keep in mind mannerism, behavior, communication, non-verbal cues, etc. Describe your observations and make conclusions.

Please note: your observation should be noninvasive and not cause discomfort. Be discreet and considerate. Be mindful of whether you're making people uncomfortable when you're staring at them or their children for a length of time.

Examples:

- If you were observing a family interaction in a restaurant you may discover who is the dominant figure in the family after noting one member ordering for everyone else in the family and dominating family conversations.
- If you observe teen behavior in a mall to see whether electronic communication occurs more than verbal communication, you would note the number of times or minutes teen participants spend on cell phones compared to how often they engage in conversation.
- Shoppers in a mall may share characteristics and behaviors, note fashions, age, gender, style, etc.

REMEMBER – YOU ARE NOT TO SPY ON ANYONE! THERE IS A DIFFERENCE. YOU MAY ONLY WATCH PEOPLE IN PUBLIC PLACES. DO NOT INTERFERE WITH ANYONE OR LET THEM KNOW YOU ARE WATCHING THEM... ALL YOU DO IS OBSERVE & TAKE NOTE.