

## Model Essay Question Intro Soc

Sociology is the study of society, the study of human behavior in groups, or more specifically the scientific study of social structure. Let's unpack that a little.

Sociology is a scientific study. As such it deals with verifiable data, using the empirical method (with inferential statistics when experimental data cannot be obtained.)

Sociology, like other sciences depends upon testable hypothesis, empirical tests, with replicable results, building upon previous research, and published in peer reviewed journals. Thus, like any science, we discover more about our world little by little.

Unlike some other sciences, however, Sociology is concerned with human behavior. Thus the phenomenon we study usually have more than one cause. Indeed we believe that humans have choice. However, we notice patterns in what they choose to do. It is these patterns that make the social structures that we study.

Unlike psychology, sociology is not interested in the choices of one individual so much as the patterns of the larger group. We are interested in the problems of poverty in general rather than the patterns of one particular poor person. We might ask what factors tend to keep people in poverty and what factors enable upward social mobility, whereas the psychologist might ask what particular mental or emotional problems caused a particular person to be poor. A sociologist might compare two societies to see which structures caused more poverty and which less.

Sociology is special because we engage in it, in an amateur, unscientific way. Because we are humans, engaged in social patterns, we cannot help but be caught up in the trends of society. Because we cannot help but notice the trends of human patterns of behavior around us, we cannot help but generate beginning, tentative Sociological hypothesis.

Studying sociology may reveal more important factors than the ones we generate as an amateur. We hope that a more scientific study may make more progress in understanding our social world and thus give us more options in making our world a better place. Sociology may be used by politicians working to make public policy. For instance, will Aid to Dependent Children relieve or increase the problems of single parents and the number of children in poverty? Scientific study may help more than strongly held opinions. Sociological data may be used by business leaders in planning appropriate products and marketing more effectively. For instance, demographics, a sub-discipline of Sociology, would tell us that pet care, optical supply houses, diabetic supply companies will be in greater need than will child care across most of the country in the coming decades. Any business leader would prefer hard facts and scientifically reasoned predictions than an amateur guess. Every citizen, to the extent they vote and work for the betterment of their community, is helped by understanding information on society.

Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level: 11.7