

Name: _____

Short Guide to Writing an Ethnography

An ethnography seeks to describe all or part of the culture or life of a person, or a community, by identifying and describing the practices or beliefs of that person or community.

Step-by-Step Guide to Writing an Ethnography:

1. Write a short description explaining the purpose of your ethnography, and the information you would like to collect.
2. Receive informed consent from the person (or their guardian if they are under the age of 18) that you would like to interview for the ethnography. Ensure that the person knows of the nature and purpose of the study, as well as what they will be expected to discuss during the interview. Ask if they agree to the use of a tape recorder during the interview.
3. Determine what questions to ask, and the order in which you will ask the questions. Some general themes are: memories of early childhood, family stories, relationships, life events, key turning points in her/his life, experience with being a target or an ally in a situation of prejudice, discrimination or violence, reasons for decisions or actions made, hopes for the future, and so forth.
4. Determine a location to conduct the interview in privacy.
5. Check to make sure your tape recorder has new batteries before conducting the interview.
6. When conducting the interview:
 - a. Start slowly.
 - b. Keep the interviewee focused with your questions, but allow for small silences and pauses to allow time for the interviewee to think about their responses.
 - c. Don't debate or show judgment about your interviewee's responses; the ethnography is meant to be a full reflection of the person being interviewed.
 - d. Take notes as the person is speaking, and check for missing details immediately after the interview.
7. Thank the interviewee for their time and commitment to this project.

Source: [Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications](#), Chapter 6: Characteristics of Qualitative Research, [Lorrie R. Gay](#), [Peter W. Airasian](#), [L. R. Gay](#) (Prentice Hall, 2002)