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Frank Zulke, "Sociology: Human Behavior in a Group and Societal Context"

SAMPLE READING PAPER

This article defines the academic discipline of Sociology, which is based on the idea that "behavior is determined by the groups to which people belong and by the societies in which they live." Zulke says that Sociology is more accepted in democratic countries. It uses two levels of analysis, "microsociology," which looks at interactions of small groups on a daily basis, and "macrosociology," which looks at interactions among groups and societies. Sociologists believe that their research goes beyond "common sense," and they look at their discipline as a science. Zulke says that an approach that focuses on the individual in social context is the use of "sociological imagination." Sociologists are employed in a variety of settings. The author then compares Sociology to the other social sciences.

This reading agrees with the previous readings. As in the previous reading, the author clearly differentiates Sociology from Psychology. As Zulke says, Psychology looks more at individuals and less at groups. Psychology also looks at biological processes, which is not a focus of Sociology.

This reading also agrees with an earlier reading when it points out that Sociology is a science, not common sense. This is a point he also makes in "Science, the Scientific Method, and Research Designs in the Social Sciences." Zulke also gives examples of ways that Sociologists study problems, as he does in his "Science" article.

A discussion question that arises from "Sociology" is "Why did Jane Addams and W.E.B. DuBois become 'parents' of Sociology -- What was it in their backgrounds that made them focus on groups and relationships among groups?"