Five Sociological Lenses

How different thinkers explain everyday social life

SS24.S.1a "Explain the contributions of important figures in the field of sociology, including Émile Durkheim, George Herbert Mead, Karl Marx, Max Weber, and W.E.B. Du Bois.*"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle each thinker's name and underline one statement that explains that thinker's contribution. Write a matching number from 1 to 5 beside each name and its underlined statement.

What Happens at Lunch?

1. At a crowded school cafeteria, students line up, sit with friends, and notice who can afford extra food. Sociologists ask how such ordinary scenes connect to larger patterns. Émile Durkheim called shared ways of acting and thinking social facts: they exist beyond any one person and can shape behavior. A school rule that sets lunch times is one example. Durkheim also studied how social ties and institutions hold a society together. Karl Marx focused on class conflict instead. He argued that people who own productive resources can gain power over those who sell their labor, shaping unequal access to wealth and opportunity.

2. The same cafeteria can look different through two other lenses. Max Weber examined how people attach meaning to their actions and how authority operates. He described bureaucracy as an organization built on formal rules, assigned roles, and a chain of command. A principal who approves a lunch schedule through official procedures illustrates that structure. George Herbert Mead studied how the self develops through social interaction. People learn to see themselves from others' perspectives by using shared symbols and taking on roles. At lunch, a student's understanding of being a team captain may shift after classmates treat that student as a leader.

3. W.E.B. Du Bois used careful research to challenge claims that racial inequality came from personal failings. In *The Philadelphia Negro*, he studied Black communities and showed how discrimination and limited opportunities shaped daily life. He also described double consciousness, the strain of seeing oneself through one's own eyes and through the prejudiced eyes of a racist society. In a cafeteria, a Black student might feel proud of a family tradition while worrying that others will judge it unfairly. These thinkers did not offer one interchangeable answer. Each identified a different process, from shared rules and unequal power to organized authority, interaction, and racialized experience.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How would Durkheim and Marx explain different features of the cafeteria? Give one contribution from each.

2. What part of Weber's work helps explain how the principal approves the lunch schedule? Explain the connection.

3. How does the team captain example illustrate Mead's contribution to sociology?

4. How did Du Bois use both research and the idea of double consciousness to deepen the study of racial inequality?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose one setting outside school. In four sentences, use two different thinkers from the passage to explain two different social patterns there, with a specific observation for each thinker.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.S.1a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle each thinker's name and underline one statement that explains that thinker's contribution. Write a matching number from 1 to 5 beside each name and its underlined statement. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How would Durkheim and Marx explain different features of the cafeteria? Give one contribution from each.	**Durkheim would examine shared rules or social ties, such as the set lunch time. Marx would examine how control of resources and labor can create unequal power and access to food.**
2	What part of Weber's work helps explain how the principal approves the lunch schedule? Explain the connection.	**Weber's account of bureaucracy applies because the principal acts within an organization with formal procedures and assigned roles.**
3	How does the team captain example illustrate Mead's contribution to sociology?	**Mead studied how the self develops through interaction. Classmates treating the student as a leader may shape how that student sees themself.**
4	How did Du Bois use both research and the idea of double consciousness to deepen the study of racial inequality?	**His research showed how discrimination and limited opportunities shaped Black communities' lives. Double consciousness described the strain of seeing oneself through one's own eyes and through a racist society's prejudiced eyes.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At a grocery store, employees sell their labor while the owner controls the business. Marx's analysis of ownership and labor could help explain why the owner has more power over pay decisions. A new cashier may start to see herself as capable when coworkers ask her to train others. Mead's view of the self developing through interaction explains how their responses can shape her sense of herself.

Accept other accurate contributions supported by the passage. For Part 3, look for two distinct explanations, each tied to a specific observation in the chosen setting.