Beyond the Hallway

How sociologists study behavior and share what they learn

SS24.S.2 "Explain methods and tools of research used by sociologists.* 2a Differentiate between qualitative and quantitative research methods, giving examples of each.* 2b Explain the usefulness of discerning and sharing insights into human behavior..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two ways the sociologist gathers numerical evidence, circle two ways she gathers descriptive evidence, and number two ways sharing the findings could help the school.

Why Does the Hallway Slow Down?

1. At Riverside High, students often gather near one hallway door before first period. Some adults assume they are blocking traffic on purpose. A sociologist would treat that claim as a question, not a fact. To study what happens, she could define a clear time window and count how many people pass the door each minute. She could also record how often someone has to stop or change direction. These counts are quantitative evidence: numbers that help show the size and pattern of a behavior. Repeating the count on several mornings would help her see whether one busy day was unusual.

2. Numbers alone cannot explain why people choose that spot. The sociologist could ask students open-ended interview questions, such as why they wait there and how they feel when the bell rings. She might also take detailed field notes while watching the hallway, recording what people say and how they make room for others. Interviews and descriptive notes are qualitative evidence because they capture words, meanings, and context rather than numerical totals. She would ask permission before interviews and avoid using students' names in her report. Students might describe the doorway as the only place to meet friends before separate classes.

3. Suppose the counts show a sharp slowdown on rainy mornings, while interviews reveal that students wait inside because the outdoor benches are wet. Together, the methods suggest an explanation worth testing, not proof that rain causes every delay. The sociologist could share the pattern and anonymous comments with school leaders and students, who might test a new indoor meeting area. Sharing the evidence lets people question an unfair assumption that students simply refuse to move. It may also help the school choose a solution based on students' experiences and observed traffic, then check whether hallway movement changes.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does counting people who pass the door differ from interviewing students about why they wait there?

2. Why would field notes about what people say and how they make room for others be qualitative evidence?

3. What does each method add to the suggested explanation for the slowdown on rainy mornings?

4. How could sharing both kinds of evidence help the school respond to the hallway problem?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a public place other than Riverside High. In one paragraph, propose a quantitative tool and a qualitative tool to study a behavior there, explain how sharing the combined findings could help people, and name one privacy precaution.

ANSWER KEY

Beyond the Hallway

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.S.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ways the sociologist gathers numerical evidence, circle two ways she gathers descriptive evidence, and number two ways sharing the findings could help the school. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does counting people who pass the door differ from interviewing students about why they wait there?	**Counting produces quantitative evidence about traffic; interviews produce qualitative evidence about students' reasons and experiences.**
2	Why would field notes about what people say and how they make room for others be qualitative evidence?	**They describe words, actions, and context rather than giving numerical totals.**
3	What does each method add to the suggested explanation for the slowdown on rainy mornings?	**Counts show when traffic slows. Interviews suggest why students wait inside, but the combined evidence does not prove rain causes every delay.**
4	How could sharing both kinds of evidence help the school respond to the hallway problem?	**The evidence could challenge an unfair assumption about students and help the school test a meeting area based on both traffic patterns and students' experiences.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At the public library, I would study how people choose study seats. I would count occupied seats in each area at the same time on four weekdays. I would also interview willing visitors about what makes a seat comfortable or distracting. Sharing the counts and anonymous interview themes with library staff could help them decide where to add quiet seating. I would leave visitors' names out of the report.

For the open task, accept any feasible count or other numerical measure paired with a tool that gathers descriptions or meanings. The response should explain a useful way to share the combined findings and include a specific privacy precaution.