Three Fair Lenses

Read one event through three sociological perspectives.

S.1.2 "Identify, differentiate among, and apply the major sociological paradigms (e.g., functional analysis, conflict theory, symbolic interactionism)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one fair detail that each perspective would study, and write F for functional analysis, C for conflict theory, or S for symbolic interactionism beside each detail.

What Happens at the Riverside Street Fair?

1. At the annual Riverside Street Fair, volunteers direct visitors, vendors prepare food, and a cleanup crew sorts waste. Each role affects the others: when waste bins overflow, food stalls may lose customers. Functional analysis asks how parts of a social setting work together to meet shared needs and what happens when a part fails. For example, a city's water department keeps homes supplied, while inspectors check that the water is safe. At the fair, a volunteer schedule lists shifts, and workers move between tasks when a crowd forms. Some neighbors call this teamwork the fair's biggest strength.

2. Conflict theory asks how unequal access to resources and decision-making power shapes a social setting. In a factory, owners and workers may disagree over wages because they do not have equal control over pay decisions. At the fair, organizers charge a fee for each food booth. Residents from the east side say the fee keeps many small sellers out. Organizers say fees pay for tents and permits. A signup form for volunteer shifts goes only to groups that have run booths before, so some residents never hear about openings. These details raise questions about who makes decisions and who benefits.

3. Symbolic interactionism focuses on how people create and use shared meanings in everyday encounters. A raised hand in a classroom can signal a request to speak because students and teachers understand the gesture. At the fair, a blue wristband marks volunteers. A vendor waves a teenager wearing one past a line, assuming the teenager is delivering supplies. The teenager actually signed up for cleanup and is heading to a concert. Other visitors see the same band and ask for directions; after several requests, the teen begins giving directions. The band has shaped their interactions, although the teen's assigned shift has not changed.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How would functional analysis explain why overflowing waste bins matter to the fair as a whole?

2. Which disagreement about food booths would conflict theory examine, and what unequal access does it reveal?

3. How does the blue wristband change the teenager's interactions with others, even though the assigned shift stays the same?

4. How might functional analysis and conflict theory ask different questions about the volunteer signup form?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine your school starts a student-run radio station. Write three sentences about it: one showing what functional analysis would study, one showing what conflict theory would study, and one showing what symbolic interactionism would study.

ANSWER KEY

Three Fair Lenses

HIGH SCHOOL · S.1.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one fair detail that each perspective would study, and write F for functional analysis, C for conflict theory, or S for symbolic interactionism beside each detail. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How would functional analysis explain why overflowing waste bins matter to the fair as a whole?	**The cleanup crew's work supports other parts of the fair. If bins overflow, food stalls may lose customers.**
2	Which disagreement about food booths would conflict theory examine, and what unequal access does it reveal?	**Organizers say booth fees cover costs, while east-side residents say the fees keep small sellers out. The fee limits those sellers' access to booths.**
3	How does the blue wristband change the teenager's interactions with others, even though the assigned shift stays the same?	**People treat the teenager as someone who can deliver supplies or give directions because they understand the wristband to mean volunteer.**
4	How might functional analysis and conflict theory ask different questions about the volunteer signup form?	**Functional analysis might ask whether the limited signup process leaves shifts unfilled or disrupts fair tasks. Conflict theory might ask why established groups get first access while other residents do not hear about openings.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Functional analysis would study how student hosts, sound technicians, and a broadcast schedule work together to keep the station running. Conflict theory would ask who controls the limited airtime and whether some students have more chances to be heard. Symbolic interactionism would examine how students react when someone wears a headset they associate with being a host.

Accept other passage-supported details if the explanation matches the named perspective. For Part 3, look for distinct applications to connected roles, unequal power or access, and shared meaning in an interaction.