

Anthropology: evidence, concepts and practice

Supported preparation only; actual school choices and assessed work remain separate

Meaning and researcher position: method

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An **emic account** describes participants' meanings; an **etic account** uses an analyst's categories. Start by distinguishing an observed action, a participant's statement and your interpretation.

Then test which account the evidence supports. Reflexivity asks how your access, language and expectations shape that evidence.

Concepts, culture and reflexivity: source representation

Original source / task evidence

Original source A: a club member says, "I accept food because next week I will help prepare it." Source B: a visiting observer records, "Food was distributed to members." Compare the claims and explain a useful follow-up.

Separate what is stated from the interpretation.
Meaning and researcher position

Original fictional task source; not an authentic selected work.

Meaning and researcher position: worked case

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Identify the evidence before reading the model.

Meaning and researcher position: reasoning

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A links acceptance to reciprocal obligation; B records distribution without establishing its meaning. They need not contradict each other. The statement is one member's account, not a community-wide rule. Ask consenting members about differing experiences and compare what actually happens later.

A visitor may miss relationships that a member takes for granted; a member may also present an idealized account. Neither position is automatically superior.

Meaning and researcher position: your transfer

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A club officer says everybody welcomes the meal obligation, but a newcomer reports feeling unable to refuse. Explain how to use both accounts.

Pause and give an individual answer with reasons.

Meaning and researcher position: transfer review

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The officer may describe a public ideal while the newcomer describes an experienced constraint. Compare roles, context and voluntary accounts rather than averaging them or treating one as the whole community.

Observe how refusal is handled where approved. Explain how the researcher's access might favour officeholders.

Comparison through a concept: method

Comparison through a concept: method

Use a concept to explain a relationship, then compare its operation across contexts.
Do not equate similar objects with identical social functions.

A classroom comparison rehearses the method; the school's selected ethnographies supply the authentic evidence.

Reading and comparing ethnographies: source representation

Original source / task evidence

Original cases: club A invites all newcomers to a shared meal; club B invites them only after a period of service. Explain belonging through both arrangements and challenge a simple ranking of inclusion.

Separate what is stated from the interpretation.
Comparison through a concept

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Comparison through a concept: worked case

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Comparison through a concept: reasoning

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A may establish membership through immediate sharing; B may recognize membership through demonstrated contribution. Invitation timing provides a contrast, but does not show how welcomed members feel. Examine refusal, obligations and participants' interpretations. Immediate access could still involve unequal duties; delayed access could be experienced differently by different members.

Transfer check: explain what an interview with only committee members would miss, then specify a contrasting consenting sample.

Comparison through a concept: your transfer

Comparison through a concept: your transfer

Committee-only interviews support a claim that the invitation rule creates belonging. What is missing and how should the claim change?

Pause and give an individual answer with reasons.

Comparison through a concept: transfer review

Comparison through a concept: transfer review

Those excluded, new members and members who left may experience the rule differently. Restrict the claim to committee accounts, then seek approved contrasting recruitment and actual participation evidence.

A large number of committee interviews does not remove this selection limit.

Fieldwork rehearsal and reflection: method

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Before observation, state a focused question, a recording unit, a sampling period and approved consent/privacy arrangements.

Separate description from interpretation. Actual fieldwork and school approval cannot be supplied by a model answer.

Ethical fieldwork and analysis: source representation

Original source / task evidence

Original notes: "At 12:10, four members sat near the door. The observer knew three of them." Interpret cautiously and improve a plan about seating and belonging.

Separate what is stated from the interpretation.
Fieldwork rehearsal and reflection

Original fictional task source; not an authentic selected work.

Fieldwork rehearsal and reflection: worked case

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Fieldwork rehearsal and reflection: reasoning

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The description records a location and count. Friendship, status and exclusion are hypotheses. Repeat observations at comparable times and ask voluntary, non-leading questions where approved.

Record how the observer's friendships influence access and interpretation. Do not label identifiable people or assume consent from silence.

Fieldwork rehearsal and reflection: your transfer

Fieldwork rehearsal and reflection: your transfer

The second seating observation breaks the initial pattern. How should the analysis respond?

Pause and give an individual answer with reasons.

Fieldwork rehearsal and reflection: transfer review

Fieldwork rehearsal and reflection: transfer review

Retain the exception and compare timing, activity and participants. Revise a general friendship claim to a bounded observed pattern unless further evidence supports it.

A discrepant observation can test the interpretation; deleting it would conceal evidence.

Check yourself

Independent retrieval

Two accounts of the same ritual disagree. How would positionality and contextual observation guide your next inquiry?

Write your reasoning before comparing it with the methods and limits taught in this lesson.