

Handout

Analyzing Pew Research Data

Directions: After reading and analyzing the data, discuss the **Part 1: Expert Group Questions** with others in your group. Support your ideas with examples from the reading and your own lives. Record notes so you can share key points with your classmates who read different reports. Do not start **Part 2: Teaching Group Questions** until your teacher tells you to do so.

Part 1: Expert Group Questions

Data Report 1: A Majority¹ of Rural Americans See a Values Gap Between Themselves and Urban Dwellers

1. What does the word “**value**” mean to you? List a few values that are important to you.
2. Do you believe that you **share common values** with your community? Why or why not?
3. **Based on the study**, do people tend to believe they hold similar or dissimilar values to those within their **own** communities?
4. **Based on the study**, do people tend to believe they hold similar or dissimilar values to those **outside** their communities?
5. **Connection:** Do you believe that **people from other types of communities** share your values? Explain.
6. **Graph Analysis:** Take a moment to analyze the graph. Then answer the following questions:

¹ In this report, Pew uses the words “majority” and “majorities” to mean “more than 50% of people polled in these areas.”

- a. A **large majority of people** surveyed believe that those who live in their type of community **share their values**, but fewer people believe this applies to those who live in different communities. Does this data surprise you? Explain.
 - b. Is it possible for people with **different values** to still respect and care for one another? Can you provide examples?
 - c. Consider the statement: "*They* have different values from *us*." In what ways can such a mindset be **harmful**?
7. **Challenge Question:** Are there group or social consequences that could arise from having inaccurate assumptions about other people's values?

Data Report 2: Majorities in Urban and Rural Areas Say Others Have a Negative View of People in Their Type of Community

1. The study suggests that more than half of rural (63%) and urban (56%) residents believe that those from **other community types** view them **negatively**.
 - a. Where might the claim that "others" view "us" negatively come from?
 - b. Could there be any harm in holding this belief? Explain.
2. Why do you think a **majority of suburban** residents (60%) believe they are viewed **positively** by others, unlike their rural and urban counterparts?
3. Why do you think **rural and urban college graduates** are more likely to believe they are viewed negatively by people living outside their community type?
4. **Graph Analysis:** After analyzing the graph and the accompanying note, do you think the absence of responses from some participants might skew the data? Why or why not?
5. **Connection:** Have you ever believed that someone viewed you negatively? What impact did that have on you?
6. **Challenge Question:** What consequences can arise when we believe that groups of people from other communities view us negatively?

Data Report 3: Most in Urban and Rural Areas Say People in Other Types of Communities Don't Understand Their Problems

1. **The data indicates** that a majority of urban, rural, and suburban dwellers believe that others do not understand the problems they face.
 - a. **Reflect:** Why might people from different types of areas—urban, rural, suburban—feel that others don't understand their challenges?
 - b. **Connect:** Can you recall a time when others did not understand a problem you were facing? How did this feel?
2. The report claims that **suburban residents** living *farther* away from densely populated areas believe that others **do not understand** their problems. However, **suburban residents** living *closer* to more populated areas believe that the *opposite* is true. Why might this be the case?
3. **Examining Racial Perspectives:** The study shows that “74% of rural whites” feel that “outsiders” don't understand their problems, while only “57% of nonwhites” in rural areas hold this belief. What factors might contribute to these racial differences in perspective?
4. Rural and urban **college graduates** are particularly likely to feel that their problems are **misunderstood** by those outside their community type. Why do you think this is?
5. **Graph Analysis:** Look closely at the graph provided. Did anything stand out or surprise you, especially in relation to the points discussed above?
6. **Connection:** Has someone, or a group of people, ever misunderstood your struggles? How did this experience make you feel?
7. **Challenge Question:** If we assume that groups of people cannot understand **our** challenges, how might that impact our perception of **them**?

Data Report 4: Majorities Say They Understand the Problems People in Other Types of Communities Face

1. **The data indicates** that a majority of urban, rural, and suburban residents believe they understand the problems that those outside of their types of communities face.

- a. **Reflect:** Why might someone believe that they understand the challenges faced by people outside their community types?
 - b. **Connect:** Do you believe that you understand the challenges of people you do not know very well? Why or why not?
 - c. **Reflect:** What consequences can arise when we assume that we understand the problems people from other communities face?
 2. Researchers were “not surprised” that the people who left their “home” community claimed to **understand the challenges** of these types of communities. Why do you think the researchers anticipated this result?
 3. **Challenge Question:** Consider the statement: “I understand the challenges that people in a specific place face **today** because I lived in a similar place **years ago**.” What might be **accurate or inaccurate** about this reasoning?
 4. **Graph Analysis:** Take a close look at the graph. What do you notice? Is there anything that surprises you? Explain.
 5. **Hypothesize:** If you were to make an educated guess, how might the data look if the reverse question was asked: “Do you believe people who live **outside** the type of community you live in understand **your** problems?” Explain your hypothesis.
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Part 2: Teaching Group Questions

Directions: Start by having each peer in your group answer the first question so you can learn about the data represented in each other’s reports. Then discuss the remaining questions. Support your ideas with examples from all four data reports.

1. Which report did you read? What is one idea from your group’s discussion that you want to share?
2. Use the research and analysis to guide you through the following questions:
 - a. Does the type of place we live in contribute to our **sense of identity**?
 - b. Are the people who live in our communities—or communities like ours—inherently or naturally **similar** to us?

- c. Conversely, are the people who **do not** live in communities like ours inherently **dissimilar** from us?
 - d. How can becoming aware of our **assumptions and stereotypes** challenge us to reconsider the **borders and boundaries** between communities?
3. This lesson challenges us to consider the question: “How can where we live influence the stories others tell about us?” Discuss using your new understanding from the research activity. Additionally, define the terms “stories,” “others,” and “us” in this context.

Notes: While your peers teach, write notes to share with your original “expert” group at the end of class.