**Chapter Exercises**

**Chapter 1: Discovering Sociology**

1. Read through a recent copy of your area’s or your school’s newspaper. Make a list of topics covered by the newspaper to which sociologists might want to apply the *sociological imagination*. Can you find topics that you can characterize as existing at the intersection of *private troubles* and *public issues*? Which of these topics would you, as a new sociologist, like to study and why?
2. In this chapter, the authors discussed poverty as a private trouble and a public issue. Together with a small group, make a list of *sociological factors* that may help explain the existence and persistence of high levels of poverty in the United States, particularly in inner city and rural areas. Put this list in a notebook or other location where you can examine it over time. Check back on the list throughout the term to see if and how your explanatory variables might expand or change.
3. The global issues box asked you to look around your place of residence to see where the goods you use in daily life were manufactured. Globalization has affected our lives as consumers, but that is just one of its important effects. Can you come up with other specific ways that globalization has an effect on our individual lives and society? Which of these effects might be of interest to sociologists and why?
4. An important theme in this textbook is technology and the rise of digital societies. Technology is key to social interaction in ways that could not have been imagined even a single decade ago. Discuss this issue with classmates and identify 2–3 ways that face-to-face interaction is *similar to* and *different from* electronic interaction through media such as Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter. How would you respond to a member of an older generation who argued that social media are “ruining” human social interaction?
5. The authors discuss how ethnocentric thinking creates barriers to sociological understanding. Consider what you think you know about the specific beliefs, activities, and lifestyles of people in other countries. Ask yourself how you *feel* about these other people’s beliefs, activities, and lifestyles. Do you *feel* your society’s beliefs, activities, and lifestyles are more normal, right, or good? Why or why not? How do these *feelings* affect your ability to sociologically understand these societies?
6. Sociology researches social issues through the use of theoretical frameworks. Examine the news and pick a controversial news story about a big social issue. Consider what different questions a sociologist researching this topic might ask if they were investigating this issue from a conflict versus functionalist versus symbolic interactionist perspective. How might these differing approaches work together to build a deeper sociological understanding of the issue?