**Chapter Exercises**

**Chapter 2: Discovering Sociological Research**

1. Together with a small group of peers, choose a social problem of interest to you. Prepare a brief set of research questions that you could use to learn more about the dimensions and roots of the phenomenon you chose. How could the topic be studied using *quantitative* methods? How could it be studied using *qualitative* methods?
2. In this chapter, we discussed the problem of respondents’ honesty in answering questions about socially awkward or embarrassing topics such as drug use. Imagine that you are designing a survey about an uncomfortable topic such as academic cheating or pornography use (you choose the topic!). How would you prepare your research project in a manner that maximizes respondent honesty?
3. Following your completion of exercise 2, think about the ethics of your project. What would be the *ethical* issues you need to consider in preparing your study of a socially uncomfortable topic?
4. For research to be valid, the operational definitions of the variables under study must be well constructed. Think about if you were to conduct research on the prevalence of binge drinking among college students. Consider what your operational definition of binge drinking would be and write it down. Now ask a small group of your peers how they would define binge drinking and compare their responses to your operational definition. On what basis are you and your peers constructing your operational definitions? Are there other, more valid, bases on which you could form your operational definition?
5. Imagine you wanted to conduct a survey about how the residents of your city felt about an important municipal issue. To study this issue, you want to take a random sample of 200 people in your city. What would the population of your study be? What method could you use to identify the 200 people who will be your sample to ensure that they are chosen randomly? Remember that being chosen randomly means that every resident of the city has an equal chance of being selected for your study.