

Table 9.4 Summary of sociological perspectives: Work and the economy

	Functional	Conflict/Feminist	Interactionist
Explanation of work and the economy and its social problems	<p>Sociologists use this perspective to examine the functions and dysfunctions of work and employment.</p> <p>Functionalists also analyze the functional elements of work itself.</p>	<p>Conflict or feminist theorists focus on how economic, ethnic, and gender inequalities are perpetuated in the economy and the workplace.</p>	<p>From this perspective, sociologists investigate how our work experiences are created through interaction and shared meanings.</p> <p>Social problems emerge from the meanings we associate with our work.</p>
Questions asked about work and the economy	<p>How does the institution of work help preserve the social order?</p> <p>How is economic and social stability maintained by the institution of work?</p> <p>How do other institutions affect our work or our economy?</p>	<p>What social inequalities are present in the institution of work?</p> <p>How do we become alienated from our work?</p>	<p>How is our work and workplace socially defined?</p> <p>How do we behave based on our meaning of work?</p> <p>Are there positive and negative meanings of work?</p>