

Goal:

1. Identify the role of white privilege in the lives of people in your social network.
2. Explore how white privilege as a social institution impacts individual identity.
3. Identify the social and institutional structures that create the conditions for white privilege to play a role in their lives.

Assignment:

Interview at least 3 people of your same racial or ethnic heritage to determine whether they believe that white privilege exists and why or why not? If they do, what do they think needs to be done to dismantle it? If they do not, how do they explain racial disparities in income, education, and health? Your essay should briefly (800 words maximum) describe the patterns of responses you received. It should focus mainly on explaining those patterns in terms of identity formation, and social and institutional structures.

You are to write your summary in your blog.

Due date:

March 1, before midnight.

F.A.Q.

Can I interview more than 3 people?

Yes. If you can, you should.

What kinds of questions should I ask?

I would recommend the following interview schedule:

1. Have you heard of white privilege? What do you think it is?
 - a. If they don't know, explain it to them.
2. Do you think white privilege is real? Why or why not?
 - a. If it is real, should we get rid of it? Why or why not? How do we do that?
 - b. If it is not real, how do you explain why black and Latino people are on average poorer, that they have much higher drop out rates, they have worst health, etc.
3. And any other questions that come to mind.

I've never done an interview before. How do I do them?

Interviews are guided conversations. Go in with a list of 3-5 questions that you would like to make sure you ask but you let the conversation go wherever it goes.

You should avoid judging the person you are interviewing. You want them to know that you are interested in what they have experienced and what they believe. Let them know that whatever they say is o.k.

Do not just ask your 3 questions and then leave it at that. Be prepared to sit down with a person for at least 15 minutes. The best interviews will last 30 minutes or more.

You should promise them confidentiality. This means that you will not use their names when you write up your assignment.

Can I record the interviews?

If you can and the person you are interviewing gives you permission, than yes. Recording allows you to be more present during the interview.

However, some people may not allow you to record them and that's o.k. You should be prepared to take notes about what people say. It doesn't have to be a transcript. Just notes. Write down important quotes that you might want to use in your write up.

I don't know how to write something like this. What should it look like?

The summary should be clear, concise, and convincing. Do not try to sound smart. Just try to be clear.

If you are struggling with how to write this, you might want to try this structure:

- 1-2 paragraph(s) summarizing who you chose to interview. **DO NOT NAME ANYONE.** Their identity should be kept confidential. You only need to describe who they are in relation to you (your aunt, your neighbor, your best friend from elementary school who you bumped into on the train).
- 2-3 paragraphs summarizing the patterns of responses. When I say patterns I mean, what did your interviewees have in common? What were the important differences between them?
- 2-3 paragraphs summarizing how you explain the patterns and what the implications of your findings are.
- 1 short paragraph conclusion.