

Humanities I

Part I.

Questioning and the art of inquiry must be adopted by the citizen if he is to become an involved and committed member of his community. Like a professional historian or social scientist, a good citizen has inquiry skills with which he can separate truth from falsehood. Here are six steps in a method of inquiry for social studies within a Humanities oriented study.

1. Recognizing a problem from data.

2. Formulating hypotheses.

Asking analytical questions, usually based on concepts stating hypotheses
Remaining aware of the tentative nature of hypotheses

3. Recognizing the logical implications of hypotheses.

4. Gathering data.

Deciding what data will be needed
Selecting or rejecting sources on the basis of relevance to the hypotheses

5. Analyzing, evaluating, and interpreting data.

Evaluating the sources
Determining the frame of reference of the author of the source
Determining the accuracy of statements of fact
Selecting relevant data from sources
Interpreting the data

6. Evaluating the hypotheses in light of the data.

Modifying the hypotheses if necessary
Rejecting logical implications unsupported by data
Restating the hypotheses
Stating generalizations

Students who master this method of inquiry will have a disciplined method of approaching social, economic, and political questions.

Primary Analytical Questions Part II

A. Stressed first in Comparative Political Systems.

1. Leadership: That position in society having the authority to determine how the power of the government will be used.
 - a) Who are the leaders?
What are their personal characteristics?
Their social backgrounds?
 - b) How does society recruit its leaders? How does it persuade people to accept leadership positions? What formal and informal rules does the society establish for granting leadership?
 - c) What must a person do to obtain and keep leadership position? To whom does he appeal? How does he appeal to these people? How does he maintain support?
2. Decision Making: The process by which a political system determines for what purposes governmental power will be used and how power will be exercised.
 - a) What are the formal rules for making decisions?
The informal rules?
 - b) In what leaders and institutions does decision-making power reside?
 - c) What factors influence decision making? How does ideology influence it? The personal attributes of leaders? Institutions? The desires of citizens?
 - d) How does information flow to the decision-makers? What influence does it have?
 - e) How are decisions carried into effect? What sanctions are used to enforce decisions?
3. Institutions: Organizations and well established practices which distribute authority to make decisions about how power shall be used.
 - a) What are the institutions of a society? What functions does each institution have?
 - b) What official authority has been given to the institution? What authority has an institution accumulated informally?
 - c) How do institutions influence decisions?
4. Citizenship: The rights of individuals to influence how social power will be used, their obligations to submit to governmental power, and the processes by which they accomplish these two functions?
 - a) How does a citizen influence how public power is used? Does he have a role in the decision-making process? How does he obtain access to decision-makers? What influence does he have over them?

4. cont'd.

- b) How does a citizen get information about government?
- c) How does government affect the life of the citizen? How does it restrict his freedom? How does it enlarge his freedom?

5. Ideology: The body of ideas and beliefs to which the people of a society subscribe?

- a) What are the basic beliefs about man and society shared by most people in the society? What are the sources of those beliefs?
- b) What values do the members of a society hold?
- c) What influence does ideology have on decisions about how power should be used? Do political decisions attempt to promote the goals and values of the people in society?

B. Stressed first in Comparative Economic Systems.

6. Values and Goals: The aspirations, standards, or long range, common objectives which a society considers to be important.

- a) What are the major values and goals of the society?
- b) How do values and goals affect economic decisions?
- c) How are conflicts in values and goals resolved?

7. Scarcity - Choices: The idea that since resources are limited and wants are infinite, society must constantly allocate resources among competing goals.

- a) What goods and services does the society make with its resources? (what)
- b) How does the society use resources to make goods? (how)
- c) How are goods and services distributed? (for whom)
- d) How does society choose between using resources for present needs (consumption) and using them for increased productivity in the future? (growth)

8. Resources: The supply of raw materials, capital, and human skills available to a society.

- a) What natural resources are available?
- b) What human resources are available?
- c) What capital resources are available?
- d) How are the three types of resources combined to produce goods?

9. Price: The amount of money needed to purchase a particular economic good or service.
- a) How are prices set in an economic system?
 - b) What are the functions of prices in the system?
10. Distribution: The process by which goods and services are distributed.
- a) How are goods distributed? What economic institutions are involved?
 - b) In what proportion do the various factors of production receive goods?
 - c) How is the pattern of distribution related to values and ideology?
11. Production: The process through which goods and services are made and supplied.
- a) In what ratio are the three types of resources combined to produce goods?
 - b) What economic institutions influence production?
 - c) What technology is employed in production?
 - d) What is the nature of the entrepreneurial function?
12. Economic Growth: An increase in gross national product and in G.N.P. per capita.
- a) How is gross national product related to consumption, investment, and government expenditures?
 - b) How can natural, capital, and human resources be combined to produce economic growth?
 - c) What can be done to control business cycles? What are the social costs of depression or severe inflation?

C. Stressed first in The Shaping of Western Society and Tradition and Change in Four Societies.

13. Role: The functions and activities society expects individuals with specific characteristics to perform.
- a) How are roles assigned by society?
 - b) What does society expect of individuals who have certain roles?
 - c) What different roles is a particular individual expected to fulfill?
 - d) How can an individual prepare himself for a particular role? Are some roles closed off to certain individuals?

14. Status: The position given a role in relationship to other roles.
- a) Which roles are given high status by the society? Which are given low status?
 - b) What privileges are given to roles with high status? Are they given more wealth? More freedom? More power?
 - c) Is status inherited or is it earned in the society?
15. Norms: The standards of behaviour in social relationships expected from different roles. The way people who fill different roles ought to behave toward other people.
- a) What are the most important norms of the society (mores)?
 - b) What are relatively unimportant norms (folkways)?
 - c) What are the norms of behavior assigned to given roles?
 - d) What sanctions are applied when someone violates a norm?
16. Social Class: A large group of people who share many things in common and who are classified by other members of the community as belonging together.
- a) What are the classes in a given community? What criteria are used to place people in a class (for example, wealth, education, birth)?
 - b) Can a person earn membership in a given social class or must he be born into it? How open are classes to people born outside of them?
 - c) How are classes arranged in the social structure? What roles are assigned to the upper classes? The middle classes? The lower?
17. Groups: A cluster of two or more people who interact because they have some common characteristic or purpose.
- a) What kind of groups exist in a society? What identified people as members of a group? How is membership in the group determined?
 - b) What are the most important primary groups (such as the family, play group, or neighborhood group) characterized by intimate, personal relationships among members?
 - c) What are the most important secondary groups (such as a labor union, political party, or business firm, professional body) characterized by non-personal relationships among members?
 - d) How does membership in a group influence the behaviour of its members? The structure of the society?

18. Group interaction: The process by which groups in contact influence each other.
- a) Are particular groups in contact with each other basically co-operative or competitive?
 - b) When two ethnic or racial groups interact what determines which of the following four processes will take place: extermination, accommodation, assimilation, or amalgamation?
19. Culture Change: The process by which a culture adjusts to new circumstances or a new environment.
- a) Has a new invention promoted culture change? If so, in what way?
 - b) Has diffusion from an outside source produced change? If so, how? What was the agent of diffusion?
 - c) Has a change in one area of culture (technology) produced a condition demanding change in another area (family structure)? Has there been a lag between the first change and the second?