

Analysis Matrix—PESCRID

When reading the textbook and analyzing documents, it's best to have some kind of analytical framework to make sense of the given information. Below I've outlined one basic way of going about that process. This matrix especially works when figuring out the nature of communities and societies. The first column contains broad topical categories, ranked in a rough order of importance (in the context of AP work, at least). The second column contains brief definitions of each category. The third is left blank so that you can make copies of this sheet and perhaps use it for future notes of readings in the text or documents.

Political	Form of government and decision-making process; distribution of authority and power in country or society; attitudes toward government	
Economic	labor, trade, markets, production of goods (e.g., manufacturing and agriculture); also, organization of work and attitudes toward work	
Social	demographics (mostly size and distribution of population); class structure; race and ethnicity; family structure; gender roles; social relations (especially beyond family)	
Cultural	customs, traditions, ways of life; values and assumptions (usually unexamined) that underpin social arrangements; relationship to nature ("built environment"—e.g., houses or teepees?)	
Religious	organized religion; spiritual beliefs and practices	
Intellectual	<i>Ideas</i> and <i>arguments</i> (usually formally articulated) about humans, society, nature, and the cosmos.	
Diplomatic	foreign relations, foreign policy, and wars	

Soon enough, I'm sure, you'll notice that these aren't neat categories. They blend into each other. There are categories within categories. Well, it is messy, but human societies work that way. It's what makes them interesting and frustrating to study at the same time. Some of these categories overlap so much that I often merge them myself, especially the "social" and "cultural" categories (which you could combine to make a "socio-cultural" category). In American history, in particular, the intellectual and religious categories will often overlap. *However*, as messy as the categories might be, they will be extremely useful tools of analysis that you should "carry" with you at all times. They are very traditional and solid terms of analysis that will carry you a long way, in this class and beyond. We will add more tools of analysis later, and you can create and redefine your categories and methods of analysis as we go in ways that make sense for you.