

Name & Period: _____

Date: _____

Bias In Standardized Testing

“A famous example of alleged bias in the SAT I is the oarsman-regatta analogy question. The object of the question was to find the pair of terms that have the relationship most similar to the relationship between "runner" and "marathon". The correct answer was "oarsman" and "regatta".

As shown above, SAT scores vary according to race, income, & parental educational background

The question relied upon students knowing the meaning of the two terms, referring to a sport popular with the wealthy. While 53% of white students correctly answered the question, only 22% of black students did. Analogy questions have since been replaced by short reading passages.¹”

Activity Instruction:

Language contains an assumed knowledge of a cultural upbringing when constructed for “standardized” testing in America. (Notice that the use of “standard” as a description of the test assumes that there is a standard worldview of all people in the overall population of the country)

These types of assumptions give those who have the life experiences of the political and economically powerful an unspoken advantage.

In this activity you will attempt to consider understandings from your own life experiences that will be similar to the examples but at the same time, would be specific to your own communities general life experiences.

Expand:

In the following categories, list specifics from your own life might be more likely to be understood by those with the same experiences as your own. Consider such variables as the area you live in, family expectations, community history, etc.

Part 1

Categories of themes that may represent cultural and class identity:

1. Food: _____

2. Sports: _____

3. Holiday: _____

4. Home: _____

5. Lifestyle: _____

¹ “Don't Believe the Hype, Chideya, 1995; The Bell Curve, Hernstein and Murray, 1994”

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Part 2

Converting test examples to personal experience.

Take the following topics and attempt to find instances from your current life that have similar meanings. After you replace each topic, list three reasons that the two topics have similar meanings/ substance.

(note: You should not be looking for tangible similarities [such as, they both use a ball, or you have to drive in a car to get there] similarities should be based upon reasons for doing them, or the connection to your own life.)

1. Topic: Breaking a new horse.

List the emotional and/or social results/understandings of this topic:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Converted Topic: _____

Explain the specific reasons that their emotional and social understandings are similar:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

2. Topic: Pwning your friends in Halo/Counterstrike/etc

List the emotional and/or social results/understandings of this topic:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Converted Topic: _____

Explain the specific reasons that their emotional and social understandings are similar:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3. Topic: Backpacking in Desolation Wilderness on the PCT.

List the emotional and/or social results/understandings of this topic:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Converted Topic: _____

Explain the specific reasons that their emotional and social understandings are similar:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____