

Instructions:

1. Begin with either a notepad or a tablet with a stylus and notetaking app.
2. At the top of each page, as you begin, put a notation of:
 - Date:
 - Location:
3. On the left-hand side only (you may need to draw a dividing line down the middle of the page), write observations or descriptions of what you are seeing in this location. Try to be as factual as possible, not interpretive or evaluative (yet).

Note: For some examples of this kind of observation, see the image on the following page.

- No feelings or emotions or attempts at analysis are appropriate on this left side of the page. If you have lots of observations that are occurring to you, continue to a second page (or more), but remain on the left side of each page as long as you are recording observations.
4. For each observation or short set of observations, on the RIGHT hand side of the same sheet, record your opinions, feelings, conclusions or analysis related to what you have described (across from the observation in question).
 - Try to include some thoughts on how your cultural values system or influences from childhood may be affecting how you feel. Again, see examples on next page of this document. Your conclusions and feelings may shift over time, as you accumulate observations at the same or similar locations and as you reflect on them. This is natural.
 5. Remember, in this “Martians at the Airport” exercise, you are not from Earth, so some things are likely to seem confusing to you. On the other hand, you are trained as an anthropologist, which means you do have some knowledge of common cultural patterns across the universe: kinship systems, gender, social structures, power and privilege, etc.
 6. Have fun, take risks, be creative. And be honest about how the observations make you feel (in your role as a Martian scientist, that is).

Image of field notes from the following:

Kohls, L.R. & Knight, J.M. (2004). Developing intercultural awareness: A cross-cultural training handbook (2nd ed.). Nicholas Brealey.



The following is a sample drawn from the Martian Anthropology Exercise (Resource 11).

Date: January 5

Location: Commerce Bank

OBSERVATION/DESCRIPTION

People enter the bank and fill out forms. They hand these to a person behind a counter, who processes them and provides paper vouchers, which are later used in exchange for goods and services in the community.

OPINION/ANALYSIS

The bank is this society's educational institution. The people are students, and the forms they fill out constitute exams or reports, which are passed along to the teacher. There is a direct relationship in this society between educational excellence and society at large; students are rewarded immediately and in a very concrete fashion.

The following is an unedited journal entry from a Japanese student analyzing American culture.

Date: Sept. 9

Location: At my host family's house

OBSERVATION/DESCRIPTION

This morning I had to go to school at 8:10, but I could not hear my alarm clock ringing at 6:40, so I overslept until 8:00. My host mother did not wake me up though she heard the alarm clock's sound.

OPINION/ANALYSIS

She was very unkind to me. Maybe she doesn't care if I have many difficulties at school. I felt loneliness. In Japan, people help each other. We always take care of our families and always take care of our friends even if they are grown-up persons. To take care of each other is a most important value for us. Host mother said in the evening, "Next time if you don't wake up, what should I do? I respected your privacy this morning." Her words were very impressive to me. I understood her attitude represented the important American values: individualism and privacy. Maybe she also wanted me to learn "self-help" and "time control" to survive in America.