



SUBSISTENCE

Hunter-Gatherer Exercise

Adapted from Teaching eHRAF [*Exercise 1.22 Hunter-Gatherers, Level I.*](#) by Carol Ember.



Fresh meat cut from bone. Photo by Jon Sullivan. Public Domain Image via Wikimedia Commons.

In this exercise students will break into groups and compare and contrast the various social factors correlated with hunter gatherer subsistence systems.

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HUNTER-GATHERER SOCIAL COMPARISONS



EXERCISE DETAILS

TIME: 45 minutes

MATERIALS REQUIRED:

- Worksheet and pen or other materials for recording answers
- 6 person working groups

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

At the end of this assignment, you will be able to:

- observe and analyze patterns of social life using the example of hunting and gathering societies
- gain experience in team based secondary data collection and analysis techniques
- construct effective and efficient search strategies in eHRAF in order to retrieve data relevant to a specific topic/assignment.



VARIATION IN HUNTER GATHERERS

By understanding what conditions predict variation and also using the paleoanthropological record to make educated guesses about past conditions in a particular place, anthropologists may have a better chance of inferring what hunter-gatherers of the past were like (Hitchcock and Beisele 2000, 5; C. R. Ember 1978; Marlowe 2005).

Ilongot hunting party. Popular Science Monthly Volume 77. 1910. Public Domain Image via Wikimedia Commons

*The Alaskan Range. United States geological Survey.
Public Domain Image via Wikimedia Commons*

MAIN QUESTION

The way a society gets its food seems to affect many aspects of social and political life. What are the societal living conditions like for people who make their living from wild food resources (food collectors)?





ASSIGNMENT PART 1

Break into groups of six and evenly divide the societies on the following slide among all group members.

Hadza archery and hunters, Lake Eyasi, Tanzania. 2008. Photo by Woodlouse. CC by 2.0 Via Wikimedia Commons

HUNTER GATHERER GROUPS

Warao

Bororo

Xokleng

Abipón

Chorote

Ona

Tehuelche

Aranda

Tiwi

Manus

Quinault

Tlingit

Tubatulabal

Yokuts

Yuki

Yurok

Assiniboine

Blackfoot

Comanche

Crow

Chinookans
of the Lower
Columbia
River

Aleut

Alutiiq

Chipewyans

Copper Inuit

Ingalik

Innu

Kaska

Ojibwa

Western Woods Cree

Mi'kmaq

Haida

ASSIGNMENT PART 1

Each individual will fill in the following data table for their chosen society(s):

| Society Name | Response |
|---|----------|
| Settlement size (Large 100+/Medium 50-99/Small <50) | |
| Degree of settlement permanence (Permanent/Temporary) | |
| Total population size (use demography) | |

ASSIGNMENT PART 1

Regroup and combine individual findings into a large group table (5 minutes).

| | Society A | Society B | Society C | Society D | Society E | Society F |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Settlement size | | | | | | |
| Degree of settlement permanence | | | | | | |
| Population Size | | | | | | |



ASSIGNMENT PART 2

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Using the group table, calculate what percentage of hunting and gathering societies have

- *Large settlements*
- *Medium settlements*
- *Small settlements*
- *Permanent settlements*
- *Nomadic settlements*

Hopi Indian boy pretending to use a bow and arrow against a Hopi Indian girl, ca. 1901. She is standing to the left of the doorway of an adobe dwelling. Photo by Pierce, C.C. Public Domain Image via Wikimedia Commons

ASSIGNMENT PART 3

Answer the following questions in your groups.

1. What patterns do you observe, now that you have combined all this data? E.g. What tendencies towards social factors? Number these tendencies and summarize them. (appx. 5 minutes)
2. Formulate each of these tendencies as a hypothesis and briefly describe how you would go about testing it (appx. 8 minutes)
3. Were there any societies that didn't fit the patterns you noticed? (appx. 7 minutes)



RESOURCES

Assignment Rubric, Tips, References

The †Khomani San Craft Village, connected with !Xaus lodge, where members of the community show their traditional skills. Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. by Tim Ellis CC by 4.0 via Flickr

RUBRIC

➤ The following rubric is suggested for evaluating responses:

| | Unsatisfactory (0%) | Needs Improvement (25%) | Satisfactory (75%) | Outstanding (100%) |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| Assignment Part 1: <u>Tables</u> | <p><i>Unsatisfactory</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Tables for hunter-gatherer societies in eHRAF are absent | <p><i>Needs Improvement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Tables for hunter-gatherer societies are sparsely filled in and include only a few (2-3) societies. | <p><i>Satisfactory</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Tables for hunter-gatherer societies include multiple societies with regular notes | <p><i>Outstanding</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Tables for hunter-gatherer societies include multiple societies with a variety of notes and most include citations. |
| Assignment Part 2: <u>Calculations</u> | <p><i>Unsatisfactory</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Answers are absent or mostly incomplete | <p><i>Needs Improvement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Answers are only partially completed and/or inaccurate | <p><i>Satisfactory</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Answers are largely complete and mostly accurate | <p><i>Outstanding</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Answers are complete and accurately calculated. |
| Assignment Part 2: <u>Questions</u> <u>1-3</u> | <p><i>Unsatisfactory</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Major points are not clear. ▶ Specific examples are not used. ▶ Hypotheses not present | <p><i>Needs Improvement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Commentary on research findings is not comprehensive and /or persuasive. ▶ Major points are addressed, but not well supported. ▶ Responses are inadequate or do not address topic or response to the questions ▶ Specific hypothesis do not support topic or response to the questions. | <p><i>Satisfactory</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Evaluation and analysis of research findings is accurate. Major points are stated. ▶ Hypotheses are adequate and would address the question at hand. ▶ Content is accurate ▶ A specific example from the research is used. | <p><i>Outstanding</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Evaluation and analysis of research findings is accurate and persuasive. ▶ Hypotheses are stated clearly ▶ Responses are excellent and address questions ▶ Content is clear. ▶ Several specific examples from the research are used. |

FURTHER READING

- For more exercises and teaching resources related to human societies past and present, explore [*Teaching eHRAF*](#).
- For more information on Hunter-gatherers check out the [*Hunter-Gatherer*](#) module by Carol Ember in HRAF's [*Explaining Human Culture*](#) database.
- For a more detailed version of this particular exercise with additional questions and activities check out Teaching eHRAF [*Exercise 1.22 Hunter-Gatherers, Level I*](#) by Carol Ember.
- For information on hunter-gatherers in the archaeological record, check out [*eHRAF Archaeology*](#).

REFERENCES

- Hitchcock, Robert K., and Megan Beisele. 2000. "Introduction." In *Hunters and Gatherers in the Modern World: Conflict, Resistance, and Self-Determinations*, 1–10. New York, NY: Berghahn Books.
- Ember, Carol R. 1978. "Myths About Hunter-Gatherers." *Ethnology* 17 (4): 439–48. doi:10.2307/3773193.
- Marlowe, Frank W. 2005. "Hunter-Gatherers and Human Evolution." *Evolutionary Anthropology: Issues, News, and Reviews* 14 (2): 56–67. doi:10.1002/evan.20046.