

Outsiders easily (and often!) misunderstand components of another culture. This exercise will give some sense of why that happens.

Scenario



You are space travelers who have been beamed to earth from the planet Pegasi. You don't know anything about life on planet earth, but you have been instructed to carefully study what is going on there and report back your conclusions. When you were beamed to earth, you ended up near a McDonald's restaurant. Because you assume that what is happening in a McDonald's restaurant is typical for what goes on across the entire planet, that restaurant has become your ethnographic "text."

Look for things that might be symbols revealing meanings that human beings have assigned to areas of their life. From your observations of the following things in the restaurant, what might you conclude about life on the planet earth? The more bizarre things your imagination comes up with, the better!

**Architecture / furnishings**

**Food**

**Male / female roles**

**Family**

Specify the symbols of items carrying the meanings you discern (or imagine).