

Discussion Question Guidelines

1. Clearly indicate which reading your questions are referring to. (e.g. In the Bargh et al article)
2. Avoid simple demographics questions (e.g. what if they used all females, or all Whites)
3. Avoid vague questions about the results (e.g. how would the results have changed if...) Instead, be more specific. Indicate which finding in particular that you are concerned with.
4. Avoid phrasing questions so that they can be answered with a simple yes or no (e.g. Do you think the researchers considered the fact that the students were not attending to the stimuli?)
5. Try to develop questions that deal with the main findings or major themes identified in the readings.
6. Try to develop questions that deal with the implications of the study.

Examples of discussion questions (note: good discussion questions often have multiple components):

1. What are some of the ways in which we acquire stereotypes? Does the method of acquisition alter the effect of the stereotypes? How does simple awareness of stereotypes lead to potential discrimination?
2. The authors compare the emergence of the home computer to the advent of the TV in terms of what they feel to be a technological change that resulted in social disengagement. Why would you consider this to be a fair comparison? Are there other technological advancements that you feel would be a better parallel in regards to the social impact of the home computer?
3. Lea & Spears suggest that paralanguage takes the form of typographical marks and other text features that although they have no lexical meaning, nevertheless signify socially shared meanings. How has the usage of paralanguage in computer-mediated communication aided in impression formation? Do you feel that impression formed via the use of paralanguage (e.g. emoticons) are accurate? Is paralanguage usage in CMC comparable to its use in face-to-face interactions?
4. Social Identity theory suggest that our identities are derived in part from our memberships in social categories. How does social interaction during computer-mediated communication influence our social identities? Is this consistent with the predictions made by social identity theory? Do you think that Lea & Spears' manipulation was effective in altering the salience of social vs. individual identity? Explain.