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## City Life - Inquiry and Problem Solving Exercise

Milena Cuellar

*CUNY LaGuardia Community College*

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## City Life - Inquiry and Problem Solving Exercise

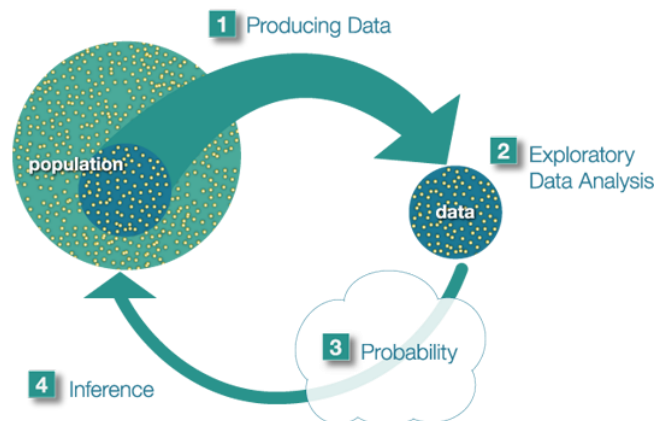
Living in a big city like New York can be very challenging. City planning is an interdisciplinary enterprise where social scientists, humanists, psychologists, scientists, statisticians, citizens, politicians, etc. come together to offer solutions to improve quality of life in the city. To find such solutions, these people need clear and reliable (qualitative and quantitative) information about specific challenges that residents and visitors face.



For the variety of stakeholders in the city, many different things might be considered worthy of study, depending on their interests and needs regarding, e.g., employment, financial status, family size, healthcare, mobility, and education.

For example, do you know whether your neighborhood is sufficiently protected from a fire? What about other neighborhoods in the city? To what extent does a CUNY degree help a person gain employment in the City? In which ways do race or gender or sexual preference play a role in how people experience city life? Can these be quantified in dollar terms?

As you know, there are four phases to the process by which the methods of Statistics can be used to study a situation. Use the diagram below to remind yourself the four phases of the inquiry process.



## Phases:

1. Come up with a question about some living condition in the City that you would like to see answered. Would an observational study or an experiment be the best way to answer this question?
2. Identify what data would be needed to help answer the question. One would hope that an unbiased source of such data would be available.
3. Organize and process the data to find useful information that would help answer the question.
4. Make a **reasonable** conclusion based on the information you obtained.

***We wish to focus on the first two of these phases.*** Please write an essay that describes a question about city life that you believe is worthy of a statistical study. Think of this as an opportunity to inquire about something you might need to know for your major, in a future job, or just to develop your research skills. **You are not expected to collect data or to answer your question**, but you must provide some background information that justifies the study, noting that statistical studies may be costly. Talk about how an answer to the questions would have value. You are expected to describe what data might be collected and how the subsequent data analysis steps in the statistical process might be conducted so that some useful information could be learned.

In your conclusion, you should discuss at least one potential response that might be appropriate, based on the results from the study. For example, what would you suggest be done if you learned that some neighborhoods don't have enough grocery stores or if there are certain subway lines that are frequently over-crowded?

Your essay should be about two to three pages, in Times New Roman font size 12, single spaced, and one inch (1") in all margins. Include an illustration, chart or graph (not larger than half a page) if you believe it will improve your presentation and provide justification for your study. This is a guided project and you can always ask your instructor any questions.

You have a lot of freedom in selecting your topic. Past projects have included questions about the quality of food at a CUNY cafeteria, the demographics of first-year students at LaGuardia, the habits of church-goers in the city, cell-phone use, math remediation, the impact of e-commerce, etc.

Your essay will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- You demonstrate that the question you select comes from some deliberation.
- You demonstrate that you are familiar with the inquiry process used to (at least partially) answer the question.
- Your essay is written with clarity.
- You provide an adequate conclusion.
- References and citations should be included.