

### **Part I: Identification/Definition of a Third Place**

In an informal journal entry, choose a third place (a space in which civic conversations regularly occur—a public gathering place) in which to observe. The journal entry should first define the place you've chosen and how you see it as a "third place" for civic engagement. Visit the space a few times, documenting the dates and times in which you observed. Describe what you see and hear in some detail, knowing that your reader has not been there, at least not with you and not at those times. Draw me a picture with words.

### **Part II: Three-day journal**

Your goal for this part of the exercise is to specifically observe the third space you have chosen at three separate times of the day. Find time to observe during the morning hours, afternoon and evening. If you know you have classes in the morning, choose a Saturday or Sunday on which to observe what occurs in that civic space. Obviously, if your choice for a civic space is a synagogue or church, there may be just one time that is likely to have lots of activity (during services); however, both spaces often host other activities at other times of the day, so they're still viable.

Document your observations of those three times paying particular attention to what you hear among the people. Your goal for this journal is to determine what issues are being talked about and people you might consider speaking with.

### **Part III: Talking with strangers**

Obviously, as a reporter, your goal is not only to know the spaces people occupy within the community, but also to be able to talk with those people and tap into what they know and what they believe. Oddly, one of the toughest things for young reporters to get past, however, is talking with strangers. It's a scary thing to simply start a conversation with someone, but how else can we get to know the community members?

So, your final step for this assignment is likely the toughest, but may prove to be the most fun, too. You are to choose two people, at separate times during your observations of the third place you have chosen, and talk informally with them about whatever seems relevant to that space or to the social climate at that moment. In your first interview, do not take notes. Simply engage in the conversation, and afterward write down everything you can remember. In the second interview, explain your task to the citizen, and ask if it would be O.K. to take notes while you chat. (one tip: you may want to engage them first, and then take out the notebook and ask if you can take a couple quick notes as you're talking.)

Write a journal entry that details the experience and relays what you learned in your interviews with people. Highlight what you found interesting, what made you uncomfortable, what you'd like to follow up on.

Finally, assess what, if anything, you observed or learned in your interviews might make a good story for a newspaper—either one of the local papers or The Beacon. Analyze why you think it would be a good story.