

Individuals in Groups

1. Prompt

Something happens to individuals when they are in a group. They think and act differently than they would on their own. Most people, if they observe some disaster or danger on their own—a woman being stabbed, a pedestrian slammed by a hit-and-run driver—will at least call for help; many will even risk their own safety to intervene. But if they are in a group observing the same danger, they hold back. The reason has more to do with the nature of groups than the nature of individuals.

In one experiment in behavioral psychology, students were seated in a room, either alone or in groups of three, as a staged emergency occurred: Smoke began pouring through the vents. Students who were on their own usually hesitated a minute, got up, checked the vents and then went out to report what certainly seemed like a fire. But the students who were sitting in groups of three did not move. They sat there for six minutes, with smoke so thick they could barely see, rubbing their eyes and coughing.

In another experiment, psychologists staged a situation in which people overheard a loud crash, a scream and a woman in pain, moaning that her ankle was broken. Seventy percent of those who were alone when the “accident” occurred went to her aid, compared with only 40 percent of those who heard her in the presence of another person.

Psychologists call this “diffusion of responsibility” or “social loafing.” The more people in a group, the lazier each individual in it becomes. Often, observers think nothing needs to be done because someone else has already taken care of it, and the more observers there are, the less likely any one person is to call for help.

Adapted from “In Groups We Shrink” by Carol Tavris. Originally published in the Los Angeles Times, 1991.

Writing Directions

Read the passage above and write an essay responding to the ideas it presents. In your essay, be sure to summarize the passage in your own words, stating the author’s most important ideas. Develop your essay by identifying one idea in the passage that you feel is especially significant, and explain its significance. Support your claims with evidence or examples drawn from what you have read, learned in school, and/or personally experienced.

Remember to review your essay and make any changes or corrections that will help your reader follow your thinking. You will have 90 minutes to complete your essay.

2. Guidelines for Summaries

For a score point of 4 (competent), with a competent degree of understanding of the complexity of ideas in the reading passage, students should mention the following points:

- Individuals in groups think and act differently than they do on their own.
- “The reason has more to do with the nature of groups than the nature of individuals.”
- Psychologists refer to this phenomenon as “diffusion of responsibility”: the more people in a group, the lazier each individual in the group becomes.

- Observers in a group think nothing needs to be done since they assume another member of the group has already done so.

Additional points that may be mentioned:

- In one experiment, students alone in a room with smoke pouring in reported the event, while students in the room sitting in groups of three sat for six minutes before taking action.
- In another experiment, 70% of people hearing the sounds of an accident while alone went to help, while only 40% of those hearing the accident while with someone else did so.

3. Sample Papers

Paper 1: 5 5 5 5 5

People are not the same when they are in a group. A person is smart, responsible, reasonable, and hardworking. A person cares for others and knows his or her moral standing. People are unintelligent, scared, lazy and onlooking. People seem to think that its always some elses problem All they can do is watch so thats what they will do. Yes, a person is less likely to act if no one else is acting. Even if it is the moral or professional duty of a person to help or act, they may fail if they feel out numbered.

Carol Tavis says from her "In Groups We Shrink" that, in groups, people have, what Psychologist call, "diffusion of responsibility" or "social loafing."

Experiments show that students, in a room filling with smoke, would be more likely to call for help if they were alone. This is contrary to the test with multiple students who would sit there and allow the smoke to fill the room. In a real life situation the people who do not act upon smoke is not likely to survive.

This behavior is not restricted to young college or high school students which have little life experience. In a surveillence video of a parking lot, a man was stabbed and then mugged. The assailant escape leaving the man bleeding. The man gathered enough strenght to stumble in front of the traffic going though the parking lot. He might have thought to himself that this would be a fast way to get help. The drivers proved him wrong. Cars would drive around him to avoid him. Perhaps these people did not want to hold up traffic. Each minute wasted is more blood drained. Even a school bus carefully tried to avoid him. The man, knelt down hold his arms up with blood on them Finally a lone man got out of his car and assisted the man to the hospital. It took almost an hour for someone to decide to help and it was during a gap where the savior was alone with no traffic behind him and no passenger.

At the hospital one could be treated for whatever ailments one may have. That is why the stab victim wanted to go so badly. But even at the hospital there is no guarantee. At one New York City hospital, a elderly woman collapsed due to a heart condition in the lobby. All the people waiting watched as she hit the floor. However they returned to whatever they were doing. Minutes go by and activity around her remained normal. Doctors were seen walking passed and then disappearing past the camera. Almost an hour passes and finally a guard is seen feeling her pulse. After ten minutes a stretcher comes to take her away. What took so long? Whatever the case may be the assured thought was that some else must be handling it.

There are cases of individuals who would help despite other people. But the general masses are always onlookers. As seen, students seem to disregard their own life from laziness. Even adults and professionals are guilty of this. This is the nature of people. That is why there are heroes in the world. There needs to be balance.

Paper 2: 4 4 4 4 4

Many people tend to depend on others when they are in large groups of people. They react and think differently when surrounded by others. When people are alone, their reactions are different when something happens. In the article "In Groups we Shrink" by Carol Tavris, she demonstrates it very well the difference between groups of people and individuals on how they act towards serious issues. Tavris uses the term "diffusion of responsibility" or "social loafing", they both describe the way people in groups care less of a situation or feel that it has been already taken care of. The two terms are very true in present day society, because of personal experiences and the experiment Tavris provides in the reading.

A couple of years ago, witnessing an accident of two cars colliding in the middle of New York City, was very interesting. Nobody went close to the car to see if the driver and passengers were well. It took at least five minutes for people to go and see if things were fine. The large groups of people seemed to have felt that someone had called the ambulance and that everything was fine. What if the people in the car were suffering real bad and which they were. Again this situation relates back to Tavris's term "diffusion of responsibility" or "social loafing". That people in areas of others are less likely to react to a serious situation. They depend on others or think that someone has reacted and it is fine to move on. In the middle of the night, when walking alone to the house. A guy riding his bike had fallen real badly. First reaction was to see if he was ok, because automatically when I knew that no one else was around, it was good to see if he was fine.

In the article, Tavris uses the experiment on students in classrooms that released smoke from the vents and this proves her term "diffusion of responsibility" or "social loafing". When individuals were placed in classrooms that released a white smoke, the students quickly left the room to notify officials. Then when groups of students were placed in the rooms, it had taken them 6 minutes to react when the whole room was covered in white smoke. This indicates that individuals rely on their own self to a serious problem. Whereas, large groups of people think that everything is alright, because someone must have reacted first. As the world moves on and a lot of things are improving, people think that everything is fine.

Technology today is very strong and powerful. It also plays a role to Tavris's term "diffusion of responsibility" or "social loafing". With cellphones, internet, and cameras; people begin to think that when a situation occurs, it should be fine because someone around them is taking care of it. Technology has a connection, because any anyone can think and say that the problem is fine because it was captured on camera or the guy next to him used his cellphone. When it come a time that they are the only person around the accident, they sure will react much differently or quickly.

The world is changing, it could be far better or far worse in different aspects of life. One thing for sure is that Tavris is right on the difference between individuals and groups of people on how they act towards a problem. More people need to be aware about this difference Tavris illustrated. People in general should learn about this and it will change their thoughts next time when they are alone or in groups.

Paper 3: 3 3 3 3 3

This short article is about individuals in groups. This article is adapted from "In groups we shrink", by Carol Tavris and was published in the Los Angeles of 1991. According to Psychologists Individuals in groups People often feel lazier because they think the other Person in the group will finish the work for themselves. This happen is because something to do with the nature of groups than the nature of individuals.

In one of the study of behavioral psychology, students often seat in a room and work in a group. The group has three people and each person help the other people will do the work for themselves. For example, if there is a group of people who studies in a English class. The teacher tell then to work in a group and the more people in a group will make people in that group lazier because they think someone else has already taken care of the work in the group. In my opinion people who works in group will not pay attetian on the work because they will talking in their little group with their personal problems. This often happen in my classes. The teacher tell ours to working in a group and the students in the group often talking about their own lives, not the work that teacher told ours to do.

According to Carol Tavris group work is not good and I am agree. First of all, group work will bring people so together talking about something else, as I said in Paragraph number two. Besides some people don't like group work because they are uncomfortable to work in a group. Working in a group will making People anixy. For example, whenever the teacher tell ours to working in a group and I am feeling novise because I don't know how to communct with others. Also, I am scary to talk to my classmates which making very anixey to work in a group. Group works like a group of People go together to talking, not working. Often people in a group is talking and they accept someone else in the group to do the work for them.

I have siblings and they often accept me to do work for them. Ecpecially, if you are the oldest in the family. They often think we are a group of people and we should working together, but when I need their help, they often said I am the oldest and I should do the work at my house. This happened is because the nature of groups then the nature of individuals. According to Psychologists, they call this "diffusion of responsibility" or "social loafing". These quotes means the more people in a group, the lazier each person in that group becomes. Moreover, they often think nothing needs to be done because some else in that group will do the work or taken care of it. It is true the more observers there are, the less likely any person is to call for help. For this reason, we should not have groups for students to working in classes.

Paper 4: 2 2 2 2 2

According to the Passage "In Groups we Shrink" by Carol Tavris. The main idea of this passage is "diffusion of responsibility". In other worlds the way People respond to the danger of their self or to others, it depends on when they are in a group or individual.

In one experience of myself. Years ago, I was walking on street valley near my house, and I saw lots of people were gathering around at the park near the block. by the time I got there, it was a fight between two sides of teenagers. Instead of calling 911 immediately, but I stood there and watched till the end. The reason I didn't do anything.-- because there was a crowed of People got there before me, I thought. one of them Probably called 911, but they didn't, no Polices showed up.

The disasters in Iran now days also shown diffusion of responsibility, which is the explosions in the city from terrorists that killed thousands of People. The reason why every explode killed lots of People is people in Iran usually don't do anything when they

see weird stuffs that landed around them. They should have called or removed the People around it.

In conclusion of. people act differently to the affairs when they are individual and surrounded by the group, the more People in a group, the lazier each individual in it becomes.

Paper 5: 1 1 1 1 1

This first paragraph is talking about people with different kind of mind and their way of thinking most people are kinding to help somebody in danger and remove the person in the act of risking his/her for the person to live instead of letting the person to died. Most people who hit and run are sometime sacred to call a police office or to Dial 911 about an accident thinking in the back of their mind that they will be send to Jail – for example a man hit a woman and her son on their way the man call the 911 for help but without staying for their arrived. A man who did not know anything and got their and help the woman and her son. the man was happy to help them and say if does it take his life he will do it and the other man was fill with guilty in him saying he was sorry and he was scared to be sent to jail.

Most students when they see a smoke in the air they try to investigate to see what is going on in that area. they also want to help people in the palace and call for help. so that police office and fire fighter will come to their aid.

Most people are willing to help other in problem and some do not care of what is happening around them alone care about their self which is not good we should try to help other If they need our assitances.

I will say at lazy people that will do that and they are the one that bring different kind of thing say they cannot do anything now but If they have any problem they want somebody to come and help them out.

4. Scoring Articulations

Paper 1: 5 5 5 5 5

Critical Response to Writing Task and the Text: The essay improves along the way, effectively integrating a critical discussion of ideas in the text and the writer's experiences, demonstrating a good understanding of the main ideas and complexity of ideas in the text.

Development of Writer's Ideas: Ideas are well-developed, and the examples from news events are skillfully chosen and effectively described.

Structure of the Response: The linkage among the examples is very good, demonstrating a clear plan. Transitions clearly convey relations among ideas, as in the link between the stabbing victim and elderly woman paragraphs.

Language Use: Sentences and Word Choice: The language is usually effective in conveying the writer's ideas; sentences are usually well-controlled and effective.

Language Use: Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics: There are a few surface errors, but good command of language is apparent, and meaning is usually clear.

Paper 2: 4 4 4 4 4

Critical Response to Writing Task and the Text: Although the writer misstates one term from the text, the paper competently responds to the assignment, integrating ideas from the text with the writer's experiences. The summary consistently demonstrates an understanding of the text as well as some of the complexity.

Development of Writer's Ideas: The writer competently uses ideas from the text to interpret and evaluate the narrated experiences.

Structure of the Response: There is a progression from example to cause-and-effect to solution in the response that competently supports the writer's central focus. Linkages come from consistent focus on key phrases from the text.

Language Use: Sentences and Word Choice: Sentence structure is competently controlled, and word choice clearly conveys meaning.

Language Use: Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics: Grammar, usage, and mechanics are mostly correct; language use is competent.

Paper 3: 3 3 3 3 3

Critical Response to Writing Task and the Text: The writer appears to understand the overall assignment, but the summary is incorrect at times, demonstrating a superficial or incomplete understanding of the text.

Development of Writer's Ideas: The writer uses appropriate school and family experiences and, in general, connects them to ideas in the text.

Structure of the Response: Although sometimes disconnected, relevant ideas are grouped together, and simple transitions convey relationships among ideas.

Language Use: Sentences and Word Choice: There is some structural variety, but sentence control is uneven. Word choice is usually clear enough to convey meaning.

Language Use: Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics: An uneven command of the language occasionally impedes understanding.

Paper 4: 2 2 2 2 2

Critical Response to Writing Task and the Text: The response demonstrates a little of the skills specified in the writing assignment. There is little integration of ideas from the text and elements of the writer's experiences, demonstrating a weak understanding of the text.

Development of Writer's Ideas: There is weak development of the writer's ideas. Ideas from the text and examples from the writer's experience are brief and inadequately developed.

Structure of the Response: While the paragraphs extend the main idea, there is no linkage among them until the end.

Language Use: Sentences and Word Choice: There is weak sentence control and word choice.

Language Use: Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics: There is weak command of language, with many distracting errors.

Paper 5: 1 1 1 1 1

Critical Response to Writing Task and the Text: The writer consistently misunderstands the text, demonstrating little, if any, understanding of the main ideas.

Development of Writer's Ideas: The elements of the text are confused and often misstated; reasons from the text and the writer's experience are blurred, undeveloped, and irrelevant.

Structure of the Response: Ideas are clumped but not related, and the second half of the paper is a string of one-sentence paragraphs; transitions are rarely used.

Language Use: Sentences and Word Choice: There are a few clear sentences, but many are obscured by unclear word choice and minimal control.

Language Use: Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics: There is minimal command of language.