

# ACTIVITIES



## ACTIVITY 1.1

### Sampling or Assignment?

**Allyson J. Weseley, EdD**

Roslyn High School, Roslyn Heights, NY

Sampling is when researchers select a group to study. While the word can apply to anything a researcher is studying (e.g., plants, animals), for the purpose of this exercise, we will assume we are talking about psychologists who are studying people. The word *sample* refers only to those people the researcher is studying.

Assignment, on the other hand, is the process by which researchers conducting an experiment decide which of their participants will be in each of the various treatment conditions. After picking their sample, experimenters must then assign the participants to conditions (e.g., experimental and control).

Students often confuse the terms “sampling” and “assignment.” For each of the scenarios described below, indicate which process is being discussed and how you can tell.



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1. Keith exposes half of his participants to an episode of a sitcom and half to an episode of a violent television show and then observes them for signs of aggressive behavior.
2. Laurie picks 100 people to be in her study on the effects of listening to music while studying.
3. Danny picks 100 students to try a new AP Psychology text and compares them with 100 other students who are using the old text.
4. Chris puts 20 children in a drumming class and contrasts their drumming abilities with 20 children who have not had any drum instruction.
5. Tracey chooses 1,000 people to be in her study about the personalities of youngest children.



## Answer Key

1. Assignment. Keith is dividing or assigning participants to groups for his study.
2. Sampling. Laurie is choosing 100 people—the sample—to be in her study.
3. Assignment. Danny has divided (or assigned) his sample of 200 students into two groups of 100 each and plans to compare them.
4. Assignment. Chris has split 40 students into two groups of 20 in order to look at the effects of drum instruction; he has assigned students to groups.
5. Sampling. Tracey has chosen (selected) 1,000 students to be her sample.