

9. I know how to enroll my children in the preferred private schools.

10. I know how to host the parties that "key" people attend.

11. I am on the boards of at least two charities.

12. I know the hidden rules of the Junior League.

13. I support or buy the work of a particular artist.

14. I know how to read a corporate financial statement and analyze my own financial statements.

The first point about this exercise is that if you fall mostly in the middle class, the assumption is that everyone knows these things. However, if you did not know many of the items for the other classes, the exercise points out how many of the hidden rules are taken for granted by a particular class, which assumes they are a given for everyone. What, then, are the hidden rules? The subsequent grid gives an overview of some of the major hidden rules among the classes of poverty, middle class, and wealth.

"The one deep experience that social rich from the merely rich and those below is their schooling, and with it, all the associations, the sense and sensibility, to which this education routine leads throughout their lives."

"As a selection and training place of the upper classes, both old and new, the private school is a unifying influence, a force for the nationalization of the upper classes."

C. Wright Mills
The Power Elite

Have you seen those in the class room?

HIDDEN RULES AMONG CLASSES

WEALTH	MIDDLE CLASS	POVERTY
POSSessions	Things.	People.
MONEY	To be managed.	To be used, spent.
PERSONALITY	Is for acquisition and stability.	Is for entertainment. Sense of humor is highly valued.
SOCIAL EMPHASIS	Emphasis is on self-governance and self-sufficiency.	Social inclusion of people they like.
FOOD	Key question: Did you like it? Quality important.	Key question: Did you have enough? Quantity important.
CLOTHING	Clothing valued for its quality and acceptance into norm of middle class. Label important.	Clothing valued for individual style and expression of personality.
TIME	Traditions and history most important. Decisions made against future ramifications.	Present most important. Decisions made for moment based on feelings or survival.
EDUCATION	Crucial for climbing success ladder and making money.	Valued and revered as abstract but not as reality.
DESTINY	Believes in choice. Can change future with good choices now.	Believes in fate. Cannot do much to mitigate chance.
LANGUAGE	Casual register. Formal register. Language is about negotiation.	Language is about survival.
FAMILY	Tends to be patriarchal.	Tends to be matriarchal.
WORLD VIEW	Sees world in terms of national setting.	Sees world in terms of local setting.
LOVE	Love and acceptance conditional and based largely upon achievement.	Love and acceptance conditional, based upon whether individual is liked.
DRIVING FORCE	Work, achievement.	Survival, relationships, entertainment.