The sociological eye is used to look at the world with a sociological point of view. It allows for sociologists to see social patterns or problems. The term sociological imagination was developed by C. Wright Mills and is defined as the ability to connect events in one’s personal life or others personal lives to patterns in society. The sociological imagination allows us to notice how events in one’s personal life affect the patterns in society. An example of this is increasing divorce rates. If we look at certain friends and family that we know that are getting a divorce or are divorced, we can notice the causes of these divorces and apply it to society. For example, if some couples we know are getting a divorce due to money problems, we can assume that a common cause of divorce among society is issues with money. Using the sociological imagination allows us to connect our personal problem of divorce to the social issue of increasing divorce rates. This means the same thing as when sociologists say the sociological imagination helps connect the relationship between “history” and “biography” in society. The personal issue we face is meant by “biography” and its relationship to “history” is the social pattern or issue that it connects to. Connecting the biography to the history in society helps us to see societal trends over time and find the causes of such trends. Another example of how to use sociological imagination is to look at a personal problem such as high stress. Many college students have high levels of stress for many reasons such as grades, income, tuition levels, limited sleep, and independence. By looking at the causes of stress at the micro level, we can apply this to the macro level of the social issue of increased stress levels in young adults. We can then start to find causes of this social issue and look for explanations and solutions.

Social structure, also known as the social order, is defined as the consistent patterns of behavior and organized social institutions that persist through time. The social system approach refers to the “classic” set up of the social structure. The social system approach is as follows: social institutions at the macro level, organizations and groups at the meso level, and statuses and roles at the micro level. This is the most common and basic structure of a society that sociologists use to define social interactions.

The stereotypical US family is a female and male, or wife and husband, who are also parents, or mom and dad, that have some children. This idea of the US family was the norm and basic American values since the beginning of American history. Men and women were expected to marry and have children. Men were expected to go off and work while the women stayed home to care for the children and do the housework. American views and values have since shifted and changed and as a society we are becoming more open-minded. Nowadays, the idea of a family is also changing in that gay couples are marrying and having children. The societal views on gender are also changing as we have transgender men and women emerging in society and being raw and open about their gender and sexuality. With these changing views and norms, we can no longer hold a view on what the US family “should” be. Families also do not always consist of two parents, single mothers and fathers exist as well. Married couples also do not have to have kids to be considered a family. When we look at how other cultures define their form of a “family,” we can see differences across our culture and others.