

# House calls

Literature



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Literature House Calls By Lewis Thomas An autobiographical account portrays the life of a person, written by that person. In Lewis Thomas' book, the author who is also the narrator provides the audience with a taste of American medical practice in the 19th century and early part of the 20th century. The story outlines the human character of the author's father and his medical persona.

House calls were a normal occurrence when Thomas was a boy and based on his autobiography, he went to many of these house calls with his father who was a doctor. As Thomas points it out in the essay, doctors during his father's time could only diagnose a medical problem if they were lucky. It shows that the objective of the story is to reflect on the hard truth about the 19th century medical practices. Thomas also points out that no one expected that doctors would be a profession to get rich (1983). Contrary to the popular image of the doctors today with Lexus LX, SC cars and idle time playing golf, his father was not a doctor because of the money. Therefore, the autobiography has one clear objective; to provide a comparison of the author's generation of doctors and those of his father. In addition, it also shows how the early medical practices changed in a way that most doctors during his father's time would never imagine.

The author has employed one key research technique to convey his message to the readers. Thomas used participant and non-participant observation to give an account of what doctors did during his father's time. For example, he says that the same stories that people talked about regarding his father were the same stories that would be told of any other hard-working practitioner during the same time (Thomas, 1983). To get to this idea, Thomas had observed or learnt what other doctors did during his time as a <https://assignbuster.com/house-calls/>

boy on house calls with his father. An excellent example is when he says “my father’s early instructions to me sitting in the front of his car...” (Thomas, 1983). It is a clear depiction that the research technique used was through observation.

#### Reference

Thomas, L. (1983). “ House calls.” In *The Youngest Science: Notes of a Medicine-Watcher* New York: Penguin: Viking Press.