

DESTINATION READING COURSE 3

UNIT 19: Who Asked You? Polling Today's Youth from Becoming a Clever Consumer by Sally Monroe

**Who Asked You?
Polling Today's Youth
from
Becoming a Clever Consumer
by Sally Monroe**

Imagine you work for a company that makes soda drinks. You're in charge of inventing a new flavor. Your latest idea is a blueberry-vanilla flavored drink. Will anybody like it?



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Companies are constantly creating new products. But how do they know consumers will buy them?

WHAT IS A POLL?

One way to find out what people will buy is to conduct a poll. A poll is a collection of opinions about a subject. Taking a poll can be a great way to find out what people are buying, eating, or thinking.

Polls have been around for hundreds of years. The earliest polls in the United States were called straw polls. They were interviews conducted by news reporters with people who had just voted in an election. Straw polls revealed how and why people had voted.

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At the beginning of the chapter the author asks us to think about the possibility of creating a new flavor of soda. What other ideas for products do you have? How would you figure out whether these products could become the basis of a business?



One way to become a good reader is to compare the information that you already know with the information that you're learning. I know that a vote and a poll are similar because they both have to do with making a choice. How are they different?

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In the 1930s, George Gallup founded the Institute of Public Opinion. The Institute polled people in the United States on many different subjects. Polls began to track what people bought and why. These marketing polls helped companies decide how to plug their products. They also helped them advertise their goods based on what people wanted.

Today, an effective poll includes these elements:



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- A large sample. The sample is the number of people who answer the questions. Often, national polls use about one thousand people.
- A sample chosen in the right way. To have a reliable poll, the people should not be volunteers. That means they can't come to the company and offer to participate. The company should come to them first. They also cannot be paid, because it might affect how they answer.
- Questions worded in the right way. Sometimes the way a question is worded can be a factor in how a person answers.
- Questions asked in the right order. General questions should come before specific questions.

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Why is it a bad idea to use volunteers in a poll?



Words ending in the letters a-r, e-r, and o-r often have the same ending sound—er. This paragraph has several words ending with these letters. Find them and pronounce them. Do they seem to end with the same sounds?

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WHAT HAPPENS IN A POLL?

When a company takes a poll, the company must first decide on the poll's purpose. Should it find out if people like a certain product? Should it give a general impression of what people need? Does the company want to know when and where a product is used, or how to improve it?

Next, the company decides how to take the poll. In a mail poll, a list of questions is mailed to participants. In a telephone poll, an interviewer calls people. In a personal interview, the poll taker meets with people face to face. People answer questions online in an Internet poll.

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Once the participants have answered all the questions, the polling company examines the results. After conducting a poll, here's how to crunch the numbers. First, count the total number of people in the sample. Then, for each question, look at the number of people who gave a certain answer. Divide that number by the total number of people who responded. This shows what percent, or fraction, of people gave that answer.



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In what way is figuring out the results of an election the same as figuring out the results of a poll?



What does the idiom “crunch the numbers” means? If you're not sure, look for clues in the text.

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Sport	Number Who Liked the Sport Best	Percent Who Liked the Sport Best
Baseball/ Softball	271 out of 3,585	8% (0.08 or 8/100)
Football	436 out of 3,585	12% (0.12 or 12/100)
Basketball	570 out of 3,585	16% (0.16 or 16/100)
Soccer	279 out of 3,585	8% (0.08 or 8/100)
Hockey	197 out of 3,585	5% (0.05 or 5/100)
Track	209 out of 3,585	6% (0.06 or 6/100)
Swimming	319 out of 3,585	9% (0.09 or 9/100)
Gymnastics	197 out of 3,585	5% (0.05 or 5/100)
Skating	289 out of 3,585	8% (0.08 or 8/100)
Bowling	202 out of 3,585	6% (0.06 or 6/100)
Other	616 out of 3,585	17% (0.17 or 17/100)

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Polling kids can help companies understand the factors that contribute to what young people buy. One poll asked 1,350 kids ages six to fourteen about their lives. The poll found that seventy percent of kids worry about getting good grades. Fifty-six percent would rather have a job helping people than a job where they made a lot of money. Fifty-one percent of kids from ages 9 to 14 watch TV every day, and 19 percent use a computer every day.

This information helps companies develop products for kids and effective ways to advertise those products.

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Total polled : 1,350
70% - worry about good grades
56% - would rather have a job helping people than a job with a lot of money
51% - watch TV every day
19% - use a computer every day



Poll for Kids and Their Lives
Ages 6 to 14

Corporations spend about \$2 billion each year to advertise their products on TV. They want to make every dollar count. Since a kid will see more than 20,000 ads per year, companies want to know what a kid will buy. A poll can tell them the answer.

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This word ends in the letters a -r. Pronounce the word. What sounds do you say when you pronounce the second syllable?



Sometimes readers can't remember all the facts they just read. If this happens to you, go back and reread the material you just finished. The section you just read was a long one. Reread the section headings and the section to make sure you got the main points.



Now that you've completed the passage, can you remember what four elements an effective poll contains? Reread the passage to find out.
