

**Announcements:**

- Midterm next Friday. Review on Wednesday, question/answer in next Friday discussions.
- **Today:** Chapter 5 (may not finish)
- **Mon:** Chapter 6
- **Wed:** Finish Chapters 5 and 6 if needed; Midterm review

**Homework (Due Wed, Feb 1):**

Chapter 5: #76, 102, 110



# Sampling: Surveys and How to Ask Questions

**Example of a Public Opinion Poll**

ABC News/Washington Post Poll. Jan. 12-15, 2010. **N=1,083 adults nationwide. MoE ± 3%.**

Source: [www.pollingreport.com](http://www.pollingreport.com)

*“In general, do you favor or oppose legalizing the possession of small amounts of marijuana for personal use?”*

<b>Results:</b>	Favor	Oppose	Unsure
	46%	51%	2%

How did they do this? What do the results tell us about all adults nationwide? What is “MoE”?

**Some Definitions**

**Population:** Entire group of units about which inference will be made.

(Recall inference = hypothesis tests and confidence intervals)

**Example:** Political poll

Population = all those who will vote in the election

**Sample:** The units measured or surveyed.

**Example:** n = 1000 likely voters nationwide

**Census:** Sample = entire population

**More Definitions**

**Sample Survey:** a subgroup of a large population questioned on set of topics. Special type of observational study.

**Simple random sample:** Every conceivable group of units of the required size from the population has the same chance to be the selected sample.

This is the ideal!

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**The Fundamental Rule for Using Data for Inference:**

Available data can be used to make inferences about a much larger group if the data can be considered *representative for the question(s) of interest.*

**Example:** Our class probably *is* representative of *all college students* for relationship between measurements like hand span and height, but not for something like estimating proportion who have been to Disneyland.

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### Advantages of Sample Survey over Census

#### Sometimes a Census Isn't Possible

when measurements destroy units

#### Speed

especially if population is large

#### Accuracy

devote resources to getting accurate sample results

**US Government conducts a census every 10 years (since 1790). Otherwise, relies on sample surveys to get unemployment rates, etc, etc.**

**Examples (next pages): Walt Disney in 1920 census; Humphrey Bogart in 1900 census**

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### The Beauty of Sampling When Done Right

With proper sampling methods, based on a **sample** of about **1000 adults** we can almost certainly estimate, to **within 3%**, the **percentage** of the **entire population** who have a certain trait or opinion.

This result does *not* depend on how large the (large) population is. It could be tens of thousands, millions, billions....

(1000 and 3% is just an example; % depends on the size of the sample)

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### Estimating a Population Percent from a Sample Survey: Margin of Error

For a properly conducted sample survey:

The sample percent and the population percent rarely differ by more than the **margin of error**. They do so in fewer than 5% of surveys (about 1 in 20).

$$\text{(Conservative) Margin of error} \cong \frac{1}{\sqrt{n}} \times 100\%$$

where  $n$  is the number of people in the sample.

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### 95% Confidence Interval for a population percent

In about 95% of all surveys, the interval

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{sample percent} - \text{margin of error} \\ \text{to} \\ \text{sample percent} + \text{margin of error} \end{array}$$

will cover the *population percent* (a fixed but unknown *parameter*).

Add and subtract the margin of error to the sample percent to create a **95% confidence interval for the population percent**.

**Example: Oct 5-7, 2010 CNN Poll of  $n = 938$  registered voters, and 504 likely voters asked:**

*"If the elections for Congress were being held today, which party's candidate would you vote for in your congressional district?"*

	Democrat	Republican	Neither/Unsure
All reg. voters	47%	47%	6%
Likely voters	44%	53%	3%

**Conservative margin of error is:**

**All registered voters:**  
 $\frac{1}{\sqrt{938}} = 0.03$  or 3%

**Likely voters:**  
 $\frac{1}{\sqrt{504}} = 0.045$  or 4.5%

### Constructing and Interpreting the Confidence Interval

**95% confidence interval** for the percent of *all likely voters* who would say they would vote Democrat: **44% ± 4.5% or 39.5% to 48.5%**

#### Interpretation:

Based on the *sample* of 504 people interviewed, we are 95% confident that between 39.5% and 48.5% of *all likely voters in the United States* planned to vote for the Democrat. Note that this is *less than 50%*.

### Interpreting the *Confidence Level*

The interval 39.5% to 48.5% *may or may not* capture the true percent of all likely voters who planned to vote for the Democrat.

But, *in the long run* this *procedure* will produce intervals that capture the unknown population values about 95% of the time => **95%** is called the **confidence level**.

(In Chapters 10 and 11 you will learn to use other confidence levels, like 90% and 99%.)

### Technical Note: 95% Confidence Interval for a population *proportion*

In about 95% of all surveys, the interval

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{sample proportion} - \text{margin of error} \\ \text{to} \\ \text{sample proportion} + \text{margin of error} \end{array}$$

will cover the *population proportion* (a fixed but unknown *parameter*).

Define margin of error as *proportion*:  $\frac{1}{\sqrt{n}}$

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### Marijuana Poll (again)

*“In general, do you favor or oppose legalizing the possession of small amounts of marijuana for personal use?”*

**N=1,083** => **margin of error = .03 or 3%**

46% said “favor”

A 95% confidence interval for:

- *percent* who favor legalization: 43% to 49%
- *proportion* who favor legalization: .43 to .49

We are 95% confident that between 43% and 49% of all adults in U.S. favor legalization of marijuana.

### Choosing a Sample Size

Most polling agencies use samples of about 1000, because margin of error  $\approx .03$  or 3%.

**In general:**

Desired margin of error =  $e = \frac{1}{\sqrt{n}}$

Then  $n = (1/e)^2$

Examples:

$e = .02$  (2%) or  $1/50$ , then  $n = 2500$

$e = .05$  (5%) or  $1/20$ , then  $n = 400$

Ex: You want interval to be  $\pm 2\%$ , need  $n = 2500$ .

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### Methods of Choosing a Sample

**Probability Sampling Plan:** everyone in population has specified chance of making it into the sample. Many special cases, such as:

**Simple Random Sample:** every conceivable group of units of the required size has the same chance of being the selected sample.

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### Choosing a Simple Random Sample

**You Need:**

1. List of the units in the population.
2. Source of **random numbers** (usually a computer).

For example, to choose a simple random sample of 5 students from the two classes, I could number all students from 1 to 516 and use a computer to randomly choose 5 numbers. Doing that, I get students 47, 67, 220, 285, 345:

*Kathryn C., Meghan L., Jodi N., Andrew S., Rebecca T.*

If I did it again, I would get different list of 5 students.

All sets of 5 students would be equally likely!

## Randomized Experiments (Chs 1, 6)

**Randomization** plays a key role in designing experiments to compare treatments.

**Completely randomized design** = all units are randomly assigned to treatment conditions.

**Example:** Nicotine or placebo patch. Number all 240 people, then chose 120 numbers for nicotine patch.

**Caution:** Do not confuse *random sampling* with *randomization* = *random assignment*.

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## 5.4 Other Sampling Methods

- Not always practical to take a simple random sample
- Can be difficult to get a numbered list of units.
- May want separate estimates for different groups.
- Methods we will see:
  - Stratified sampling
  - Cluster sampling
  - Systematic sampling

## Stratified Random Sampling

Divide population of units into groups (called **strata**) and take a simple random sample from each of the strata.

**Example: Want to know how UCI Undergrads feel about shuttle service. Stratify by Housing Area:**

Take simple random sample from *each of* 8 strata – the seven housing areas, and commuters:

Arroyo Vista, Campus Village, Mesa Court, Middle Earth, Vista del Campo, Vista del Campo Norte, Camino del Sol, Commuters

*Ideal:* stratify so there is little variability in responses *within* each of the strata, to get accurate estimates.

## Cluster Sampling

Divide population of units into *small* identifiable groups (called **clusters**), take a *random sample of clusters and measure only the items in these clusters*.

**Example:**

**For a survey of UCI students, use classes as clusters.**

Each class is a cluster. Randomly choose 10 classes, and sample *all* students in those classes.

*Advantage:* need only a list of the clusters instead of a list of all individuals.

## Systematic Sampling

Order the population of units in some way, select one of the first  $k$  units at random and then every  $k^{\text{th}}$  unit thereafter.

**Example: Medical clinic wants to survey its patients who come in for routine appointments.**

Randomly choose one of first 10 patients who come in, then take every 10<sup>th</sup> one after that. So, may get 8<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, etc.

*Note:* often a good alternative to random sampling but can lead to a biased sample if there is a pattern. In above example, suppose there are 20 patients an hour, 5 each at 8am, 8:15, 8:30, 8:45, etc. Then using above, would always get people at 8:15, 8:45, 9:15, 9:45, etc.

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## Random-Digit Dialing

Method approximates a simple random sample of all households in the United States that have telephones. (Cell phones are now included in most polls.)

1. List all possible *exchanges* (= area code + next 3 digits).
2. Take a sample of *exchanges* (chance of being sampled based on proportion of households with a specific exchange).
3. Take a random sample of *banks* (= next 2 digits) within each sampled exchange.
4. Randomly generate the last two digits from 00 to 99.
5. Once a phone number determined, make multiple attempts to reach someone at that number.

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## New York Times explanation of recent poll (January 19, 2012)

The latest New York Times/CBS News Poll is based on telephone interviews conducted Jan. 12 through 17 with 1,154 adults throughout the United States. Of these, 1,021 said they were registered to vote.

The sample of land-line telephone exchanges called was randomly selected by a computer from a complete list of more than 72,000 active residential exchanges across the country. The exchanges were chosen so as to ensure that each region of the country was represented in proportion to its share of all telephone numbers. (Continued...)

## Explanation, continued

Within each exchange, random digits were added to form a complete telephone number, thus permitting access to listed and unlisted numbers alike. Within each household, one adult was designated by a random procedure to be the respondent for the survey.

To increase coverage, this land-line sample was supplemented by respondents reached through random dialing of cellphone numbers. The two samples were then combined and adjusted to assure the proper ratio of land-line-only, cellphone-only and dual phone users.

Interviewers made multiple attempts to reach every phone number in the survey, calling back unanswered numbers on different days at different times of both day and evening.

Source: [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/19/us/politics/how-the-poll-was-conducted.html?\\_r=1&scp=2&sq=poll&st=nyt](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/19/us/politics/how-the-poll-was-conducted.html?_r=1&scp=2&sq=poll&st=nyt)

## Multistage Sampling

Using a combination of the sampling methods, at various stages.

### Example:

- Stratify the population by region of the country.
- For each region, stratify by urban, suburban, and rural and take a random sample of communities within those strata.
- Divide the selected communities into city blocks as clusters, and sample some blocks.
- Everyone on the block or within the fixed area may then be sampled.

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## Bias: How Surveys Can Go Wrong

Results based on a survey are **biased** if the methods used to obtain those results would consistently produce values that are either too high or too low.

**Selection bias** occurs if the method for **selecting participants** produces a sample that does not represent the population of interest.

**Nonparticipation (nonresponse) bias** occurs when a representative sample is chosen but a subset **cannot be contacted or doesn't participate (respond)**.

**Response bias (biased response)** occurs when participants respond, *but* they provide **incorrect information**, intentionally or not.

## 5.5 Difficulties and Disasters in Sampling

### Selection bias

- Using wrong sampling frame
- Self-selected (volunteer) sample
- Convenience/haphazard sample

### Nonresponse bias

- Not reaching individuals selected
- Non-response or nonparticipation

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## Using the Wrong Sampling Frame

The **sampling frame** is the list of units from which the sample is selected. This list may or may not be the same as the list of all units in the desired "target" population.

**Example:** using telephone directory to survey general population excludes those who move often and those with no land line.



**Solution:** use random-digit dialing, include cell phones.

### Extreme Selection Bias:

Responses from a **self-selected group**, **volunteer sample**, **convenience sample** or **haphazard sample** often don't represent any larger group.

#### Example 5.10 A Meaningless Poll

"Do you support the President's economic plan?"

Results from TV on-air call-in poll and proper study:

	Television Poll	Survey
Yes (support plan)	42%	75%
No (don't support plan)	58%	18%
Not sure	0%	7%

Those dissatisfied more likely to respond to TV poll. Also, it did not give the "not sure" option.

### Not Reaching the Individuals Selected

Failing to contact or measure the individuals who were selected in the sampling plan leads to **nonparticipation or nonresponse bias**.

- Telephone surveys tend to reach more women.
- Some people are rarely home.
- Others screen calls or may refuse to answer.
- **Quickie polls:** almost impossible to get a random sample in one night.

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### Nonresponse or Volunteer Response

"In 1993 the GSS (General Social Survey) achieved its highest response rate ever, 82.4%. This is five percentage points higher than our average over the last four years."  
*GSS News, Sept 1993*

- The lower the response rate, the less the results can be generalized to the population as a whole.
- Response to surveys is voluntary. Those who respond are likely to have stronger opinions than those who don't.
- Surveys often use reminders, follow up calls, small cash award, to decrease nonresponse rate.

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### 5.6 Sources of Response Bias

1. Deliberate bias
2. Unintentional bias
3. Desire to please
4. Asking the uninformed
5. Unnecessary complexity
6. Ordering of questions
7. Confidentiality and anonymity

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### Wording is Important and Difficult to Get Right!

Small change of words can lead to big change in answers.

#### Example 1: How Fast Were They Going?

Students asked questions after shown film of car accident.

- About how fast were the cars going when they **contacted** each other?  
Average response = 31.8 mph
- About how fast were the cars going when they **collided** with each other?  
Average response = 40.8 mph

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### Example 2: Is Marijuana Easy to Buy But Hard to Get?

#### 2003 Survey of Teens and Drug Use

Two versions of same question.

Half teens were asked about '**buying**' these items and the other half about '**obtaining**' them.

- Which is easiest for someone your age to **buy**: cigarettes, beer or marijuana?
- Which is easiest for someone your age to **obtain**: cigarettes, beer or marijuana?

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## Example 2: Is Marijuana Easy to Buy But Hard to Get?

### Results:

Response	"buy" version	"obtain" version
Cigarettes	35%	39%
Beer	18%	27%
Marijuana	34%	19%
The Same	4%	5%
Don't know/no response	9%	10%

### Note:

Beer is easier for teens to 'obtain' than marijuana, but marijuana is easier for teens to 'buy' than beer.

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## Deliberate Bias

Questions can be deliberately worded to support a certain cause.

**Example:** *Estimating what % think abortion should be legal*

- Anti-abortion group's question: "**Do you agree that** abortion, the murder of innocent beings, should be outlawed?"
- Pro-choice group's question: "**Do you agree that** there are circumstances under which abortion should be legal, to protect the rights of the mother?"

**Appropriate wording should not indicate a desired answer.**

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## Wording of Questions about Cheating (Davis Honors Program Survey)

### Version 1:

If you saw a student cheating on an exam, would you betray them and go and tell the professor?

Yes      No

### Version 2:

If you saw a student cheating on an exam, would you do the honest thing and tell the professor?

Yes      No

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## Results for turning in cheater

### Version 1 (Betray):

Only 6 out of 19 said **yes** they would turn in the cheater  
 – 68% no, 32% yes

### Version 2 (Do the honest thing):

14 out of 29 said **yes** they would turn in the cheater  
 – 52% no, 48% yes

**Key Point:** Wording indicating a "right answer" is wrong!

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## Unintentional Bias

Questions are worded such that the meaning is misinterpreted by many.

### Example:

- **Do you take any drugs?** --- need to specify if you mean prescription drugs, illegal drugs, etc.
- **What is the most important date in your life?** --- need to specify if you mean calendar date or going out on a date.

**The same word can have multiple meanings.**

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## Desire to Please

Most respondents have a desire to please the person who is asking the question.

People tend to **understate responses about undesirable social habits**, and vice versa.

### Example:

Pollsters know that asking people if they plan to vote is a very inaccurate method of identifying "likely voters". Most people say they plan to vote.

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## Asking the Uninformed

People do not like to admit they don't know what you are talking about.

### Example:

"When the American Jewish Committee studied Americans' attitudes toward various ethnic groups, almost 30% of the respondents had an opinion about the **fictional Wisians**, rating them in social standing above a half-dozen other real groups, including Mexicans, Vietnamese and African blacks."

Source: Crossen (1994, p. 24)

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## Example (Case Study 5.2, p. 173)

Original Source: Morin, 10-16, April 1995, p. 36.

### 1995 Washington Post poll #1:

1000 randomly selected respondents asked this question about the *non-existent* 1975 Public Affairs Act: "Some people say the 1975 Public Affairs Act should be repealed. Do you agree or disagree that it should be repealed?"

- 43% of sample expressed an opinion – with 24% agreeing and 19% disagreeing.

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## Example, continued...

### 1995 Washington Post poll #2:

Two groups of 500 randomly selected respondents.

**Group 1:** "President Clinton (a Democrat) said that the 1975 Public Affairs Act should be repealed. Do you agree or disagree?"

**Group 2:** "The Republicans in Congress said that the 1975 Public Affairs Act should be repealed. Do you agree or disagree?"

- **Group 1:** 36% of Democrat respondents agreed, only 16% of Republican respondents agreed.
- **Group 2:** 36% of Republican respondents agreed, only 19% of Democrat respondents agreed

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## Unnecessary Complexity

If questions are to be understood, they must be kept simple.

### Examples:

- **Too confusing:** "Shouldn't former drug dealers not be allowed to work in hospitals after they are released from prison?"
- **Asking more than one question at once:** "Do you support the president's health care plan because it would ensure that all Americans receive health coverage?"

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## Ordering of Questions

The order in which questions are presented can change the results.

### Example:

1. How happy are you with life in general?
2. How often do you normally go out on a date? about \_\_\_ times a month.

Almost no correlation in answers. When order was *reversed*, there was a strong correlation! Respondents seem to think the happiness question was now, "Given what you just said about going out on dates, how happy are you?"

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## Confidentiality and Anonymity

People answer differently based on degree to which they are anonymous.

- **Confidentiality:** researcher promises not to release identifying information about respondents.
- **Anonymity:** researcher doesn't know identity of respondents. Important to assure respondents of this if possible.

**Surveys on sensitive issues like sexual behavior and income are hard to conduct accurately.**

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## Open or Closed Questions: Should Choices Be Given?

- **Open question:** respondents allowed to answer in own words.
- **Closed question:** respondents given list of alternatives from which to choose answer. Often an 'other' choice is provided.

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## Problems with Closed Questions

Source: Schuman and Scott (22 May 1987).

**“What is the most important problem facing country today?”**

### Open Question Results

Over half of the 171 respondents gave one of these four answers:

- Unemployment (17%)
- General economic problems (17%)
- Threat of nuclear war (12%)
- Foreign affairs (10%)

### Closed Question Results

List of choices and percentage who chose them (“other” was an option):

- The energy shortage (5.6%)
  - The quality of public schools (32.0%)
  - Legalized abortion (8.4%)
  - Pollution (14.0%)
- These four choices selected by only 2.4% of respondents in the open-question survey.

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## Problems with Open Questions

Source: Schuman and Scott (22 May 1987).

**“Name one or two of the most important national or world event(s) or change(s) during the past 50 years.”**

**Open Question Results:** most common choices

- World War II (14.1%)
- Exploration of space (6.9%)
- Assassination of John F. Kennedy (4.6%)
- The Vietnam War (10.1%)
- Don't know (10.6%); All other responses (53.7%)

**Closed Question Results:** given top 4 choices above + invention of computer

- World War II (22.9%)
  - Exploration of space (15.8%)
  - Assassination of JFK (11.6%)
  - The Vietnam War (14.1%)
  - Invention of Computer (29.9%)
  - Don't know (0.3%)
  - All other responses (5.4%)
- Invention of computer only mentioned by 1.4% in open question survey. Wording of question led to focus on 'events' rather than 'changes'.

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## Open or Closed Form Questions

- Open – hard to summarize results *and* important choice may not come to mind
- Closed – make sure you have the right choices, including “don't know or no opinion”
- To get choices for closed form, do a “pilot survey”

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## Example – false advertising?

Levi's 501 Report, a fall fashion survey conducted annually on 100 U.S. campuses concluded ...

**“90% of college students chose Levi's 501 jeans as being 'in' on campus.”**

**List of choices:**

- Levi's 501 jeans
- 1960s-inspired clothing
- Overalls
- Decorated denim
- Long-sleeved, hooded T-shirts
- T-shirts with graphics
- Lycra/spandex clothing
- Patriotic-themed clothing
- Printed, pull-on beach pants
- Neon-colored clothing

**Levi's 501 jeans were ONLY blue jeans on the list!**

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## Measuring Attitudes and Emotions

### How to measure self esteem or happiness?

**Common Method:** respondents read statements and determine extent to which they agree with statement.

### Example for happiness:

“I generally feel optimistic when I get up in the morning.”

Indicate level of agreement from:

*‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’.*

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## Some Concepts Are Hard to Define Precisely

### Example: Measuring Stress in Kids

**Drug study:** “*How much stress is there in your life?*”  
*Think of a scale between 0 and 10, where 0 means you usually have no stress at all and 10 means you usually have a very great deal of stress, which number would you pick to indicate how much stress there is in your life?”*

**Results:** *Low stress (0 to 3) = 29%*  
*Moderate stress (4 to 6) = 45%*  
*High stress (7 to 10) = 26%*

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## Example continued: Stress in Kids

**Another study also measured stress:**  
“To gauge their stress, the children were given a standard questionnaire that included questions like: *‘How often have you felt that you couldn’t control the important things in your life?’*”

- **No fixed definition** of stress.
- Important = **reader is informed about how** the researchers measured stress in any given study.

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## Summary

When you read the results of a poll, ask:

- Who was asked – how were they chosen?
- Who responded (what percent)?
- Exactly what was asked?
- How were people contacted?
- What was the margin of error?
- What might be possible sources of bias?

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## Homework Due Wed, Feb 1

5.76  
5.102  
5.110

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