



Deconstructing Polls and Surveys

Why bother with polls and surveys?

They are indispensable tools for discovering valuable information we can use in practical ways. It's expensive and frequently impossible to collect information from every person in a town, state, nation, or the world, but we can obtain such data through scientific polls and surveys.



How can I assess their reliability? Answer these questions:

1. How was the sample gathered? Was it truly random (mixed well) and scientific, or were certain people more likely to participate than others?
2. Were the results weighted? If so, could the respondents differ in ways beyond the factors that are weighted?



3. Did the respondents have reasonable motives to lie?
4. What is the exact wording of the questions?
5. What is the sampling margin of error?

If you need a precise answer or want to design your own survey, use Just Facts Academy's Margin of Error Calculator @justfactsacademy.com/margin.xls

REMEMBER: If a survey doesn't present the exact questions, and any other vital info about how the data was gathered, file it in the "Something's Fishy" folder.

