

# What Do People Think?



## Overview

Students will understand the meaning, process, and usefulness of poll taking by surveying their schoolmates.

## Background

Elected officials depend on polls to know what the voters think about an issue. Opinion polls are conducted by mail, telephone, on-the-street, even electronically using the computer. Collected information can be used as a springboard for discussion; feedback on values, attitudes, and beliefs; and testing ideas before deciding on a course of action. After polls are tabulated, questions that may be answered include:

- What important points do the data reveal?
- Are the results different from what was expected?
- What conclusions can be drawn?
- What recommendations can be made?

## Resources

- Drawing paper and markers
- Self-stick notes

## Procedure

1. Explain to the students that they will conduct an opinion poll on the issue of gun control to learn what their peers think. Later, they will role play a scenario in which an elected official must confront this issue and decide how best to represent his or her constituents.
2. Have students brainstorm three clear and precise questions about gun violence for their poll.
3. On a sheet of paper, have each student respond to the three questions. They should include their gender and grade on their response form. Collect the completed polls.
4. Randomly redistribute the completed polls. Distribute three self-stick note sheets to each student. Have students record the results for the separate questions. Each self-stick note should look as follows:

Grade: _____ Gender: _____  #1	Grade: _____ Gender: _____  #2	Grade: _____ Gender: _____  #3
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5. Write each question at the top of a large sheet of paper. Have students place their sticker in the appropriate column, depending on the yes or no vote. Have those who have polls answered by females place their self-stick tags in the appropriate column. Next, have the male responses placed on the paper.

Example:

Question 1: Should there be an age limit on who carries a gun?	
YES	NO

Repeat process for questions two and three.

6. Have the class tally the responses and make generalizations about the results of each question. For example, what does the majority of the class believe or does not believe? Is there a difference between male and female polling results?

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