



Teacher Resource

Opinion Polls

Focus Questions

Discuss the BTN story as a class and record the main points of the discussion. Students will then respond to the following:

1. What does the BTN story explain?
2. What is the purpose of an opinion poll?
3. How do polling companies choose a random sample of people?
4. Why has it become difficult for polling companies to get a random sample of people?
5. What did you learn watching the BTN story?

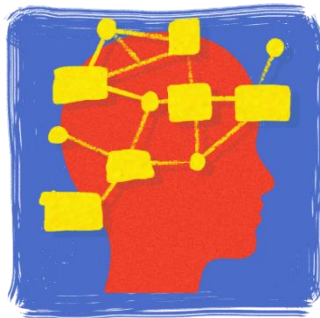
Activity: Class Discussion

Before watching the BTN Opinion Polls story, hold a class discussion asking the following questions:

- What do you know about opinion polls?
- Have you participated in a poll before? Explain.

After watching the BTN story, discuss with students what they learnt about opinion polls. Use the following questions to guide discussion.

- What is an opinion poll? Write a definition.
- Why do we have opinion polls?
- Who uses opinion polls (media, political parties, market research companies)?
- How have opinion polls changed over time (look at the history of opinion polls)?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of opinion polls?
- Are opinion polls reliable? Explain.
- Can opinion polls predict the future? Explain.
- How is an opinion poll different to a survey or a census?



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KEY LEARNING

Students will conduct their own opinion poll based on an issue of interest to them.

CURRICULUM

Civics and Citizenship – Year 5

The key features of the electoral process in Australia.

Civics and Citizenship – Year 6

The responsibilities of electors and representatives in Australia's democracy.

Civics and Citizenship – Year 7

Reflect on their role as a citizen in Australia's democracy.

Mathematics – Year 8

Explore the practicalities and implications of obtaining data through sampling using a variety of investigative processes.

Activity: Glossary

Students will brainstorm a list of key words that relate to the BTN Opinion Polls story. Here are some words to get them started.

STATISTICS	RANDOM SAMPLE	POPULATION SIZE
OPINION	POLL	SAMPLE SIZE

Activity: Understanding Opinion Polls

In this activity students will find examples of opinion polls, surveys, data and statistics that help us understand information in the world around us. Students will respond to the following:

- Look for news stories that include data and statistics. It may be an opinion poll, survey or census. Choose one example to focus on for this activity.
- How do you think the information was collected? Was the information collected face-to-face, on the telephone, online or through other traditional techniques?
- How is the information represented? For example, in a graph, diagram or percentage. Is it clear and simple to understand?
- Are there comparisons made about the data? Explain.
- How do these statistics help us understand the information?

Activity: Class Opinion Poll

Students will conduct their own opinion poll on an issue or topic that interests them. Working in groups, students will need to decide who their sample group will be and how many people will be polled. What method they will use to conduct the poll? (Face to face interviews or written responses).

Issue

Working in groups, decide on an issue that you want the public's opinion on. Decide on the question you will ask respondents, making sure that it is clear and relevant. Below are some examples:

- Should homework be banned?
- Should the voting age be lowered to 16?
- Should kids under the age of 14 be allowed to have a mobile phone?
- Should junk food ads be banned on kids' TV?

Sample size

Sample size is important for obtaining reliable data. The greater the number of people interviewed, the more likely the prediction will be accurate. As a group decide what you will need to achieve an adequate sample size. You will need to think about the following:

- What is your population size? E.g., whole school.
- How big a sample do you need?
- How diverse is your sample?
- Will it be random or targeted?
- How will you invite people to participate?

Polling

- What method will you use to conduct your opinion poll?
- How will you record the data?
- Conduct your opinion poll.
- Sort and enter the information you have collected into an excel spreadsheet.

Present

What is the best way to represent the data you have collected? Summarise the information you have gathered and represent the results as a percentage. Alternatively create a graph, draw a diagram or create an infographic to highlight the opinion poll results.

Analyse

Analyse your results

- What do the opinion poll results tell you? Write a short paragraph explaining the results.
- How reliable do you think your results were?
- If you conducted another opinion poll with a different sample group, do you think the results would differ? Explain.
- Did you have a big enough sample size? If you surveyed the whole school how would this improve the representation opinions?
- What would you do differently next time?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of opinion polls?
- If other groups in your class have polled on the same issue compare your results.

Activity: BTN Election Stories

Check out these BTN Election stories to understand more about voting and the federal election.



[BTN Election Lingo - Electorates](#)



[BTN Election Lingo - Parties](#)



[BTN Voting Age](#)



[BTN - Election Lingo - Seats](#)

Useful Websites

- [Opinion Polls](#) - BTN
- [A brief history of opinion polls](#) - Museum of Australian Democracy