Surveys

• Who was surveyed? How were they selected? Is the sample representative? Is it large enough for the results to be significant?

  – Ann Landers once asked her female readers to respond to this question: *Would you be content to be held close and treated tenderly, and forget about 'the act'?*
  
  – 72% of the women who wrote in said yes.
Surveys

• How were the questions worded? Is there bias built into the questions? Consider . . .
  – Would you favor offshore oil drilling in order to decrease our dependence on foreign oil?
  – Would you favor offshore oil drilling even though it could produce an environmental disaster?

• “Roper finds three out of four Americans approve commercial sponsorship for children’s TV programs.”
  – How do you feel—that there should be NO commercials on any children’s programs, or that it is all right to have them if they don’t take unfair advantage of the children?
• Don’t you agree that social workers should earn more money than they currently earn?

• Do you believe social worker salaries are a little lower than they should be, a little higher than they should be, or about right?
Surveys

• What answers were possible? Might different options yield different results?
  – Do you think that increasing our city’s debt level will have disastrous consequences? (yes or no)
  – Do you believe that global warming is an issue that must be dealt with immediately? (yes or no)
Surveys

• What conclusions can appropriately be made based on survey data? Consider these:
  – Is second-hand smoke harmful?
  – Does correlation imply causation?