

LESSON 5: Survey Your Community (3 days)

Overview:

The purpose of this lesson is to have students gain a deeper understanding of how the community feels about their issue. In doing so, students also will learn how to write and conduct a survey in an unbiased way.

Student Objectives:

- Identify bias in a survey
- List the qualities of a good survey question
- Write and conduct a survey that will act as an accurate instrument in understanding a community problem
- Tally a survey and analyze the results

Materials:

- Chart Paper
- Guiding Research Questions handout from previous lesson
- Sticky notes
- Sticker Dots
- Case Study: Mayoral Youth Commission Student Transit Win
- Evaluating Survey Questions
- Types of Survey Questions
- Survey Checklist

Assessment:

- Community Survey

Common Core

State Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.B

Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

BEFORE CLASS BEGINS

Develop a question focus before the lesson to guide the students in generating survey questions. Use the questions your students generated on their Guiding Research Questions handout from Introduction to Primary Research. Below are some guidelines about how to create a Question Focus.¹

A question focus is a catalyst in that it jumpstarts the process of students brainstorming survey questions. It should be a short statement that can stimulate students' ideas about what kinds of questions can be asked about your group's issue.

¹ Question Focus is a strategy adapted here from the Right Question Institute. <http://rightquestion.org/>

LESSON 5: Survey Your Community (3 days)

A Question Focus:

- Must have a clear focus. The main point should be easy to identify.
- Is a statement, not a question.
- Should not reveal bias.

Examples:

Issue: Lunch Food

Question Focus: Student lunch habits at Monroe High School

Issue: Sex Education

Question Focus: Access to different types of contraception at Willow High School

Question Focus: The need for sex education at Willow High School

Develop 1-3 question focuses depending on the scope of your issue and write them on chart paper.



BELL-RINGER: The Power of numbers (10 minutes)

Have students read *Case Study: Mayoral Youth Commission Student Transit Win* and answer the following questions:

- What strategy did the Mayoral Youth Commission use to convince the mayor? Why was it effective?
- Do you think their argument would have worked without the survey? Why or why not?



BEFORE: Review bell-ringer and guiding questions (5 minutes)

Discuss responses to the bell-ringer questions. Have students look at the Guiding Research Questions they completed in the Introduction to Research lesson (Lesson 3) and review the questions that they identified as best for a survey.



DURING: Producing questions (20 minutes)

Divide your group into groups of 3-4 students each. Each group should have a piece of chart paper with a question focus (that you have prepared prior to class based on the questions students developed in the Introduction to Primary Research lesson) and a stack of sticky notes. More than one group can have the same question focus. If you have one question focus, all groups will have the same question focus on their chart paper.

Explain to students the rules of brainstorming questions:

- Ask as many questions as you can.
- Do not stop to discuss, judge, or answer any question.
- Write down every question exactly as it is stated.
- Do NOT write statements (change all statements into question form)

Have students write as many questions as they can that are related to the question focus for about 3-5 minutes. They should write one question per sticky note. You can incentivize the process by offering a reward to the group with the most questions.

LESSON 5: Survey Your Community (3 days)



AFTER: Prioritizing question (10 minutes)

Have students group their questions into categories by moving sticky notes into groups on their chart paper. Explain that each category should have at least one element in common.

On average, 5-10 categories are ideal. They should be broad enough that you don't wind up with a hundred categories but not so broad that you wind up with two.

Have students title each category on the chart paper.

Students should re-read all the questions and remove any questions that are unclear or redundant. Have students hang their chart paper and give each student 8-10 sticker dots or a colored marker. They should rotate around the classroom, read all the questions, then use their sticker dots or marker to vote for the questions they think are most clear and will best gather the type of information they are looking for.

After class, tally up which questions got the most votes, and this is the foundation of your survey! Make sure you keep other questions that got a high number of votes so you have backups in case some that were chosen don't work out.

Day 2

BEFORE CLASS BEGINS

Type up the rough list of top questions from yesterday. Make enough copies for the whole class.



BELL-RINGER: Pair and prep (2 minutes)

Give students 2 minutes to find a partner to work with, and take a copy of Evaluating Survey Questions handout and read the instructions.



BEFORE: Evaluating survey questions (15 minutes)

Check for understanding and then have students complete the Evaluating Survey Questions handout with their partner. Review answers with students.

LESSON 5: Survey Your Community (3 days)



DURING: Types of survey questions (15 minutes)

Distribute Types of Survey Questions handout and the typed out questions generated from the previous day to each pair. Assign each pair a question from the list of survey questions and have them complete the Types of Survey Questions handout for their question. Remind students that open-ended questions are the most difficult to tally.

Explain that we are going to check either other's work. Distribute a Survey Checklist to every student. Explain that when time is called, each pair will pass their question to the pair to their right. Explain that pairs should read the question handed to them and assess it according to numbers 1-4 of the Survey Checklist. Explain that if the question meets criteria 1-4, they should draw a smiley face in the upper right hand corner. If it fails to meet one of the criteria, they should write the number(s) it fails to meet in the upper right hand corner.

You can have students rotate questions a few times so that each question is assessed by more than one pair. Return questions to their original authors and allow a few minutes for revisions to the questions where necessary. Collect all the questions and solicit a volunteer to update the question list with the new, revised questions. Solicit a few students to proofread the typed survey.



AFTER: Developing a plan (10 minutes)

Read through # 5 -10 on the Survey Checklist handout and lead a discussion to develop a plan for conducting the survey. Things to consider:

- Will students work as individuals or in pairs?
- Will the survey be conducted orally or in writing?
- Paper or online?
- Do we want/need demographic information like age/grade level/race/gender?
- Who will write the introduction that explains who we are, why we're doing this survey, and ensure confidentiality of responses?
- When will we start? When will we end?

LESSON 5: Survey Your Community (3 days)

Day 3



BELL-RINGER: Group check-in (3 minutes)

Students should meet with their groups and make sure they have a draft of a survey to circulate in class.



BEFORE: Round robin (20 minutes)

NOTE: You might want to give each group a red (or other color) pen to use, as they will be editing their peers' papers.

Students should be seated with their group and pass their draft survey questions to the group sitting to their right. Using the Conducting a Community Survey Checklist handout, students should mark up and/or correct any questions they feel are not well-written. They should also put a star next to questions they feel are very well-written. Give groups three to five minutes to read and comment on each survey and then have them pass their papers to the right. Continue this process until every group has read every draft survey.



DURING: Compiling the best questions (10 minutes)

Collect all the drafts and ask students to read aloud the questions that received stars as best questions. You might want to have one student at the board or overhead copying down the questions as they are read aloud. As the best questions are compiled, have students watch for redundancy (is the same thing being asked more than once? If so, which questions get to what we are looking for the best?). Once the best questions have been compiled, ask students what, if anything, is missing. Does this collection of questions get to our goals established yesterday? If not, have students mine questions from the drafts or write new ones to address any gaps.

NOTE: You may want to have one or two students facilitate the compilation of the best questions.



AFTER: Developing a plan and a timeline (10 minutes)

Assign one student the task of typing up the agreed-upon survey and another student to proofread the typed survey. Have students develop a plan of how they will conduct the surveys (i.e., in teams or individually, orally or in writing), where they will go to conduct the survey, when will they go, how many surveys each student is expected to gather, and how long they will have to complete this task (give them a date when you will have printed out copies of the survey ready for them).

LESSON 5: Survey Your Community (3 days)



CLOSER: Review (2 minutes)

Review the established timeline and check that the typist and proofreader will be able to complete their tasks in the allotted time.

NOTES ON SURVEYS: You may want to have one or two students facilitate the compilation of the best questions.

Planning

It is recommended you give students more than one night to conduct surveys.

Safety

Some students may live in a neighborhood where random door-knocking and standing around outside stores might not be safe. If this is the case, possible modifications for students might include focusing just on the school community and interviewing students and school staff, interviewing family members and friends, or conducting telephone interviews.

Tips on Tallying Your Surveys

- We recommend using the free online survey program www.surveymonkey.com. Tallying surveys electronically is not only more efficient, it provides lots of choices and options for analyzing data through cross tabs and disaggregation.
- If your survey has fewer than 10 questions and fewer than 100 respondents, you can create a template on surveymonkey.com for free and enter the data directly.
- If entering survey data manually have students work with a partner. One student can read out the answers while the enters results.



DIGITAL TOOLS

Survey Monkey – <http://surveymonkey.com>

Survey Monkey is easy to use. The free version has a 10-question limit and 100-response limit per survey.

Kwik Surveys – <http://kwiksurveys.com>

The free version of Kwik Surveys allows for unlimited responses, but it contains advertising, it does not allow for open ended questions, it has no built in email distribution, it does not provide support, and the surveys are removed after six months.

More survey tools – <http://web.appstorm.net/roundups/18-awesome-survey-poll-apps/>

This site provides basic information about other survey and poll tools.

Facebook/Instagram – students can pose the question via sound media and have people respond.

Google Forms – If you want to email through Google, you have the option of using Google Forms to survey respondents.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Student Handout: Evaluating Survey Questions

- A good survey question:
1. is specific in what it is asking
 2. asks only one thing at a time
 3. includes all possible responses as choices
 4. is worded without bias

Use the guidelines for what makes a good survey question above and evaluate the sample survey questions below. When necessary, rewrite the question.

Question	Evaluation	Rewrite the question (if necessary)
Would you actually want to have curfew hours for minors be extended until 1 a.m.? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	Is it a good question? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Why?	
Do you support Senate Bill 472? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	Is it a good question? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Why?	
On average, approximately how many hours per week do you watch tv? <input type="radio"/> 2-4 <input type="radio"/> 4-6 <input type="radio"/> 6-8	Is it a good question? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Why?	
How many of your teachers are experienced? <input type="radio"/> 0-2 <input type="radio"/> 2-4 <input type="radio"/> 4-6 <input type="radio"/> 6-8 <input type="radio"/> more than 8	Is it a good question? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Why?	
Do you like pizza and prunes? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	Is it a good question? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Why?	
Should curfew for minors be extended to until 1 a.m.? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Undecided	Is it a good question? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Why?	

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Teacher Guide: Evaluating Survey Questions

- A good survey question:
1. is specific in what it is asking
 2. asks only one thing at a time
 3. includes all possible responses as choices
 4. is worded without bias.

Question	Evaluation - Good Question?	Rewrite the question (if necessary)
Would you actually want to have curfew hours for minors be extended until 1 a.m.?	No, It show bias by using the word "actually" which is weighted.	Would you want to have curfew hours for minors be extended until 1 a.m.?
Do you support Senate Bill 472?	No, I may not know what Senate Bill 472 is.	Do you support Senate Bill 472, which would legalize gay marriage in the state?
On average, approximately how many hours per week do you watch tv?	No, no option for less than 2 hours or more than 8 hours.	Add more answer options.
How many of your teachers are experienced?	No, what does it mean to be experienced? Too vague. Also, a student might not really know that information.	A survey would be the wrong way to get that information.
Do you like pizza and prunes?	No – asking two different things in one question. A person could like pizza but not prunes and would have no way to mark that.	Two separate questions – Do you like pizza? Do you like prunes?
Should curfew for minors be extended to until 1 a.m.?	Yes! The only slight modification would be to say what curfew currently is, in case the survey respondent is unaware.	

Research the Issue

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Student Handout: Types of Survey Questions

Write your research question in the space below. Survey questions can be written in many different ways to gather different information. Look at the various ways to write survey questions in the table below and edit your question to be written in each of these different ways. When you are done, determine which way of asking the question will gather the information you most need for your project.

Research question:

Type	Example	Question Written in This Type:
Open Ended	How should high schools be reinvented?	
Closed Ended <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	Should high schools be reinvented? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Likert Scale	High schools need to be reinvented. Strongly agree/Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 1	
Multiple Choice	How should high schools be reinvented? <input type="radio"/> Turnarounds <input type="radio"/> Create small schools <input type="radio"/> Do nothing, high schools are fine as they are	
Ranking	Which is the most effective way to reinvent high schools? (Rank on a scale of 1 to 3) ___ Turnarounds ___ Create small schools ___ Increase student voice	
Open and Closed Ended	Should high schools be reinvented? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No If Yes, how?	

NAME: _____ **DATE:** _____

Student Handout: Survey Checklist

Does our survey ...

- ☐ **1.** ... have questions that are as short and specific as possible?
- ☐ **2.** ... ask only one question at a time?
- ☐ **3.** ... have all possible responses for each question?
- ☐ **4.** ... have neutrally worded questions that don't show any bias?
- ☐ **5.** ... have an introduction that explains who we are, why we're doing this survey, and why people should care enough to fill it out?
- ☐ **6.** ... precede personal questions by an explanation and an assurance of the respondent's confidentiality?

Will our survey...

- ☐ **7.** ... be given to a sample large enough that we can be confident that it will accurately reflect the larger population it represents? **A simple rule of thumb: give the survey to at least 10% of the total population you are targeting, but give it to no fewer than 50 people, and no more than 1,000. The more people you give the survey to, the more accurate your results will be.**
- ☐ **8.** ... have space for people to identify their age/race/sex/income level/etc. if we want to know whether these things make a difference?
- ☐ **9.** ... need to be translated to another language?

LESSON 6: Putting It All Together

Overview:

Once students have conducted all their research, they need to synthesize their findings and draw conclusions in order to make informed policy recommendations.

Student Objectives:

- Synthesize data collected from various sources
- Identify key data
- Draw conclusions

Materials:

- Sticky notes
- Student's research notes compiled from previous lessons
- Chart paper
- Lunch Room Food Survey Results

Assessment:

- Conclusions/recommendations

Common Core State Standard:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.8

Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.



BELL-RINGER: Prep (3 minutes)

Allow a few minutes for students to gather all their research and have it out on their desks. Have a student distribute a small stack of sticky notes to each student.

LESSON 6: Putting it All Together



BEFORE: Identifying key information (7 minutes)

Distribute or project the Lunch Room Food Survey Results handout. Give students a few minutes to read through the data and highlight or underline what appears to be key or important information from the survey results. Solicit responses and discuss why. Some thoughts on the data:

- **75%** of the student body (freshman – seniors) **responded** to our survey – *this is a very high number. Makes survey reliable.*
- **80%** of students surveyed report that they **do NOT like the lunchroom food**. – *Again, a high number reported a negative response to the food. Seems significant.*
- **95%** of students surveyed said they **would eat from a salad bar** – *This is high number and could be used to support a recommendation.*
- Of that 95%, **50% sophomores** – *Unclear why this might be important.*
- **12%** of students surveyed report they have some sort of **food allergy that interferes** with eating the school lunch – *This could be vital information.*
- **3%** of students report they have some sort of **food allergy that does not interfere** with eating the school lunch – *A statistically small response. And information does not seem redundant.*
- **12% of freshmen bring lunch** – *it is a small number. Also, it does not necessarily mean that 88% get the school lunch. Some might not eat and some might just eat snacks from the vending machine.*
- **4%** of students are **lactose intolerant** – *Need more data here. Do those students eat the school lunch as it exists now?*
- Of the 12% of freshmen that bring lunch, **40%** report **never having tasted the school lunch** – *unclear of how this may be significant.*



DURING: Highlighting key points (15 minutes)

Have students read through their research notes, survey data etc. and identify information they think will be useful as they begin to consider what actions to take. Have them write each key point on a separate sticky note.

LESSON 6: Putting it All Together



AFTER: Compile responses and draw conclusions (15 minutes)

Have students create small groups (4-5 students) and group their sticky notes into categories on a piece of chart paper. At the bottom of the chart paper, they should write what conclusions they can draw from the data collected (and possibly a recommendation for action). For example, using the school lunch room survey data we might conclude that students do not like school food and we would recommend a salad bar. We might also recommend additional research to be done to better understand WHAT about the lunch room food students do not like, and what types of foods should the salad bar include.



CLOSER: Setting initial goals (5 minutes)

Once students have begun to compile responses and draw conclusions, have them answer the question “What can we do about our issue?” Tell them that their answers will become their goals moving forward. Explain that their goals can and most likely will change and evolve as they continue to work on their project but they should consider what is possible, what is winnable and what would bring meaningful change. Post all possible goals for future reference.

NOTE: You may need to set aside additional time for students to complete this lesson.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Student Handout: Lunch Room Food Survey Results

- 75% of the student body (freshman – seniors) responded to our survey
- 80% of students surveyed report that they do NOT like the lunchroom food.
- 12% of freshmen bring lunch.
- Of the 12% of freshmen that bring lunch, 40% report never having tasted the school lunch.
- 95% of students surveyed said they would eat from a salad bar.
- Of that 95%, 50% sophomores
- 4% of students are lactose intolerant.
- 12% of students surveyed report they have some sort of food allergy that interferes with eating the school lunch.
- 3% of students report they have some sort of food allergy that does not interfere with eating the school lunch.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Student Handout: Lunch Room Food Survey Results

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