

Analyzing and Making Sense of Statistics in Newspapers

What Are We Going To Do?

We are going to track the use of statistics in articles of the daily newspaper.

Each day next week, starting Monday, one person from your group will be responsible for bringing in that day's newspaper (does not matter which one). Together with your group, you are going to examine the paper and answer the following questions on one piece of paper each day. You will be submitting the articles at the end of the project so either cut them out or highlight them in each paper. **Do not** throw the papers away !!!

1. How often were charts used to represent statistical data? How many articles?
2. How often were tables used to represent data? How many articles?
3. What types of graphs were used to depict the data, and how often was each type of graph used in the articles? (histograms, pie charts, line graphs, etc.)
4. Discuss the topics of the articles found using statistics. How were the statistics used or misused?
5. Carefully read a few articles that did not use any graphs or tables. Discuss how they could have incorporated the use of statistics to enhance their article.

On Monday, you and your group are going to summarize your observations in a final written document. Respond to the following questions.

Group Response

1. Look for general patterns during the time period in which the articles appeared. Are the articles connected in any way? In what types of articles do statistics most frequently appear?
2. How were the statistics most frequently used in the articles? What does the use of statistics do to enhance the articles?

Individual Response

1. Think about the statistics that you experience daily. How are statistics portrayed in the articles, television shows and radio shows that interest you? What are your general impressions of the ways in which statistics are used in the print media and entertainment industry? Do you ever feel misled? Explain.