Survey Writing 101
**What is a Survey?**

**Survey**: a tool used to gather information from a select group of people within a larger population.

Based on the results of the survey, generalizations or statistical inferences are made about the entire population.
Surveys in the News

- What is the population?
- What is the sample?
- Do you think is a reliable sample?
Elements of a Well-Written Survey

• **Rule 1:** Use correct spelling, punctuation and grammar style.

• **Rule 2:** Use specific questions.
  
  – “Did you read a newspaper yesterday?” (**better question**)  
  – “Did you read a newspaper?” (**bad question**)
Elements of a Well-Written Survey

• **Rule 3**: Use a short introduction to question of behaviors, to help explain your definition of a term.
  
  – Many students purchase food items at school, including bagels, candy, cafeteria food and snacks afterschool. Have you purchased food at school within the last week? *(better question)*

• **Rule 4**: Avoid the use of technical terms and jargon.
Elements of a Well-Written Survey

• **Rule 5**: Avoid questions that do not have a single answer.
  – For example: Do you like math and Mrs. Daniel? *(bad question)*

• **Rule 6**: Avoid negative phrasing.
  – For example: Do you disagree with President Trump’s economic policy? *(bad question)*
  – Do you agree with President Obama’s economic policy? *(better question)*
Elements of a Well-Written Survey

• **Rule 7**: Avoid words and expressions with multiple-meanings, like any and just.
  – For example: Are you sometimes late to school? *(bad question)*
  – Have you been late to school more than 6 days this school year? *(better question)*
Is this a GOOD or BAD Question?

• Do you drive to school?
Is this a **GOOD** or **BAD** Question?

- On average, how many days a week are you “in uniform”? 
Is this a **GOOD** or **BAD** Question?

• Should the drinking age be lowered to 18?
Is this a GOOD or BAD Question?

• Should the dangerous activity of whale hunting be outlawed?
Types of Survey Questions

• **Numerical response**: best when the answers are easy to count.

For example:

– How many times have you cut your hair in the last year?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 or more
Types of Survey Questions

• **Yes or No questions**: best when the answers are “black and white”

For example:

– Have you EVER skipped school? Yes or No.
Types of Survey Questions

• **Multiple Choice**: best when there are variety of possible responses.

For example:

Select the response that best describes you:

– A. I have never skipped school
– B. I have skipped school only once
– C. I have skipped school between two and five times
– D. I sometimes skip school; I have skipped between 6 and 10 times
– E. I am regular skipper; I have skipped more than 10 times
Types of Survey Questions

• **Scaled Options**: best when trying to determine the extent to which someone agrees or disagrees with a statement.

  For example:
  
  On a scale from one to ten, how would you rate the quality of the cafeteria lunch at ATM?
  
  One is the worst and 10 is the best.