1. If you were given a “sample” what would you have?

Answer: A collection of individuals selected from a population; a subclass of a population.

Here is an excerpt from a newspaper article:

About six in 10 Illinois high school students say they could get a handgun if they wanted one, a third of them within an hour, a survey shows. The poll of 2508 junior and senior high school students in Chicago also found 15 per cent had actually carried a handgun within the past 30 days, with 4 per cent taking one to school.

2. Would you make any criticisms of this article?

Answer: The article drew conclusions about Illinois high schoolers, but it used data collected from a sample of Chicago juniors and seniors. The sample is not representative of Illinois high schoolers.

3. If you were a high school teacher, would this report make you refuse a job offer in Illinois, say in Peoria, or Evanston? Why or why not?

Answer: For the reasons given in the last question, the article gives no information about conditions in Peoria, or Evanston. The article would not influence my decision.

Here is an excerpt from a newspaper article:

Some 96 percent of callers to radio station WQLQ have said that the driving age in Louisiana should be lowered. The phone-in listener poll, which closed yesterday, showed 4815—out of the 5000-plus callers—favored a lower driving age, the rock-n-roll station said. Only 238 believed the driving age should remain the same. Many callers stressed they did not drive but still believed in lowering the minimum age, a radio spokesman said.

4. What was the size of the sample in this article?

Answer: About 5000.

5. Is the sample reported here a reliable way of finding out public support for a lower driving age? What or why not?

Answer: No the sample was biased. People favoring a lower age were far more likely to respond that people who had other opinions.

Source: The questions on this quiz were adapted a couple of years ago from a source that I can no longer identify. The text of this quiz is not original work. —JJM