WE THE VOTERS

20 FILMS FOR THE PEOPLE

The Poll Dance: Full Transcript

**GFX Cards

**[01:00:05:12] - Intro Question - *"What's your opinion of opinion polls?"*

**[01:00:13:11] - GFX - "*Wake UP! (Alarm ringing)*"

**[01:00:20:02] - GFX - *"34% Of People would save a pet over their best friend"*

[01:00:20:16] HARRY: **So you've probably noticed your newsfeed is full of polls and surveys. Facebook, Twitter, CNN. Even my mother calls me about polls occasionally. I'm Harry Enten.

**[01:00:22:16 - GFX - *"6 in 10 Americans - Fear public speaking more than being punched in the face."*

**[01:00:23:17] - GFX - *"46% of Workers admit they've stolen lunch from the office fridge"*

[01:00:29:21] CLAIRE: And I'm Claire Malone. Harry and I follow polls for a living and political data in general, and welcome to 'The Millennial's Guide to Polling'.

**[01:00:37:11] TITLES: *The Poll Dance*

[01:00:38:09] HARRY: Today we're going to help you understand how to take a closer look at the polls that bombard you every day. Because as you may already suspect, not all polls created or presented equally.

**[01:00:46:03] - GFX - TITLE - *"Political Data Analysts"*

CLAIRE: I had suspected that.

HARRY: Yeah, you should have that suspicion.

[01:00:51:18] HARRY: Polls are a great way to look at public opinion during an election cycle. But think about it, if you want to know who's going to win an election you really should try to figure out who's going to vote. In reality, we'd like to know exactly who's going to vote. Who the definite voters are. But that's not always easy to figure out, so we go with likely voters.

**[01:01:04:23] - GFX - TITLES - *Likely Voter. Voted in last election: Yes. Thought given to election: Some. Plan to vote in next election: Yes.*

[01:01:11:00] CLAIRE: So a good electoral poll will survey a random sample of likely voters, makes sense. But here's where we should remind everyone that all polls are conducted for a reason. Some are polls that are conducted by let's say newspapers and they're really just trying to get a handle on what public opinion is.

HARRY: Sure.

[01:01:26:00] CLAIRE: But then there are also… private polls that are conducted by campaigns, right? So they're trying to get a grasp of public opinion but they're also trying to figure out what motivates people. Suburban soccer moms might be differently motivated than say…a millennial in the big city such as yourself, Harry.

[01:01:41:18] HARRY: Uhhh let's not give away our age too quickly, Claire. I'm still trying to get into college. So It's very important that you consider the motive for the poll
right? Let's just give you a small little example. What if I told you that 9 of 10 adults, age 18-40 think hats are sexy.

**[01:01:53:11] - GFX - TITLE - *"Consider the Source"*

[01:02:00:06] CLAIRE: I'd be suspicious of that poll.

HARRY: I would think that you would be suspicious of that poll. I'd probably be a little bit suspicious too but I'm willing to try anything. But what if I told you that survey was commissioned by the hat manufacturers of America. How would you feel then?

[01:02:12:05] CLAIRE: I'd be even more suspicious.

HARRY: You would probably have a pretty good reason to be suspicious, though have been known to wear a hat and some people find them sexy.

CLAIRE: Right. But enough about hats.

HARRY: Awwwwwww.

[01:02:21:03] CLAIRE: Let's go back to electoral polling. Polls can really help us understand the atmosphere of an election. And that means what's motivating people at a particular time, how they feel about the state of the country, things like that. So how do polls do that? Well a good electoral poll will survey a random sample of likely voters, and you wanna survey more than a few people, most likely, but you don't have to survey a million people.

**[01:02:40:05] - GFX - TITLE - *"RANDOM SAMPLING"*

[01:02:41:12] HARRY: So not just my mom, but you don't have to survey a million moms.

CLAIRE: Right, exactly. But you do need to make sure that you're not just getting white people in Iowa and Latino voters in LA. You're trying to get, you know, a sample of everyone in the country who might be coming out to vote. Right?

[01:02:54:15] CLAIRE: It's like this: imagine a pot of minestrone soup. It's sitting on the kitchen table at home and you want to know what's in the soup.

HARRY: Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.

**[01:03:05:00] - GFX -TITLES - *"BROTH" and "REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE"*

CLAIRE: Thank you for closing your eyes. You take a spoon and you take a little taste off the top.** Would you be getting a representative sample of what that soup is like?

[01:03:07:16] HARRY: It may be a delicious sample but no I wouldn't think it'd be representative.

[01:03:10:20] CLAIRE: It's probably just broth. You would eat spoon after spoon off the top of the soup, and you wouldn't have any clue of what's going on in the bottom of the pot because it's minestrone and all the good stuffs sinks to the bottom. But let's stay that you stir the soup and then dunk a ladle in and scoop it out. ** Now do you have a good assessment of what's in the pot of soup?

[01:03:24:15] - GFX - TITLES - *"Garlic, Green Beans, Onion, Pasta, Broth, Chickpeas, Carrot, Crush Tomatoes, Kidney Beans"*

[01:03:27:19] HARRY: Yes and I'm hungry.

CLAIRE: Exactly. So you're getting a more representative sample of what's in the minestrone, and that's what a good poll is. It's a random group of people, and again it doesn't have to be a million people, but it just has to be a well-mixed soup.

[01:03:42:18] CLAIRE: The other thing that's important to remember with polls is the order of questions. ** Let's say that you're putting out a survey of bus riders and you're sort of trying to figure out if they're happy with the system. But in the question before 'Are you happy with your bus riding experience?' you ask them 'Would you be down for a new electric bus system?' now all our poll takers are thinking about the shiny new electric buses, as they assess their overall satisfaction.

**[01:03:43:10] - GFX - TITLE - *"QUESTION ORDER"*

**[01:03:47:22] - GFX - TITLES - *"Question 1: How satisfied are you with the city bus system?12%, 35%, 29%, 24%"*

**[01:03:59:21] - GFX - TITLES - *Question 1: What are views about the new fleet of electric buses?"* *"Question 2: How satisfied are you with the city bus system?12%, 35%, 29%, 24%"*

[01:04:09:13] CLAIRE: And they might have a biased answer to the question. So you're almost, you're leading the person in a certain path and that's, that's a no no in polling.

[01:04:16:23] HARRY: Right. One of the things that's also very important is how those polls are presented to the public, right? It's very important that you understand what's going on and that the people who're presenting those polls do so in an unbiased manner.

**[01:04:22:13] - GFX - TITLES - *"PRESENTING THE POLLS"*

[01:04:28:20] CLAIRE: Right. And polls are reported by partisan news outlets, they're also reported, again, by mainstream media organizations – The Washington Post, The New York Times. And then, you know, it's the new millennia. People like Facebook and Twitter are getting in on the game.

**[01:04:32:22] - GFX - TITLES - *"Democrats maintain strong lead!"*

**[01:04:34:09] - GFX - TITLES - *"Two Candidates in tight race!"*

**[01:04:35:23] - GFX - TITLES - *"Republican gaining in the Polls"*

[01:04:41:08] HARRY: Right. And you know, what's just so wonderful about polls is that we can aggregate all of those individual viewpoints into something more meaningful. A more collective viewpoint you might say.

[01:05:01:12] CLAIRE: And surprise, surprise, the election is actually a poll itself.

[01:05:05:02] HARRY: That's right it is a poll, it's the ultimate poll you might say.

CLAIRE: It's the perfect poll.

[01:05:15:14] CLAIRE: That's it for this week's installment, we hope that you've enjoyed this podcast. I'm signing off, this is Claire Malone.

HARRY: And I'm Harry Enten.

**[01:0:06:23] - OUTRO CARD - "THINK. SHARE. VOTE. WEtheVOTERS.com"

END