

Innovative Iowans: George Gallup

Activity Overview: This month's Innovative Iowan focuses on George Gallup and his innovative way to gauge public opinion. Learn about George Gallup and try your hand at creating your very own polling question to find out what people are really thinking.

Connection to Iowa History

George Gallup was born in Jefferson, Iowa on November 18, 1901. Following high school, Gallup attended the University of Iowa to receive his B.A. in 1923, and his Ph.D. in 1928. After a short stint teaching at both Drake and Northwestern University, he moved to New York City. Gallup's first polling for politics was for his mother-in-law, Ola Babcock Miller, who was running for Iowa Secretary of State in 1932. In 1935, he formed the American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup Poll) which later became The Gallup Organization. Gallup passed away in 1984.



What is the Gallup Poll?

The Gallup Poll, developed by George Gallup, is used to measure the public's opinion regarding certain topics. Interviews are conducted over the phone with a small group of randomly selected people - typically 1,000 people are surveyed. The responses are then combined together. Interviewing a random section of the public can typically reflect a larger view of the general public's opinion on certain topics.

Instructions ([Video Instructions Available](#))

- 1 Make a list.** You are creating your very own Gallup Poll, so you will need to think of a question to ask other people. The question asked in the poll should be either a yes/no or multiple choice with limited choices.
- 2 Write.** After selecting the poll question, complete the first section of the attached attached worksheet. The worksheet will help collect your data.
- 3 List.** In order to get a wide variety of responses, think of up to 10 different people to ask the question. Think about how you will contact them, because it doesn't need to be in-person. Typically, Gallup Polls are asked over the telephone.
- 4 Ask.** One by one, ask your selected people the question. Keep track of their responses on the attached sheet.
- 5 Tally.** Once you have collected all the responses to your question, tally the responses together. The response with the most people in agreement is the most popular and the winner of your poll.
- 6 Publish.** Record the results on the worksheet and share your results with your respondents. Do they agree or disagree with the results? How do you feel about the results?
- 7 Share!** After you complete your poll, share your work with the State Historical Museum of Iowa. Email your results to museum.education@iowa.gov. We want to share your question and results with others!

Materials

- Paper
- Pencil/Pen
- Friends & Family

Instructions continued on next page

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Instructions continued

8 Questions to Spark Learning

- If you could poll a larger group of people for their opinion, what would you want to ask?
- What other events or opportunities besides politics can polls be used to find public opinion?
- Do you think public polling is necessary? Why or why not?
- Is polling the best option? Why or why not? What other ways can polls be conducted?

9 Additional Resources

If your young historian would like to learn more about this topic, explore these additional resources.

- Gallup Poll - [How Does Gallup Polling Work?](#)
- The Gallup House Museum - [The Gallup House](#)
- George Gallup - [Founder Biography](#)

Gallup Poll Worksheet

Poll Information	
Date	
Who is asking the question?	
How is the poll being conducted? <i>In-person, telephone, e-mail, text, or social media</i>	
What is the poll question? <i>If asking multiple choice, what are the options?</i>	

Response Section	
<i>Use this space to record responses to the selected question.</i>	
Response #1	
Response #2	
Response #3	
Response #4	
Response #5	
Response #6	
Response #7	
Response #8	
Response #9	
Response #10	

Poll Results	
<i>After conducting your interviews, combine the responses together to find the most popular answer. In the space below, write the result of your poll.</i>	
Poll Winner	
Do you agree with the results? Why or why not?	
Why do you think the winner won the poll?	