

Understanding Public Opinion Polls

Mr. Galbraith's economics class was asked to conduct public opinion polls on banking fees and services, exploring the need to control fees versus the desire for new or more flexible services. Half of the class conducted Poll A; the other half conducted Poll B. Review the Economic Skills feature on page 249 of your textbook. Then analyze the questions in and responses to the two polls shown below and answer the questions that follow.

Poll A

Banking Services and Fees

"Busy Americans need more flexibility in all areas of their lives, including their banking, but at the same time, banks have increased fees more than 10 percent in the last two years. Keeping that in mind, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?"

Statement	Agree	Disagree
A. "Americans have a right to expect flexible banking and a wide range of services at a reasonable cost."	79%	21%
B. "Bank fees accurately reflect the cost to develop new and more flexible services."	48%	52%
C. "The government should restrict the amount of fees banks can charge for special services."	57%	43%

Poll B

Banking Services and Fees

"Busy Americans are demanding more services and more flexibility in their banking, leading to an average increase in banking fees of more than 10 percent in the last two years as banks attempt to meet that demand. Keeping that in mind, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?"

Statement	Agree	Disagree
A. "Americans have a right to expect flexible banking and a wide range of services."	76%	24%
B. "Increased banking fees allow banks to offer more flexibility and a wider range of services."	58%	42%
C. "Government intervention in setting banking fees may interfere with a bank's ability to develop new services."	55%	45%

- What is the purpose of the polls? _____
- Point out key words and phrases in the introductions to Poll A and Poll B that show a bias in favor of banks or in favor of consumers. _____
- Why do you think a larger percentage of people agree with statement A in Poll A than with statement A in Poll B? _____
- What argument might a banker make using the results from statement C in Poll B? _____
- If you were a politician trying to get accurate information about the public's opinion on banking fees, how would you rephrase the three statements in these polls?
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____