Design, administer, and analyze a generation gap survey

Student guide A

In this activity, you are going to work as a social scientist. You will formulate a hypothesis, design and administer a survey to test your hypothesis, and then analyze and present your research findings.

## Step 1 Formulate a hypothesis using dependent and independent variables

Decide how you think generations may differ in their opinions on a particular topic. Team up with a classmate and choose two topics to study. These will be called "dependent variables," because you are stating that you believe that a person's beliefs about these topics depend on their age. The "independent variable" is what causes the differences in the dependent variables. In this case, the independent variable is the generation to which the person belongs. Choices for topics might include:

* Politics
* TV violence
* Movies
* Religion
* Technology
* Women in the military
* Gun control
* Family values
* Friendship
* Eating habits

Decide exactly how you think the dependent variables will differ for the generations. This is your hypothesis. For example, if the topic is TV violence, the hypothesis might be: "Younger people think TV violence is fun and harmless, but older people think it is dangerous and harmful." If the topic is Women in the military, the hypothesis might be: "The older a person is, the more he or she will believe that women in the military should not be allowed in combat." If the topic is friendship, this might be your hypothesis: "Young people tend to value friends more than family, and older people tend to value family more than friends."

## Step 2

## Create a survey and test it

Use Office Word to create a survey form similar to the one found in the Design a survey using Microsoft Office Word article (<https://www.microsoft.com/Education/DesignSurvey.mspx>).

With your partner, create five statements for survey participants to respond to that will accurately test your hypothesis. Statements should be designed to elicit answers like "strongly agree" or "strongly disagree."

Assign numerical values for different attitudes toward your statements. For example:

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neutral

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

Present your survey statements to the rest of the class to test whether:

* The class can guess your hypothesis.
* The statements accurately reflect the hypothesis.