



# A Journalist's Guide to Public Opinion Polls

*Sheldon R Gawiser, G. Evans Witt*

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## **A Journalist's Guide to Public Opinion Polls** Sheldon R Gawiser, G. Evans Witt

This straightforward text provides journalists, both professional and student, with an explanation of the realities of an increasingly important facet of today's precision journalism--public opinion polling. The work aims to provide the skills necessary for evaluating and interpreting survey results accurately. After a brief review of the historical relationship between the press and public opinion, the authors examine the polling environment today. Then, step-by-step, they take the reader through the basics of journalistic uses of public opinion surveys and the questions to be asked by the journalist in evaluating a survey: who did the poll; who sponsored the poll; what were the survey questions and how were they worded; what is the sampling error; how to report poll results; how to put survey figures in context; and how to make and evaluate projections based upon polls. In addition, the text offers a review of statistical methods for the journalist and a 20 question checklist.



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