

Conducting and Presenting a Survey

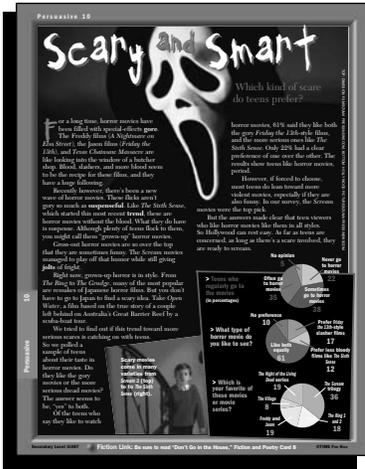
Reviews

Objective

The student writes technical text. (Standard I, Benchmark U, Skills 1–4)

Materials

- Persuasive card 10, “Scary and Smart”
- overhead projector and pen
- transparency of Student Sample: Get Rid of Fish Sticks!, page 73
- student copies of the Student Sample: Get Rid of Fish Sticks!, page 73
- writing paper and pens
- access to computers with pie graph-creating software such as Excel



Procedure

1. Display the transparency of Persuasive card 10, “Scary and Smart.” Read the card and **discuss the information presented in the pie graphs shown.** Using a show of hands, **survey your class and see how the results compare** with the pie graphs on the card.
2. Ask your students how they think the information on Persuasive card 10 was obtained. Explain that it was gathered in a survey. A survey involves asking the same question(s) of many people. Questions are designed to be answered easily and clearly to avoid confusion. **Before conducting a survey, you must:**
 - Narrow the topic so that it’s very specific.
 - Formulate a question(s) to ask.
 - Determine who the respondents should be. The larger the number of randomly chosen respondents, the more accurate the results will be.
 - Decide the best way in which to present the data you gather.
3. Help your students to better understand the importance of a big, randomly selected group of respondents by **asking them these questions:**
 - What might happen if you only asked your best friends the survey question(s) instead of asking 25 or 50 randomly chosen people? (The survey would be biased.)
 - What if you asked only members of one grade? Would their responses reliably represent the entire school population? (No, it would be biased toward the students in one level while ignoring input from other grades.)



Vocabulary

- gore
- trend
- suspenseful
- jolts

For definitions, see page 62.



Reader’s & Writer’s Response Suggested Answers

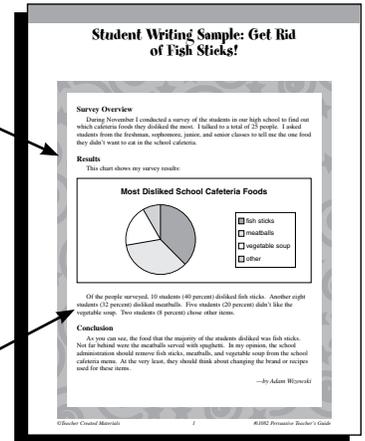
See page 62.

Procedure (cont.)

4. **Your students will conduct a survey about food in the school cafeteria and present their findings in graph form.** If possible, provide access to computers with graph-creating software such as Excel.
5. **Brainstorm with the class places where your students can find a sampling of students in different grades, such as the bus, study hall, lunchroom, library, etc.**
6. **Your students should ask at least 25 total students (representing all of the grades in the building): Which food on the school cafeteria menu do you dislike the most?** (At first glance, you'd think this question would result in as many different answers as there are students, but generally there are three to five items on any school's menu that many students dislike.)
7. **Display a transparency of the Student Sample: Get Rid of Fish Sticks!** from page 73. **Distribute student copies of the student sample, as well.**
8. Discuss the student sample with your class. **If your students are not using software to create their graphs, you may need to do a mini-lesson in how to convert the raw data to percentages.** For example, if 10 out of 25 students dislike your cafeteria's chicken fingers, divide the amount (10) by the total (25) and multiply by 100 to find the percentage (40).
9. **Instruct your students to use the same format as the student sample in presenting the data they gather.**

Point out that the survey results are brief and to the point.

Note the specific numbers given. Such detail is essential.



Assessment

Evaluate your students' survey reports for the size of the sample (at least 25), the appropriate format (see the student sample), and the accurate representation of the data in graph form. Since all of your students are asking the same question of the same population, their results should be very similar. See pages 8–14 for rubrics and other assessment assistance.

Cross References

For additional thematic support, you may supplement the lesson with the following resources:

Exploring Writing: *Level 6:* Persuasive card 12, “Kid Movies are King”

Writer's Notebook: Words, pages 5–7; Verbs, pages 10–12

Exploring Nonfiction: *Secondary Language Arts:* Editorials and Reviews card 6, “Stine’s New Nightmare”; Editorials and Reviews card 11, “Clockstoppers”; Editorials and Reviews card 12, “Force of Hobbit”

Reviews

**Grammar,
Usage, &
Mechanics**

Discuss the role of verbs in writing. Lead your students to understand that well-chosen verbs are better than the heavy use of adverbs. Have your students reread Persuasive card 10 and locate the verbs used. Ask, “Which ones are the most unique and interesting? How did they enhance the review?” Then have the students complete page 63, Vivid Verbs. For additional practice of this skill, see pages 17–18 of *Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics*.

Class Discussion Questions

Pose these questions to stimulate student discussion about the card:

1. Why do you think horror movies are so popular, especially with teens?
2. Do you enjoy watching horror movies? Why or why not?
3. What do you think are some of the reasons that some people are so against teens watching horror flicks that they want these movies rated to eliminate teen viewers under 17?



**Reader's and Writer's Response
Suggested Answers**

Reader's Response

1. The writer categorizes horror movies as gory movies or suspenseful movies. He classifies the *Friday the 13th* films and *Nightmare on Elm Street* films as gory movies. He mentions *The Sixth Sense* and *Open Water* as suspenseful.
2. Sometimes horror movies are so exaggerated or have actors that do such crazy things that the audience laughs at some of the scenes.
3. The pie charts make it quick and easy to visualize percentages. This makes the charts much more effective than a list of percentages embedded in text.

Writer's Response

1. The author probably chose this topic for the survey because horror movies are so popular among teenagers.
2. The writer asked this question only of teens who are frequent horror moviegoers because teens that rarely or never see a horror film may not have an adequate frame of reference.
3. The survey questions were: Do you go to horror movies? How often? Do you like gory horror movies? Do you like serious, suspenseful horror movies? Do you prefer one type more than the other? If so, which one? (Allow students to suggest additional questions.)



Vocabulary Definitions

1. **gore**—blood that's been shed
2. **trend**—general direction in which something is developing or changing
3. **suspenseful**—filled with a state of anxious uncertainty as to what may happen
4. **jolts**—abrupt shocks

Scary and Smart

TOP: DIMENSION FILMS/ZUMA PRESS/NEWSCOM; BOTTOM: HOLLYWOOD PICTURES/ZUMA PRESS/NEWSCOM

For a long time, horror movies have been filled with special-effects **gore**. The Freddy films (*A Nightmare on Elm Street*), the Jason films (*Friday the 13th*), and *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* are like looking into the window of a butcher shop. Blood, slashers, and more blood seem to be the recipe for these films, and they have a huge following.

Recently however, there's been a new wave of horror movies. These flicks aren't gory so much as **suspenseful**. Like *The Sixth Sense*, which started this most recent **trend**, these are horror movies without the blood. What they do have is suspense. Although plenty of teens flock to them, you might call them "grown-up" horror movies.

Gross-out horror movies are so over the top that they are sometimes funny. The *Scream* movies managed to play off that humor while still giving **jolts** of fright.

Right now, grown-up horror is in style. From *The Ring* to *The Grudge*, many of the most popular are remakes of Japanese horror films. But you don't have to go to Japan to find a scary idea. Take *Open Water*, a film based on the true story of a couple left behind on Australia's Great Barrier Reef by a scuba-boat tour.

We tried to find out if this trend toward more serious scares is catching on with teens.

So we polled a sample of teens about their taste in horror movies. Do they like the gory movies or the more serious dread movies? The answer seems to be, "yes" to both.

Of the teens who say they like to watch

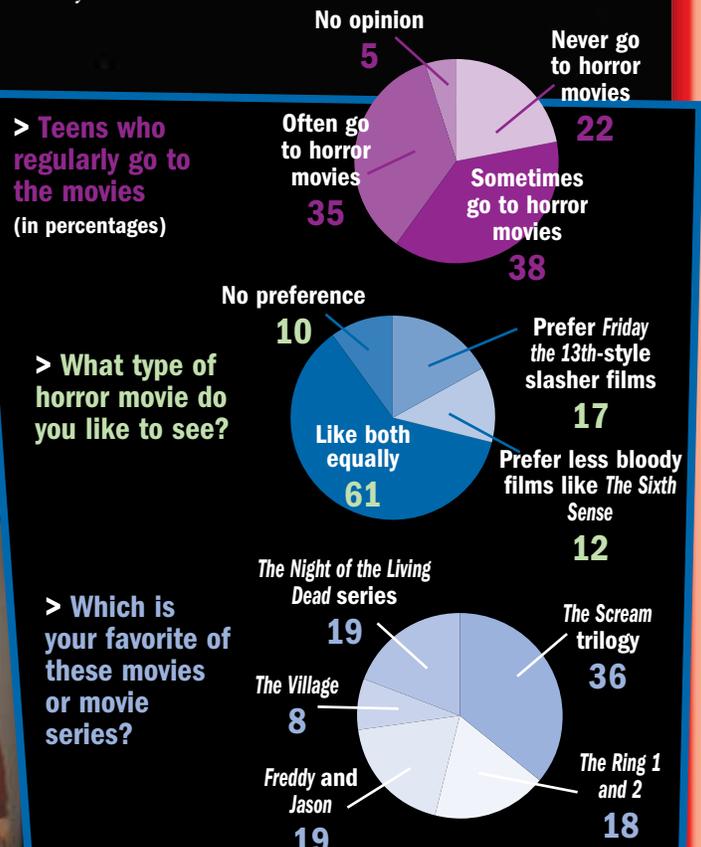
Which kind of scare do teens prefer?

horror movies, 61% said they like both the gory *Friday the 13th*-style films, and the more serious ones like *The Sixth Sense*. Only 22% had a clear preference of one over the other. The results show teens like horror movies, period.

However, if forced to choose, most teens do lean toward more violent movies, especially if they are also funny. In our survey, the *Scream* movies were the top pick.

But the answers made clear that teen viewers who like horror movies like them in all styles. So Hollywood can rest easy. As far as teens are concerned, as long as there's a scare involved, they are ready to scream.

Scary movies come in many varieties from *Scream 3* (top) to *The Sixth Sense* (right).



Reader's Response

- 1 What are the two categories of horror movies that this writer identifies and focuses on? What examples does he give of each type?
- 2 What makes some horror movies both frightening and funny?
- 3 How do the graphs help you understand the text better?

Writer's Response

- 1 Why do you think the author chose this topic for the survey?
- 2 Why did the writer only ask the second question of the teens who sometimes or often go to see horror movies?
- 3 What questions were asked in this survey? What different or additional questions would you have asked?

Be the Writer

- Conduct a survey among your classmates about other entertainment choices. Then write a report of your findings. Include graphics that communicate the results of your survey.
- Do you watch horror films? Do you have a preference between the two types? Write a reflection paper about your preferences.

Words to Know

gore **trend**
suspenseful **jolts**

From the Writer

Surveys like the one in “Scary and Smart” are important in the entertainment industry. They are one way of keeping a finger on the pulse of the viewing public. They help people recognize and respond to trends in the public’s preferences. When you write about the arts and about other entertainment fields, you become part of tracking and reporting these trends.

Collecting data through surveys requires some planning and thought. When you conduct a survey, you always want to have a very narrow focus in mind. This helps you come up with the one or two questions that will produce the most useful results. Notice that the survey in “Scary and Smart” asked only two questions. The result is a very specific set of data that is narrow in scope and easy to understand.

Surveys also require a “representative sample.” Essentially, that means asking a lot of different people the same questions to make sure your sample (people asked) looks, on a small scale, like the general population. The sample would not have been representative if the first question (“How often do you go to see horror movies?”) was asked as people were walking in to see *Freddy v. Jason*.

With a narrow focus and a good sample, you have two steps left: Conduct the survey and then write about it! Even if the big movie production companies don’t latch onto your data to learn about their audience, you’ll gain a much better understanding of what your audience is most interested in.