

Bad sampling

NAME:

1. Below is an example of a voluntary poll. Explain why this poll is *not* statistically valid. Be specific.

The image shows a screenshot of a Microsoft Internet Explorer browser window. The top address bar shows the URL <http://www.yogajournal.com/>. The browser's menu bar includes File, Edit, View, Favorites, Tools, and Help. The toolbar contains icons for Back, Forward, Stop, Home, Search, Favorites, Media, and other functions.

The main content area of the browser displays the Yoga Journal website. The page title is "Yoga Journal Magazine: The Voice of Yoga Online. The trusted source for yoga poses, teachers, p". The website header includes navigation links: HOME, NEW TO YOGA, POSES, PRACTICE, HEALTH, WISDOM, MEDITATION, VIEWS, TRAVEL, FOR TEACHERS. Below the header, there are links for YOGA DIRECTORIES, YJ EVENTS, SHOP YJ, and SUBSCRIBE. A search bar is present with a "GO!" button.

The main content area features a large image of a person performing a handstand (Bakasana). To the left of the image, there is a sidebar with the "yoga JOURNAL" logo and a welcome message: "Welcome to Yoga Journal's website." Below this, there are several links: "Tour the site", "Find yoga poses", "Learn yoga basics", "Ask yoga experts", "Search for classes", "Attend yoga events", and "Buy videos, CDs, &".

To the right of the handstand image, there is a "Featured Pose: Bakasana" section with a small image of a person in the pose and a description: "A compact arm balance, Crane Pose tones and strengthens the abdominal organs and arms." Below this is a "Relaxation 101" section with the text: "If you experience stress, take note: relaxation is a skill that can be learned."

Below the main content area, there is a section titled "Poll Results - Microsoft Internet Explorer". This section contains the "yoga JOURNAL" logo and three small images of Yoga Journal magazine covers. The poll question is: "What has helped you most with your headaches?". The poll results are displayed as a list of three options with corresponding bar charts and percentages:

Option	Percentage
1. pain relievers	41%
2. yoga and relaxation	54%
3. biofeedback and other alternative therapies	6%

Below the poll results, it states "454 votes cast." To the right of the poll results, there is a form for users to provide feedback. The form includes a text area for a message, a "submit" button, and fields for "Email:" and "Name:". The text above the form reads: "If you would you like to elaborate on your response, please send your comments to [pollwatch@yogajournal.com](mailto:pollwatch@yogajournal.com) and you appear in *Yoga Journal* magazine."

On the left side of the poll results section, there is a "Weekly Poll" section with the question: "What has helped you most with your headaches?". It lists the same three options as the poll results, each with a radio button next to it. Below the options, there is a "Vote" button and a "View results" link.

2. Find another example of a bad sample on the Web. This may include voluntary sampling, convenience sampling, or some other obviously bad sampling method. I suggest you go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) and put any subject and the word “poll” into the search engine. Then press the “Print screen” button to capture a screen shot of your example of bad sampling. Open Word and press Control-V to paste your screen shot into Word. Write a few sentences describing your example.

Beware; not every sample you see online is faulty. *Focus on the method by which they obtained the data*, not on if you think the source is biased. Look for “Methodology” which will be where they explain how they got the data. Did they randomly sample or did they just post an online, anyone-can-take-it poll? Did they sample only men but claim their result was valid for all?

Please include the Web address where you found the sample so I can retrace your steps if needed. If you do a screen grab as described above, the address will be included.