

Marvelous Meaningful Monthly Math

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Central Area Tech Prep, Mitchell Technical Institute, and Bridges

Government and Public Administration December

Career – Ombudsman

Math Activity

"Look, if the reporter is going to stand up on national television and quote our statistics, they have to be correct," a representative for a polling company says to you.

You are the ombudsman for TV communications. It is your job to listen to each of the complaints and decide whether a mistake has been made. In this case, you look over the statistics provided, and see if the reporter made an error.

"We have to manage budgets and that sort of thing," says David Bazay, an ombudsman. "I'm not an accountant, but we have to look at figures to make sure people are accountable for what they say. There are some controversies over statistics that we have to resolve."

This is the poll in question:

- 500 people were asked: "Are you satisfied with the job your government is doing?"
- 60 percent said they were extremely satisfied
- 22 percent said they were moderately satisfied
- 10 percent said they were dissatisfied
- 8 percent said they were undecided

The reporter said that 300 of the people who were polled were extremely satisfied, and that 30 people were undecided. Was she correct in both cases?

Name _____ School _____ Teacher _____

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Solution

You are looking into a polling company's complaint over the use of their statistics in a newscast. This is what you find:

The reporter said that 300 of the people were extremely satisfied. Was she correct?

60 percent were extremely satisfied

$$500 \text{ people} \times 0.60 = 300$$

Yes, 300 people were extremely satisfied with the government. The reporter was correct in this case.

The reporter said that 30 people were undecided. Was she correct?

8 percent undecided

$$500 \text{ people} \times 0.08 = 40$$

Some 40 people were undecided. The reporter was incorrect because she said that 30 people were undecided.