

# Experiment 1

Version April 30, 2006

Welcome to a social experiment. The purpose of this experiment is to test how certain factors affect the average person's behavior.

To perform the experiment, please read the following statements and then answer the questions that follow. Please do this quietly, without chatting with your neighbor, so as to avoid contaminating the results. When you are finished, copy your odd numbered answers onto the anonymous answer sheet and pass the sheet in. You can keep the questionnaire.

Each statement is a quote from an actual decisive political speech, debate, or writing. After everyone has completed the experiment, we will tally up the results on the spot and share them with you. We will also pass out material revealing who the politicians were.

In modern politics there are many things a politician can say. The following statements are examples of what actual politicians have said at crucial times in the history of their country. The statements are from a variety of parties and cover a one hundred year span in time. Please study them closely before attempting to answer the questions about each statement.

There are many types of political statements. They can be roughly classified into these categories:

1. Statements of facts and information.
2. Attempts to persuade by logic.
3. Attempts to persuade by emotion.
4. Irrelevant gibberish.

Over the years all of the above has been tried. A large body of standard approaches to communicating with the public has been developed. Politicians pick and choose from this body of knowledge depending on their needs, in a manner that varies from conscious strategies to woo voters to unconscious efforts based on practices so widespread they have become the norm.

Most political statements ramble all over the first three categories. For example, here is an actual statement:

“We say to you that you have made the definition of a business man too limited in its application. The man who is employed for wages is as much a business man as his employer; the attorney in a country town is as much a business man as the corporation counsel in a great metropolis; the merchant at the cross-roads store is as much a business man as the merchant of New York; the farmer who goes forth in the morning and toils all day, who begins in spring and toils all summer, and who by the application of brain and muscle to the natural resources of the country creates wealth, is as much a business man as the man who goes upon the Board of Trade and bets upon the price of grain; the miners who go down a thousand feet into the earth, or climb two thousand feet upon the cliffs, and bring forth from their hiding places the precious metals to be poured into the channels of trade are as much businessmen as the few financial magnates who, in a back room, corner the money of the world. We come to speak of this broader class of business men.”

Thus it is rare to find political statements that are “pure” and belong to only one category. This increases the difficulty of determining what is being said and what methods are being employed.

**Politician A** – “This is a great country, but I think it could be a greater country; and this is a powerful country, but I think it could be a more powerful country. I'm not satisfied when the United States last year had the lowest rate of economic growth of any major industrialized society in the world.”

1. To what extent do you agree with this statement and its implications?

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

2. Very briefly, why do you feel this way? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Politician B** – “In the last few years government has gotten bigger and bigger; industry has gotten larger and larger; labor unions have gotten bigger and bigger; and our children have been the victims of mass education. We must make this next century the century of the individual. We should never forget that a government big enough to give us everything we want is a government big enough to take from us everything we have. The individual worker in the plants throughout the United States should not be a small cog in a big machine.

3. To what extent do you agree with this statement and its implications?

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

4. Why do you feel this way? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Suppose this was all the information you had. Which politician would you vote for?

Politician A       Politician B       Neither

6. Why do you feel this way? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Politician C** – “My fellow citizens, trade statistics indicate that this country is in a state of unexampled prosperity. The figures show that we are furnishing profitable employment to the millions of workingmen throughout the United States, bringing comfort and happiness to their homes, and making it possible to lay by savings for old age and disability. That all the people are participating in this great prosperity is seen in every American community and shown by the enormous and unprecedented deposits in our savings banks.”

7. To what extent do you agree with this statement and its implications?

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

8. Why do you feel this way? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Politician D** – “I’m only here to tell you that I believe with all my heart that our first priority must be world peace, and that use of force is always and only a last resort, when everything else has failed, and then only with regard to our national security. I believe that meeting this mission, this responsibility for preserving the peace, is a responsibility peculiar to our country, and that we cannot shirk our responsibility as a leader of the free world because we’re the only ones that can do it. Therefore, the burden of maintaining the peace falls on us. And to maintain that peace requires strength.”

9. To what extent do you agree with this statement and its implications?

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

10. Why do you feel this way? \_\_\_\_\_

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11. Suppose this was all the information you had. Which politician would you vote for?

Politician C       Politician D       Neither

12. Why do you feel this way? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Experiment 1 – Answer Sheet – WOTT

1. To what extent do you agree with this statement and its implications?

- Strongly agree - 5
- Somewhat agree - 4
- Neither agree or disagree - 3
- Somewhat disagree - 2
- Strongly disagree - 1

3. To what extent do you agree with this statement and its implications?

- Strongly agree - 5
- Somewhat agree - 4
- Neither agree or disagree - 3
- Somewhat disagree - 2
- Strongly disagree - 1

5. Suppose this was all the information you had. Which politician would you vote for?

- Politician A - 1       Politician B - 1       Neither - 0

7. To what extent do you agree with this statement and its implications?

- Strongly agree - 5
- Somewhat agree - 4
- Neither agree or disagree - 3
- Somewhat disagree - 2
- Strongly disagree - 1

9. To what extent do you agree with this statement and its implications?

- Strongly agree - 5
- Somewhat agree - 4
- Neither agree or disagree - 3
- Somewhat disagree - 2
- Strongly disagree - 1

11. Suppose this was all the information you had. Which politician would you vote for?

- Politician C - 1       Politician D - 1       Neither - 0

Note – The numbers following the answers are the point system used for scoring the results of the experiment. We have used the simplest point system possible.