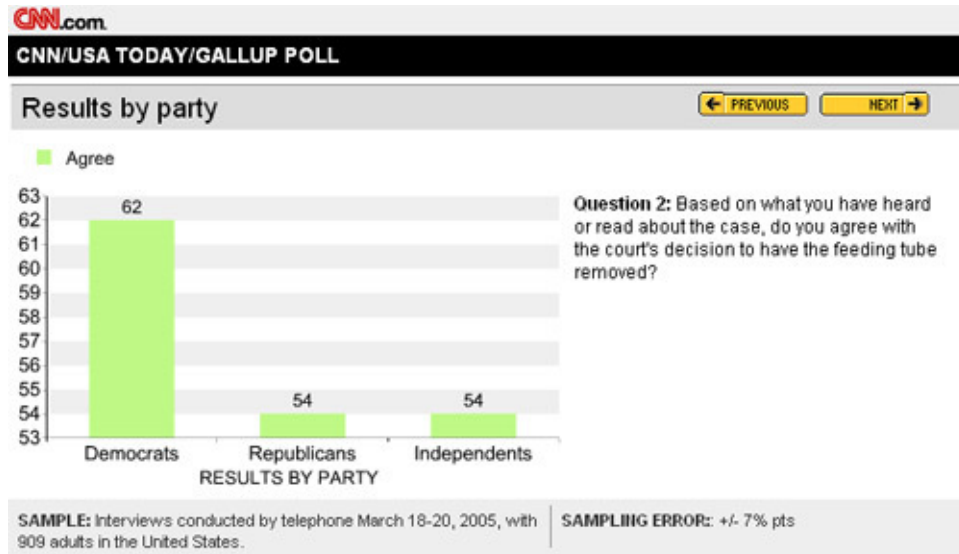


**MODEL NUMBER 1
OF A
“PUBLIC AWARENESS ANALYZED EXAMPLE”**

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MATH 156, FALL 2008
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WHERE: This is found at <http://www.cnn.com/interactive/allpolitics/0503/poll.gallup/content.2.html>

WHAT: It's a graph from a March, 2005 report on a **CNN/USA TODAY/Gallup** poll investigating Americans' opinions of the Terry Schiavo case. [Terry Schiavo was a Florida woman whose medical treatment became a subject of litigation and even Congressional action in 2005.] Here it is:



ANALYSIS: This is a bar graph, although not exactly of the type we've used in class. It seems that behind this graph was a study with

observational units: adults (909 of them) contacted by telephone

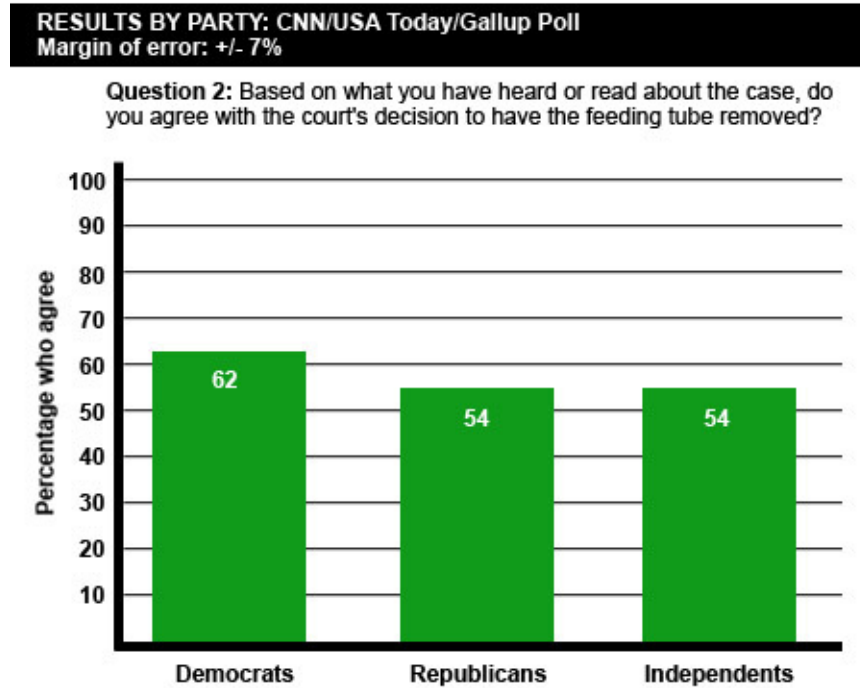
variables: seem to have been

party affiliation: categorical

agree with the court's decision: categorical, binary

CRITICISM: There are a number of questions about how the sample was chosen and whether or not these results can reasonably be interpreted as telling us something about the opinions of the rest of American adults; we will consider some of these issues later in the term. It is, however, very nice that the exact question posed in the poll was reported (at least, I assume that is what is reported in the figure), as were the date of the poll, the sample size (909), and the method whereby the sampled adults were contacted (telephone). How exactly the sample was chosen is still a mystery, though, as were the assumptions behind that comment "SAMPLING ERROR: +/- 7% pts."

An issue much more relevant to what we have covered so far in our statistics course has to do with the y -axis of this graph. First of all, there is no reason that the y -axis should not be labeled with something like “Percentage of Respondents” (although, in CNN’s defense, it is fairly clear that must be what the y -axis represents). Much worse is the decision to display only a limited part of the full range of possible percentages 0–100%. Why was this done? It serves to accentuate the differences, clearly. After this was pointed out to CNN (by the watchdogs at mediamatters.org; see their article <http://mediamatters.org/items/printable/200503220005>), CNN updated the graphic to look like:



This is much better!

Notes: Examples you hand in will likely be quite a bit shorter, since this one was bulked-up by the large graphic and then the revised graphic. What you absolutely must have, in a form similar to the above, are:

- The reference to your example, as a *WWW* link or more conventional bibliographic entry.
- The item itself, which may be a copy of a graphic (or table or some such figure) or may just be a sentence or two quoted from your source.
- A description of what you believe the content is telling us, in the terminology of our class.
- A critique of the item, mentioning something(s) you like and/or dislike about the way the data are collected, interpreted, or presented.