

Study Guide for The American Citizen

Chapter 8: Public Opinion In American Democracy

Section 1: What Is Public Opinion?

1. _____ opinions are those opinions that you might express to your family, friends, neighbors, etc.
2. _____ opinion is the combination of many individuals' expressed feelings about government and political issues.
3. According to political scientist V.O. Key, public opinion is _____

The five factors that determine how much influence public opinion will have on government actions and policies are:

4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. Often, in the American system of politics and government, a deeply committed, well-organized _____ may have greater influence on government action than the _____ of citizens.
10. An organized pattern of looking at the political world – a systematic set of ideas that is used to justify a particular point of view is called _____ .
11. Ideologies are categorized with names given to them that stretch from the far _____ to the far _____ .
12. On the far left of the ideological spectrum, those who favor rapid, fundamental change in the existing social, economic, or political order, and may be willing to resort to extreme methods -- even violence and revolution -- to accomplish their goals are called _____ .

Examples of radical political groups in American society, from the 1960s, include these groups:

13. The _____ and its extreme radical fringe
14. group, the _____ ,
15. the _____ , and the
16. _____ , most commonly referred to as the
17. _____ .
18. On the ideological left, people who would be called _____ are those who believe the government should actively promote social reform to increase individuals' well-being, and tend to see change as good – but they prefer peaceful change, within the existing system.
19. In the ideological center, people who would be called _____ are those whose attitudes and opinions on issues are between right and left – between conservative and liberal – are usually tolerant of others' opinions and unlikely to hold extreme views.
20. On the ideological right, the _____ are those people who favor the status quo – keeping things as they are – and think that government should stay out of people's lives and business.
21. On the ideological far right, those people we would call _____ are those who advocate a return to a previous state of affairs, often a social order or government that existed earlier in history, and may go to extremes to reach their goals, including the use of violence.
22. The terms “left” and “right,” when applied to ideology, come from what institution, in what place, at what time?

Section 2: Many Factors Shape Public Opinion

23. A combination of traits that are unique to a population is called its _____ .
24. Those elements of a nation's culture that are related to its government and politics is called its _____ .

What kinds of things are part of a nation's political culture?

25.

26.

27.

28.

Our political culture has an enormous influence on the way we think about our government and political system. What specific things are affected by our political culture?

29. .

30.

31.

32. Objects or expressions that represent abstract ideas, like "freedom," and "democracy" are called

_____ .

What are the three main functions of political symbols?

33.

34.

35.

What are the four main types of political symbols? Give examples of each.

<u>TYPE OF POLITICAL SYMBOL</u>	<u>EXAMPLES</u>
36.	37.
38.	39.
40.	41.
42.	43.

44. What English political philosopher came up with the idea of the connection between political socialization and the "Tabula Rasa"? _____

45. What is the idea behind the "Tabula Rasa"?

46. The process by which citizens acquire their sense of political identity is called

_____ .

45. What are the four main “agents of political socialization”?

a)

b)

c)

d)

Section 3: Public Opinion Is Measured In Several Ways

46. What are the five main **traditional methods** that public officials use to stay in touch with public opinion?

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

47. What, exactly, is a “straw poll”?

48. Precise sampling techniques and statistical methods are used in _____
polling.

Define the following terms related to scientific polling:

49. Sample:

50. Universe:

51. Probability theory:

52. What is the key to achieving “random sampling” when creating a scientific poll?

53. What is a “margin of error” or “sampling error” in scientific polling?

54. About what level of accuracy can a scientific poll achieve – stated as a “margin of error”?

55. There are two “short cuts” to achieving a random sample of a universe to be studied, during a scientific poll. One of these is when a group of people is chosen based upon characteristics found in a population, such as race, income, religion, occupation. This is called a _____ .

56. Another short cut to achieving a random sample of a universe to be studied, during a scientific poll, is through the use of a _____ , whereby a group of people is chosen by grouping them in geographical areas, or “clusters” -- a particular state, or just several counties, several cities, or neighborhoods.

Asking the right questions is one of the keys to achieving accuracy in scientific polling. What are the kinds of questions that should be avoided?

57.

58.

63.

64.

What are the two most often-used kinds of survey methods used, to achieve accuracy in polling results?

65.

66.

67. What kind of skills must those who conduct interviews have, when dealing with respondents?

What three other things are important in achieving an accurate poll of public opinion?

68.

69.

70.