Assessment: Public Opinion and the Media

Mastering the Content

1. The process by which people form their political attitudes and values is called
   A. political correctness.
   B. political engagement.
   C. political participation.
   D. political socialization. CORRECT

2. Which of the following is the best definition of public opinion?
   A. the sum of many individual views CORRECT
   B. what journalists think about issues
   C. the beliefs of one or more interest groups
   D. how politicians express common attitudes

3. Which of the following is the most important reason why a scientific poll is more accurate than a straw poll?
   A. the type of questions asked
   B. the number of people surveyed
   C. the method of sampling employed CORRECT
   D. the means of contacting people used

4. The founders of our country saw a free press as a safeguard against
   A. negative campaigning.
   B. the abuse of power. CORRECT
   C. the rise of parties.
   D. political gridlock.

5. To test the appeal of campaign messages, media consultants often use
   A. focus groups. CORRECT
   B. push polls.
   C. spin doctors.
   D. think tanks.

6. The release of confidential information to the news media by an unnamed source is known as which of the following?
   A. a staged event
   B. a trial balloon
   C. a sound bite
   D. a leak CORRECT
7. How can the company conducting an opinion poll reduce the margin of error?
   A. ask fewer questions
   B. survey a larger sample CORRECT
   C. use mail instead of phone
   D. limit the survey to college graduates

8. Which of these persuasive techniques takes advantage of people’s desire to conform?
   A. bandwagon CORRECT
   B. card-stacking
   C. name-calling
   D. transfer

9. The primary purpose of staged events and photo opportunities is to
   A. attract press coverage. CORRECT
   B. discuss issues in depth.
   C. collect small donations.
   D. hear the views of voters.

10. How do political analysts determine the voting patterns of women and men?
    A. conduct exit polls CORRECT
    B. examine the ballots
    C. review election results
    D. interview election judges
Exploring the Essential Question
To what extent do the media influence your political views?

The extent to which we are influenced by the media depends, in part, on how much we trust what we hear, read, and see in the news media. The question of trust in the media was posed in a 2006 opinion poll. Study the results below, and answer the questions that follow.

CBS News/New York Times Poll
In general, how much trust and confidence do you have in the news media—such as newspapers, TV, and radio—when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately, and fairly: a great deal, a fair amount, not very much, or none at all?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A Great Deal</th>
<th>A Fair Amount</th>
<th>Not Very Much</th>
<th>None at All</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republicans</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


11. Based on this poll, about what percentage of Americans trust the news media much or all of the time? about 63%

12. Which group—Republican, democrats, or Independents—is most trusting of the news media? The least trusting?
   - most trusting, Democrats; least trusting, Republicans

13. Based on these results, which group is most likely to believe the news media are biased? What kind of bias is that group likely to see in news reporting?
   - Republicans are most likely to see the media as biased. They are likely to think it is based in favor of Democrats (or has a liberal bias).

14. What answer would you give if you were asked this survey questions? Explain why you chose the answer you did.
   -
Students should provide an explanation that supports their answer to the survey questions.