Behind the Headline

Read a news-style survey report with care

SS24.CWI.3a "Interpret statistics included in current news stores related to political, social, and economic issues."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each detail about who was surveyed and circle each percentage. Number the circled percentages to match the groups they describe.

Would Free Weekend Buses Win Support?

1. In a fictional November 2026 news report, the city of Bellport debates free bus rides on weekends. To explore public opinion, student reporters survey 400 adults at two downtown bus stops and a nearby shopping center. They ask, "Should weekend bus rides be free?" They record whether each person rode a bus during the past month.

2. The reporters divide responses into recent riders and nonriders, with 200 people in each group. The table shows the share in each group who said yes. A headline could focus on the overall result, but comparing the groups tells a fuller story. The numbers describe the people surveyed, not every adult in Bellport.

BELLPORT WEEKEND BUS FARE SURVEY

Group	People surveyed	Favor free weekend rides
Recent riders	200	70%
Nonriders	200	40%
All surveyed	400	55%

3. Reporters interviewed people available at three locations rather than drawing names at random from all city residents. They also collected exactly 200 responses from each group, although no one checked whether those groups are equally common across the city. City council will discuss fares next month. The reporters did not ask how anyone would vote in an election.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How many percentage points higher was support among recent riders than among nonriders?

2. How many people in each group favored free weekend rides? Show how you used the table.

3. Why is the overall result 55% when the two group results are 70% and 40%?

4. What about the way reporters selected people makes it risky to treat 55% as the share of all Bellport adults who favor the idea?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a fair headline for this report, then write two sentences explaining it. Use both group percentages and give one reason the survey may not represent all Bellport adults.

Behind the Headline

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each detail about who was surveyed and circle each percentage. Number the circled percentages to match the groups they describe. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How many percentage points higher was support among recent riders than among nonriders?	**Support was 30 percentage points higher among recent riders: 70% minus 40%.**
2	How many people in each group favored free weekend rides? Show how you used the table.	**Recent riders: 70% of 200 = 140 people. Nonriders: 40% of 200 = 80 people.**
3	Why is the overall result 55% when the two group results are 70% and 40%?	**The groups have the same number of people, so their percentages have equal weight. The average of 70% and 40% is 55%.**
4	What about the way reporters selected people makes it risky to treat 55% as the share of all Bellport adults who favor the idea?	**Reporters surveyed people available at only three locations, not a random sample of all Bellport adults.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Survey Finds Different Views on Free Weekend Buses
Among those surveyed, 70% of recent riders favored free weekend rides, compared with 40% of nonriders. Because reporters interviewed people at only three locations, the results may not represent all Bellport adults.

Accept equivalent calculations and wording. For the headline task, look for an accurate comparison and a limitation tied to how the survey was conducted.