

Mathematics Department Workshops

Topic: Relative Frequency

Resource Sheet HT1.REL.4

Consider some of these ideas which may be of interest to your learners.

What evidence do weather forecasters use when predicting the weather?

<http://www.ssec.wisc.edu/data/composites.html>

Consider data collection techniques available historically and currently.

You may like to consider occasions when they 'got it wrong' and why that might be.

'8 out of 10 cats prefer Whiskas'. How can this company and others make statements like this? You can probably find lots of other examples, like Shredded Wheat and heart disease. (This could be a homework task for pupils or you could set up a debate to argue the validity of the company's case)

If polls are used to predict outcomes of elections etc what are the pitfalls? This is an example on line poll for teachers, <http://lgtnet.londongt.org/poll>

Test Murphy's law: If anything can go wrong it will go wrong.

<http://www.murphys-laws.com/>

The most common interpretation of this law is that if toast is dropped it will always land butter side down. Learners enjoy testing this out and can be encouraged to develop their own theme (supermarket queues etc) or work on the more traditional version. There are lots of useful discussion possibilities when setting up the experiment.