FAPP 9e Writing Projects – Chapter 7

1. Go to the Web site of the Gallup Organization (www.gallup.com). You should be able to find a press release that you can access and read without charge. Newspapers publish short articles based on press releases. Write a news article about two paragraphs long, based on the press release.

2. Recall how Example 8 (p. 250) shows how wording can affect survey results. You can explore this by doing an experiment disguised as a survey. Choose a topic, then design two questions with a key difference in wording. Use randomization to choose which version of the question you give each person. Don't reveal the design of the experiment to participants until after they have provided their answers. After you have roughly 20 or more responses to each version, compare and interpret your results. If you're interested in reading about an example of such an experiment, see John Rubin's article "Weighing Anchors," in the June 1990 issue of *Omni*.

3. How would you design a double-blind experiment in which participants test which of two brands of tissue they prefer? Conduct this experiment and write up the results. How do the results compare with any claims made in advertisements for the products?

4. Choose an issue of current interest to students at your school. Prepare a short questionnaire (no more than five questions) to determine opinions on this issue. Choose a sample of about 25 students, administer your questionnaire, and write a brief description of your findings. Also write a short discussion of your experiences in designing and carrying out the survey. Although 25 students are too few for you to be statistically confident of your results, this project centers on the practical work of a survey. You must first identify a population; if it is not possible to reach a wider student population, use students enrolled in this course. Did the subjects find your questions clear? Did you write the questions so that it was easy to tabulate the responses? At the end, did you wish that you had asked different questions?