

Activity ➔ 35

Introducing statistics

STUDENT HANDOUT

Work through the following tasks with your group members, spending five to ten minutes on each task. We will then hold a class discussion on the issues raised.

Task 1

Discuss what is meant by the word 'statistics'. What do you think about when this word is used?

Task 2

Discuss what you think is meant by 'descriptive statistics' and by 'inferential statistics'. Why do you think each of these is used? Give some examples of both types.

Task 3

Discuss specific instances where you feel statistics have been abused, misused or are unreliable and cannot be taken seriously.

Task 4

Draw up a checklist, or a list of questions, that will help you to evaluate whether statistics are reliable or unreliable and whether or not they can be trusted.

Learning outcome: By the end of this activity you will have a greater awareness of statistics, understand how they can be used and abused in the real world and know how to evaluate the reliability of statistics that are presented.