



ACTIVITY 3

Gathering Residents' Values

SURVEY

3 : GATHERING RESIDENTS' VALUES

GUIDING QUESTION

How can a survey be used to gather information about community values?

INTRODUCTION

No decision can be based solely on facts. While facts can predict what may happen as a result of different choices, values are needed to decide what you want to happen. For individual decisions, values can be straightforward, but values get complicated for decisions that involve a whole group of people. A group decision includes a choice made by multiple people who consider the values of stakeholders affected by the result. **Stakeholders** are the set of people who will be affected by the outcome of a decision. They can be residents of a community, business owners, or government officials.

There are multiple ways to find out people's values about an issue. For example, you can talk to them, examine data gathered about their activities, or have them answer some questions. While some data might not be available and interviewing lots of people individually can be time-consuming, a survey is a tool that can gather a lot of information quickly. An effective survey will include the people that are impacted by a decision, including those that are typically underrepresented in decision-making.

In this activity, you will advise the City Council how to survey its residents. You will then switch roles to imagine how various residents might respond.

CONCEPTUAL
TOOLS



PROCEDURE

PART A: DEVELOP THE SURVEY

- 1 With your group, read the following scenario.

The recent protests have motivated the City Council to find a way to better understand the perspectives of the residents. They realize that the values of Vanwick citizens will play a critical role in developing the details for Project REV because they want to take into account all those who will be impacted by the project. To better understand the values of the citizens around the issues brought up by Project REV, the City Council decides to survey the community.

- 2 With a partner, think of three survey questions that, when answered, could reveal what Vanwick residents value about a future energy system. The goal of the survey is to find out which values are most important to the residents of Vanwick.
- 3 Identify the kind of response you expect for each of the three survey questions—such as multiple choice, short answer, a rating scale. Consider how you will summarize and then analyze the responses. Revise any questions based on this.
- 4 Test the questions by swapping them with the other pair in your group. Answer the questions as though you are taking the survey. Return the questions to the other pair and make revisions based on the results of the test.
- 5 As a class, compile all the questions and choose 10 for the final survey. Choose a set of questions that are relevant to Project REV and will give you useful information about people's values.



A government worker gathers input about home energy needs from Tribal community members in Alaska.

MATERIALS LIST

FOR EACH GROUP
OF FOUR STUDENTS

4 STAKEHOLDER CARDS

FOR EACH PAIR
OF STUDENTS

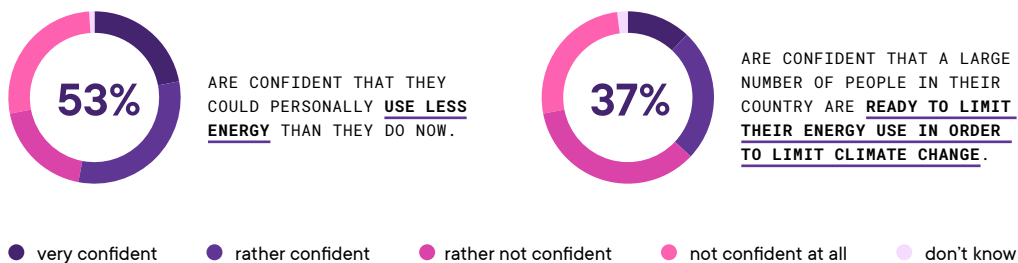
INTERNET ACCESS

PART B: VANWICK SURVEY

- 6 Get a Stakeholder card from your teacher. The card provides information about a member of the Vanwick community who you will represent. Read the card carefully and identify the values of your stakeholder.
- 7 Complete the final class survey as though you are the stakeholder on your card. You may need to refer back to your card as you answer the questions.
- 8 As a class, compile the results from all the stakeholders into a clearly presented summary.
- 9 With your group, use the summary to make a list of stakeholder values from the most to the least commonly held.
- 10 A **weighted value** is one that includes a number showing its relative importance to other weighted values. To weight the values from the previous step, distribute a total of 100 points among the values you listed in a way that shows how some values are more commonly and strongly held (greater points) or less commonly and strongly held (fewer points).
 - The table on the right shows a simple example of how to distribute value points. It is someone's distributed value points about the decision on what to have for lunch.
 - Record your weighted values in your science notebook.
- 11 Share your ideas with the class and come to an agreement on the most commonly and strongly held values in Vanwick and their relative weights. Discuss how the values might inform the planning of Project REV.

COST	50
TASTE	40
NUTRITION	10
TOTAL	100

FIGURE 3.1
European Union energy survey example



The European Commission regularly surveys residents to learn about the public's feelings and experiences on a variety of issues related to economics, the environment, community well being, jobs, etc. This example, from a survey in 2022, asked questions related to energy usage and climate change.

BUILD UNDERSTANDING

- ①
 - a What are the advantages of using surveys to gather information about stakeholder's values?
 - b What are the disadvantages of using surveys to gather information about stakeholder's values?
- ② There are many challenges to capturing all perspectives in a community by using a survey. Whose values might not be captured in a survey? Why?
- ③ How might identifying the values of different stakeholders be useful to the decision-making process?
- ④ Imagine two students talking about renewable energy sources. One says, "I think switching to renewable energy sources is the most important action to save the planet, but having steady jobs in energy generation is important, too." The other student says "My mom's steady job at the fossil fuel plant is the most important thing to my family, although I think renewable energy sources do help the environment."
 - a What, if any, similar values do these two students share?
 - b Why might they disagree about which energy source is best for their community?

CONNECTIONS TO EVERYDAY LIFE

- ⑤ Think about a significant decision that you must make in the near future.
 - a Record the decision and make a list of all your values related to it.
 - b Weight the values, as you did in the procedure, with points that add up to 100.
 - c Does the decision benefit from assigning weights to your values? Explain why or why not.

EXTENSION

Give the class survey to your family and friends and ask them to answer it as themselves. Compare the results to that of the Vanwick survey you completed in class.

KEY SCIENTIFIC TERMS

stakeholders
weighted value