

How the Poll Was Conducted

The latest New York Times/CBS News Poll is based on telephone interviews conducted Jan. 11 through Jan. 15 with 1,112 adults throughout the United States.

The sample of land line telephone exchanges called was randomly selected by a computer from a complete list of more than 69,000 active residential exchanges across the country. The exchanges were chosen so as to ensure that each region of the country was represented in proportion to its population.

Within each exchange, random digits were added to form a complete telephone number, thus permitting access to listed and unlisted numbers alike. Within each household, one adult was designated by a random procedure to be the respondent for the survey.

To increase coverage, this land line sample was supplemented by respondents reached through random dialing of cell-phone numbers. The two samples were then combined.

The combined results have been weighted to adjust for variation in the sample relating to geographic region, sex, race, marital status, age and education. In addition, the land line respondents were weighted to take account of household size and number of telephone lines into the residence, while the cell-phone respondents were weighted according to whether they were reachable only by cell-phone or also by land line.

In theory, in 19 cases out of 20, overall results based on such samples will differ by no more than 3 percentage points in either direction from what would have been obtained by seeking to interview all American adults. For smaller subgroups, the margin of sampling error is larger. Shifts in results between polls over time also have a larger sampling error.

In addition to sampling error, the practical difficulties of conducting any survey of public opinion may introduce other sources of error into the poll. Variation in the wording and order of questions, for example, may lead to somewhat different results.

Michael R. Kagay of Princeton, N.J. assisted The Times in its polling analysis. Complete questions and results are available at nytimes.com/polls.