



CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR 2008 PROJECT SUMMARY

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Project Title What Would You Do? A Behavioral Study	
<p style="text-align: center;">Abstract</p> <p>Objectives/Goals To study whether or not people in a small town would be more likely to help a stranger by mailing an envelope than people in a large city. To study whether or not people would respond to a letter addressed to someone they thought would be more familiar like a grandma or pastor instead of something more impersonal like a business letter or a letter to the Republican Party.</p> <p>Methods/Materials I wrote 4 different types of letters (Grandma Jones, Pastor Gilmore, Simpson and Sons to sound like a business and the Republican Party). Each letter was written in a way that looked like the person sending it was giving a dollar to the person it was addressed to. I placed a dollar bill in each envelope. I put the letters randomly on cars in each of 4 cities (40 per city total). Two were small towns (Sanger and Selma) and two were big cities (Fresno and Clovis). Each letter had a note attached that stated "I found this by your car. Thought you might have dropped it". As the letters came back I recorded whether or not they were returned unopened or opened, with or without the money. I noted the type of letter and the number and type not returned.</p> <p>Results Sanger had the most envelopes returned, 70%. Selma had 65%, Fresno had 60%, and Clovis had 52.5%. There was a note on a Grandma envelope. There were 2 letters opened; both returned with the money. The Grandma letters were the most returned at 70%. The pastor letters were second at 60%. The business letters were the third at 53%, and the Republican party letters were the least returned at 38%.</p> <p>Conclusions/Discussion My hypothesis stated that the most letters would be returned from a small town. My study results confirmed what I found in my research, that people in a small town would be kind and help a stranger. My hypothesis stated that the Grandma letters would be returned the most. From my research I learned that people would be more willing to mail a letter addressed to Grandma because everyone has a Grandma. One of the letters had a note on the back from a guy with a smiley face drawn on it. That letter was addressed to Grandma. Compared to the Republican Party letters, there were almost twice as many Grandma letters returned. I learned that there are a lot of kind people willing to help strangers, but there are more in Sanger. I learned that people will respond to something more familiar (like a Grandma) rather than something more impersonal (like a business).</p>	
Summary Statement This project is a study of the behavior of people who find a letter either familiar or impersonal and what they do with it.	
Help Received My mom and sister drove me around and my mom helped with typing	