

This week's issue:

SHOULD
THE U.S. HAVE
STRICTER GUN
REGULATIONS?

In December 2012, Adam Lanza shot his mother with her own gun, stole her other guns, and proceeded to Sandy Hook Elementary School. He shot through the locked doors with a semi-automatic rifle and **subsequently** fired 154 bullets in under five minutes, killing 26 people.

The guns Lanza's mother owned were purchased legally. Some people believe we should have gun control laws in our country that make it harder to obtain certain kinds of guns. However, opponents of gun control note that the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees citizens the right to "bear arms," or carry weapons. They argue that the founding fathers wanted people to be able to use guns to defend themselves.

Those who favor gun control note that when the Second Amendment was passed, the typical gun was a revolver pistol (Figure A). It held six bullets. In comparison, Lanza's gun, which looked like Figure B, could shoot dozens of bullets. Gun control supporters argue that if high-capacity guns were illegal, **schemes** like Lanza's would have resulted in many fewer deaths. The **dominant** reasons people give for owning guns are personal safety, hunting, and sports activities. Semi-automatic guns are not meant for hunting or simple self-defense.

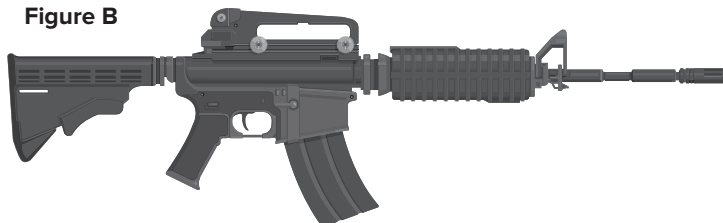
Most developed countries have stricter gun control laws than the U.S. They require safety courses, universal background checks, gun registrations, and waiting periods to buy a gun after requesting one. In contrast, these regulations are not in place in many U.S. states. The rate of gun-related deaths in the U.S. is about 5 times higher than in Canada, 12 times higher than in Australia, 41 times higher than in the United Kingdom, and 177 times higher than in Japan. According to a report **commissioned** by the FBI, 67.8% of U.S. homicides involved guns.

Opponents of gun control state that "guns don't kill people, people kill people." Gun control will only keep guns out of the hands of law-abiding citizens. Even if guns like Lanza's were illegal in the U.S., criminals could illegally **import** them. Without guns, innocent people would be defenseless against these criminals. After the Sandy Hook shooting, the president of the National Rifle Association stated, "The only way to stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun." He proposed arming teachers to combat school violence.

Figure A



Figure B



Do guns help ensure our safety, or do they create more danger? Should there be limits on gun ownership? What kind of gun would you need to protect yourself? Would you need a gun at all?



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scheme | subsequently | dominant | import | commission

USE THE FOCUS WORDS *and alternate parts of speech

scheme (*noun*) a plan, especially a sly or dishonest one

➞ **Sample Sentence:** The quick and easy process of obtaining a gun enabled him to carry out a terrible **scheme**.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** Describe a **scheme** that would cause your teacher to dismiss class early.

***scheme** (*verb*) to plan something secretive or dishonest

➞ **Sample Sentence:** The prince **schemed** to take over the throne by poisoning his brother.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** How can you tell when someone is **scheming**?

subsequently (*adverb*) afterward

➞ **Sample Sentence:** Thalidomide was a popular medication in the late 1950s, but it was **subsequently** shown to cause severe birth defects.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** If I won the lottery, I would **subsequently** _____.

dominant (*adjective*) most important or powerful; most common

➞ **Sample Sentence:** Self-defense is one of the **dominant** arguments for gun ownership.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** What is the **dominant** reason for you to work hard in school?

import (*verb*) to bring something into a country

➞ **Sample Sentence:** They remind us that even if guns were made illegal in the U.S., criminals could **import** them from countries where guns are allowed.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** Why might a country **import** a product instead of making it inside its borders?

***import** (*noun*) an item brought into a country for sale

➞ **Sample Sentence:** Foreign cars are a popular **import** in the United States.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** Governments often tax **imports** so that they cost more than products that are made locally. Why might this be the case?

commission (*verb*) to order or request something

➞ **Sample Sentence:** The principal **commissioned** a report on student reading scores.

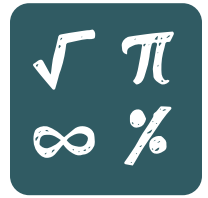
🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** What kind of report about your community would you **commission**?

***commission** (*noun*) a group of people given a task

➞ **Sample Sentence:** The **commission** recommended that the vice-principal be promoted to principal.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** Would you rather join a “Save Our Parks” **commission** or an “End Bullying” **commission**? Why?

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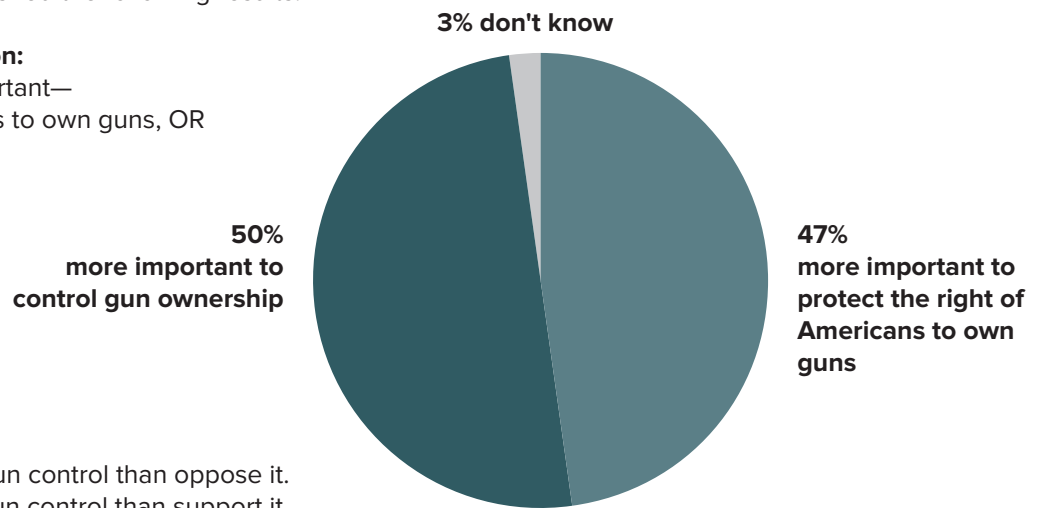
DO THE MATH

There are different **dominant** views about guns in different parts of the country. Some people think restrictions on guns are reasonable. Others think that the government should not interfere with the constitutional right to bear arms. Still others think that it's okay for the government to regulate things like **importing** guns, but claim that any **scheme** to regulate personal ownership violates the Second Amendment.

Option 1: The Pew Research Center **commissioned** a poll in 2015 to find out what the **dominant** view was on gun control. **Subsequently**, the Center published the following results:

Pew Research Center's question:

What do you think is more important—
to protect the right of Americans to own guns, OR
to control gun ownership?



Which of the following is true?

- A. More people support gun control than oppose it.
- B. More people oppose gun control than support it.
- C. There is no way to tell which view is **dominant**.

Option 2: Within the Democratic Party, the **dominant** position is that guns should be regulated. Republicans are more likely to favor gun rights. A Republican strategist **commissioned** a study on gun control views in his home state. He found that 10% of Democrats in his state were strong supporters of gun rights. **Subsequently**, he devised a **scheme** to bring these Democrats into his own party by appealing to their feelings about gun rights. If his strategy worked, his state would have more Republicans than Democrats. If r = the number of Republicans at the time of the poll and d = the number of Democrats, which inequality is true?

- A. $.1d + r > d$
- B. $.1d + r > .9d$
- C. $r \geq d$
- D. $r - d = .1d$

Discussion Question: The Pew Research Center has been **commissioning** polls on hot topics like gun control for many years. This allows them to track changes over time in the Americans' **dominant** views on controversial topics. Sometimes, subsequent to a major event like the massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School, people's opinions change. What are some major events of your lifetime that may have affected people's feelings about gun control? Which of these events may have made people more likely to support gun restrictions? Which of these events may have made people more likely to oppose gun restrictions?

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THINK SCIENTIFICALLY

Different countries have different attitudes and rules about citizens carrying guns. In some countries, it is illegal for citizens to **import**, export, or own guns. However, in the United States, the right to bear arms is part of our Constitution. Many people feel very strongly about their right to bear arms. They suggest that the Second Amendment to the Constitution allows citizens to protect themselves from the **schemes** of dangerous criminals. Conversely, some people feel that more guns lead to more violence, and argue that easy access to guns increases violent crime.

Mr. Seemy's class was debating whether access to guns makes people more likely to commit violent crimes, like murder or armed robbery. The **dominant** opinion in the class was that when people have guns, legal or not, more crime and violence will result. Brianna cited the tragedy at Virginia Tech as evidence that more guns will result in more violence. "Seung-Hui Cho bought a gun legally in 2007 and **subsequently** murdered 32 people on a college campus. Those people might be alive today if guns were illegal!"

Despite being in the minority, Lisa and Anthony spoke up in support of gun ownership. "Think about this: Those people might be alive today if one or more of them were carrying their own guns to defend themselves! More widespread gun possession could actually reduce gun murders."

"A good scientist bases conclusions on evidence and facts, not just anecdotes and opinions," said Mr. Seemy. "Can you find some statistics that support your opinions?"

The next day, Brianna, Lisa, and Anthony shared two sets of data from Wikipedia.

Mark which data set you think Brianna brought in, and which one Lisa and Anthony brought in.

Brianna's claim: Murder rates correlate with gun ownership, so owning guns should be more regulated so that they are harder to get.

Lisa and Anthony's claim: Murder rates do not correlate with gun ownership, so making guns harder to get would not do any good.

Data Set 1: This data set belongs to _____.

Highest Murder Rate States	Murder Rate (per 100,000 inhabitants)	Gun Ownership	Lowest Gun Ownership States	Gun Ownership	Murder Rate (per 100,000 inhabitants)
Louisiana	7.7	44.1%	Hawaii	7.7%	0.5
Missouri	5.4	41.7%	New Jersey	12.3%	2.8
Maryland	5.1	21.3%	Massachusetts	12.6%	1.8
South Carolina	4.5	43.2%	Rhode Island	12.8%	1.5
Michigan	4.2	38.4%	Connecticut	16.7%	2.7

Data Set 2: This data set belongs to _____.

Highest Gun Ownership States	Gun Ownership	Murder Rate (per 100,000 inhabitants)	Lowest Murder Rate States	Murder Rate (per 100,000 inhabitants)	Gun Ownership
Alaska	57.8%	2.7	Vermont	0.3	42.0%
Montana	57.7%	1.2	New Hampshire	0.4	30.0%
South Dakota	56.6%	1.0	Hawaii	0.5	7.7%
West Virginia	55.4%	1.5	Idaho	0.6	50.7%
Arkansas	55.3%	3.2	Iowa	0.7	42.9%

How do you know who brought in data set 1?

How do you know who brought in data set 2?

How is it possible that both data tables show accurate information, but lead to different conclusions? What problems can you identify with these data? What other data would you need to make a decision about whether guns result in more murders?

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OR

B



CREATE YOUR OWN

[illegible]

Can you show me evidence in the text that...?

“ I believe that...”

“ I agree with you, but...”

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.