



Ipsos KMG

# Political Marketing and Political Surveys: Do's and Don'ts

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Lansman Konferansı





## What I'm going to cover

1. Introduction to political marketing and polling
2. The use of political polls
3. Measuring political opinion
4. Success factors and what makes a good poll

# 1. Introduction to political marketing and polling





# Political Marketing

- The strategy and tactical management of a political campaign or referendum
- Principal aim? Win the election!
- Subsidiary aims?
  - Don't damage the brand
  - Live to fight another day



# What is Public Opinion?

“The ‘views’ of a defined population”



# What is a Public Opinion Poll then?

The 'views' of a [representative sample  
of a] defined population

We measure  
**PERCEPTIONS**  
rather than  
**TRUTH**

Perceptions – not truth –  
determine public opinion

**Perceptions of services/actions  
are outcomes in their own right**



## **2. Who uses political polls?**





# The media

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# The Observer

# The Economist

# totalpolitics

**NEWS OF THE WORLD**  
WWW.NOTW.CO.UK

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HOME NEWS SHOWBIZ SPORT WORLD CUP VIDEO LIFESTYLE COLUMNISTS FABULOUS

ELECTION 2010 | ANTI-BULLYING | REAL LIFE | GO GREEN | FORCES | ARCHIVE | SCOTTISH NEWS

**BREAKING NEWS: New leaders**

**TOP NEWS**

**CAMERON:** Latest news & views on coalition govt

**SNOOKER:** Higgins tried to bet against himself

**VIDEO:** Sly agent's shocking match fix boasts

**OUTRAGE:** Terror suspect wins fight to stay in Britain

**JORDAN:** Katie Price 'used phone' in pink horsebox

**JACKSON:** Tragic Michael's kids face going into care

**MORE NEWS >**

**TOP SHOWBIZ**

**AWARDS:** Soap stars sizzle in red-carpet video

**NEW LIB**

**EXC**

24/04/2010

**NICK Clegg a flash-in-the pan according to MORI**

News of the World

The Ipsos MORI poll shows Nick Clegg's party leading before the showdown again.

**London Evening Standard**

**Final campaign poll puts Tories seven points ahead**

Robert Worcester, founder of MORI

06.05.10

The last poll of this campaign, from Ipsos MORI exclusively for the London Evening Standard, carried out yesterday shows the Conservatives at 36 per cent, Labour at 29 per cent and the Liberal Democrats at 27 per cent with other parties at eight per cent.



# Political Parties

## Italy case study: Pd (the second largest party in Italy)

### *Objectives*

- Study Italian society in-depth
- Understand people's expectations of policies
- Provide support for a long-term strategy for the Democratic Party

### *Main results of the research*

- Profile of Italian voters
- Penetration and perception of the Democratic Party
- Main issues for Pd voters
- Territorial issues (North, Middle, South)
- The best political alliances for Pd



# UK constituency poll: best predictors of voting for Far Right party

More likely than average to vote X party

58.2% of variance explained

Less likely than average to vote for X party

Issue important in helping decide which party to vote for: immigration/asylum

Odds ratio

16.2

Odds ratio

$\frac{1}{8.9}$

Satisfied with way your local councillors are doing their jobs?

Voted in last general election

4.8

Voted for X party

Look after house/ children (compared to working full time)

Received election leaflet from X party

4.0

$\frac{1}{4.6}$

Number of cars in household

1.9

Shows only statistically significant components of model



# Other clients

## ■ Electoral authorities

- Referendum-wording testing
- Political engagement – voter registration, turnout

## ■ Academics

- Voting behaviour
- Electoral reform
- Representation issues e.g. gender representation

## ■ Pressure groups and trade unions

- Stimulate debate, exert pressure

## ■ Business and private companies

- Marketing and PR
- Understanding economic confidence





# 3. Measuring political opinion



**Peacetime polls...**

**Campaign polls...**

**...The final (eve of election) poll**

**...Exit poll**



Peacetime polls

Campaign  
polls

Final Exit  
poll poll

- **Snapshot indicator** of how the public thinks they would vote at a given moment
- **Polls do not predict:** Not “what would happen” – asking about a hypothetical election so answers are hypothetical too
- Think of polls as a **barometer:**
  - Barometers do not predict the weather, they measure something that is useful to know in predicting the weather



# UK: Reuters/ Ipsos MORI Monthly Political Monitor



Ipsos KMG

THOMSON REUTERS

- Random Digit Dialling (**RDD**) quota sample
  - Quotas on gender, age, region, work status & housing tenure
- c. 1,000 – 1,500 interviews
- **Weighting** by demographics to fine-tune
- **Voting intention** uses two questions (**initial plus “squeeze”**)
  - **Prompting** with names of major parties
  - Headline voting intention based only on those **“absolutely certain to vote”**





Peacetime polls

Campaign  
polls

Final Exit  
poll poll

- **Election campaign polls** measure what the public think they are going to do – which may or may not be accurate
- **Still not a prediction:**
  - 10% of voters say they make up their minds on whether/ how they'll vote in the final 24 hours of the election, and another 10% during the final week!



# UK General Election 2010: Marginals polling for Reuters

Ipsos KMG



THOMSON REUTERS

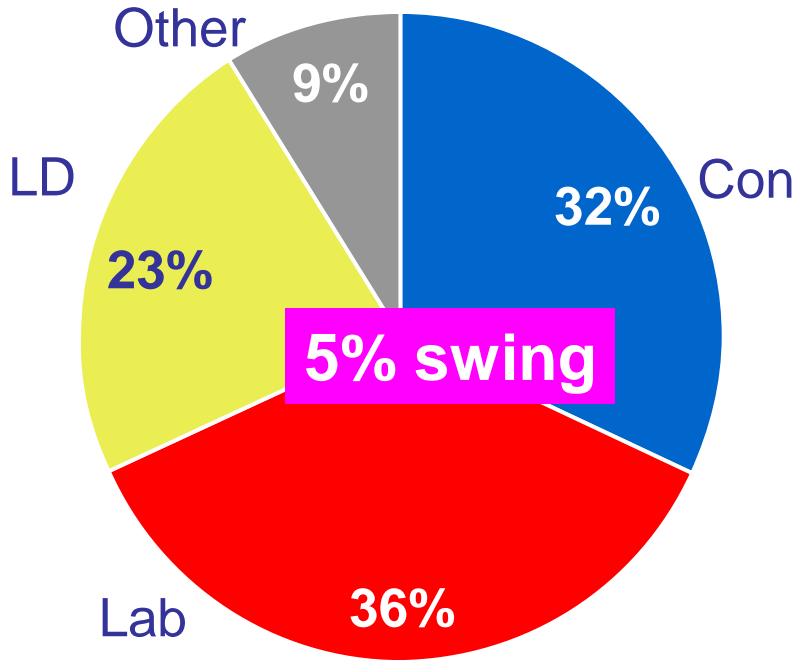
- Five polls in key marginal constituencies
  - Those where the Conservatives needed to win in order to get a majority
- How these 57 constituencies were going to vote was becoming one of the key issues in the election
  - Apparently very close race based on national data
  - But clear Conservative lead in the key marginals
    - Campaign intensity
    - Lord Ashcroft's money



# Voting Intention: all those "certain to vote"

How would you vote if there were a General Election tomorrow?

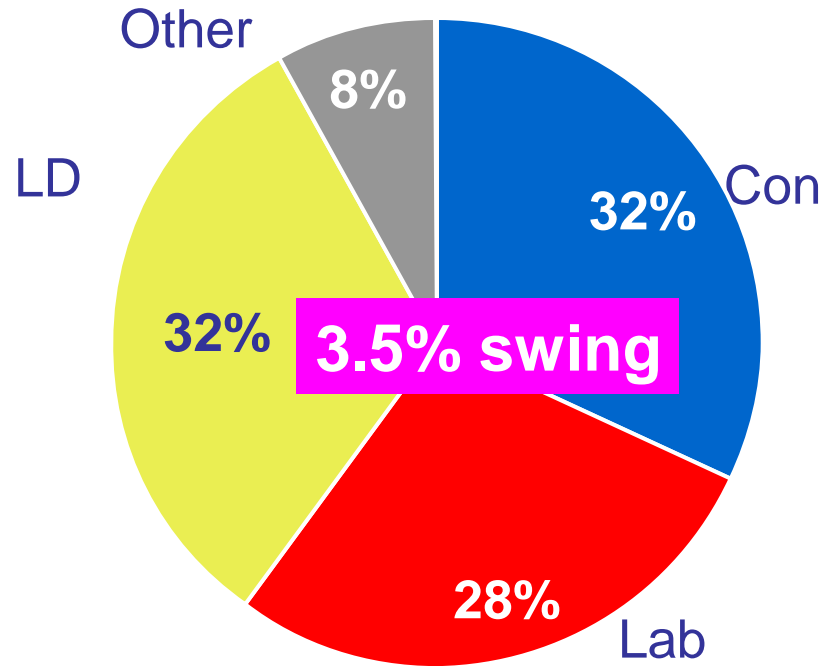
**MARGINALS**  
16 – 19 April 2010



Conservative lead = -4

Base: All certain to vote = 711 unweighted; data collected among 1,001 those 18+ in marginal constituencies, 16 – 19 April 2010

**NATIONAL**  
18 – 19 April 2010



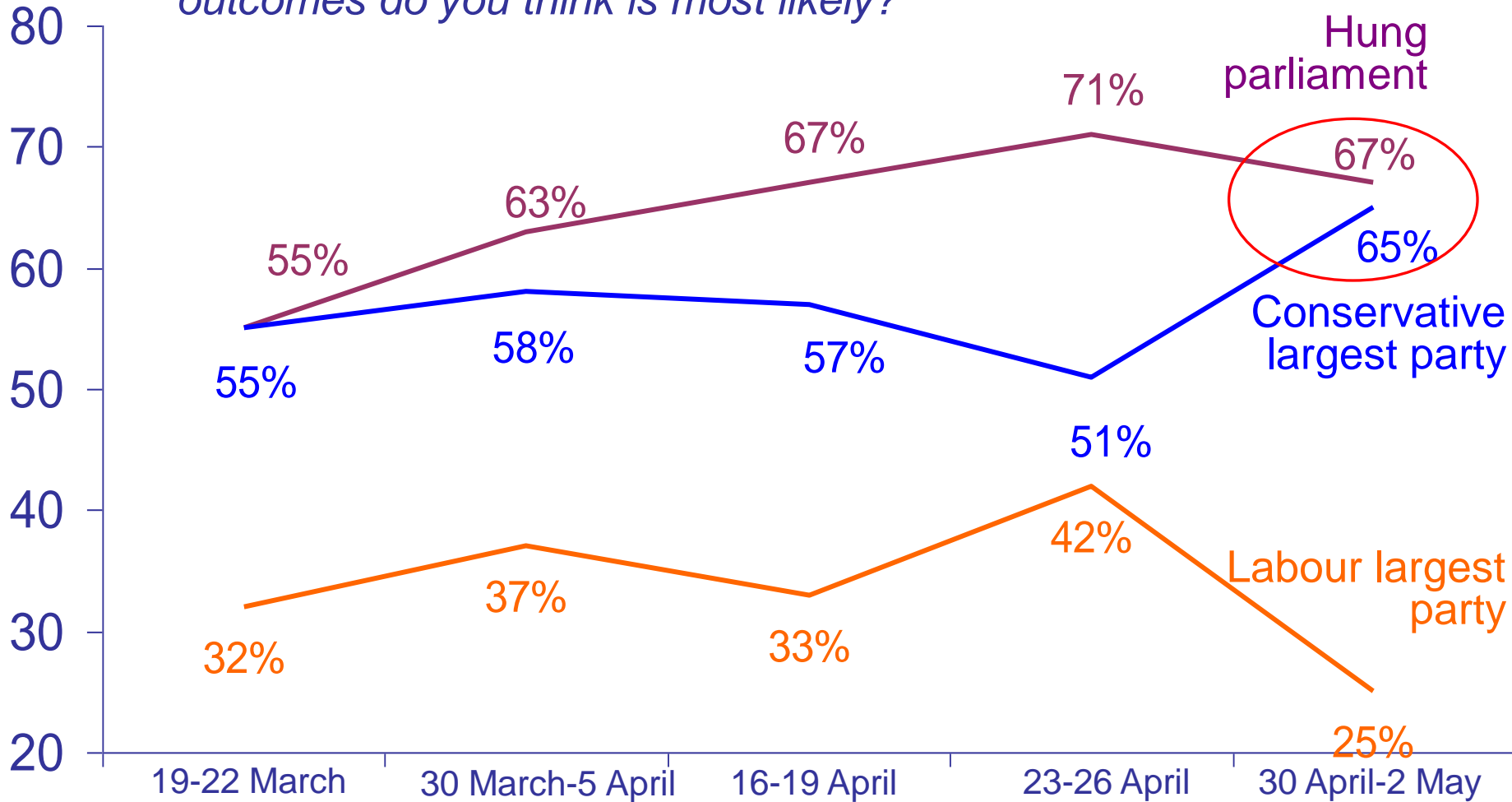
Conservative lead = 0

Base: All giving a voting intention = 1,061 unweighted, All certain to vote = 802 unweighted; data collected among 1,253 British adults 18+, 18th-19th April 2010



# Our collaboration with Reuters showed clearly the uncertainty around the election outcome

Thinking ahead to the next general election, which of the following outcomes do you think is most likely?



Base: c.1,000 British adults 18+ in marginal constituencies each wave

Source: Ipsos  
No one's unpredictable  
Ipsos KMG Reuters



# Reuters in the US



NEWS & POLLS

US Polls

Canada Polls

International Polls

Europe

- UK and Ireland
- Italy
- France

Australia

MEDIA PARTNERS

Reuters Polls

The McClatchy Company Polls

Postmedia News/ Global Television

Telemundo Polls

College Football FanFirst Polls

Home / News & Polls /

## Ipsos/ Reuters Political Tracker: October 2010

Wednesday, October 13, 2010

**Washington, DC** - Ipsos' latest poll carried out on behalf of Reuters and published today shows that 48% of likely voters say they will choose the Republican candidate at the midterm elections, compared to 44% who say they will choose the Democratic candidate.

While Ipsos does not allocate 'undecided' likely voters until our final pre-election poll, our projective modeling based on data from this poll suggests that the Republicans would take the House with 227 seats, and the Democrats would lose 48 seats to hold 208. Our models suggest that the Democrats will retain control of the Senate with 52-53 seats. Our final projections will be released on November 1st.

Other findings from this poll:

- President Obama's approval ratings have dropped from 47% to 43% since last month, with 53% disapproving of the way he is handling his job. It appears that much of this drop comes from Democrats, whose ratings of Obama have dropped from 78% approval last month to 70% this month.
- Half (49%) of the public name the economy as the most



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Reuters Polls

Politics (Regional)

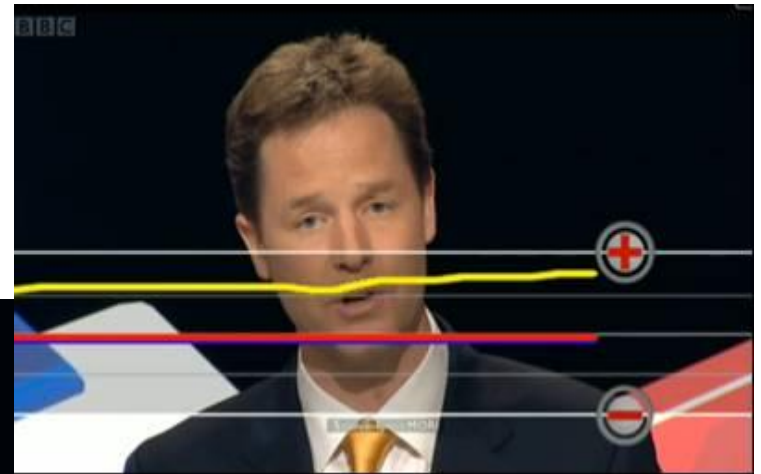
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# Election work for the BBC – the Ipsos MORI ‘Worm’





Peacetime polls

Campaign  
polls

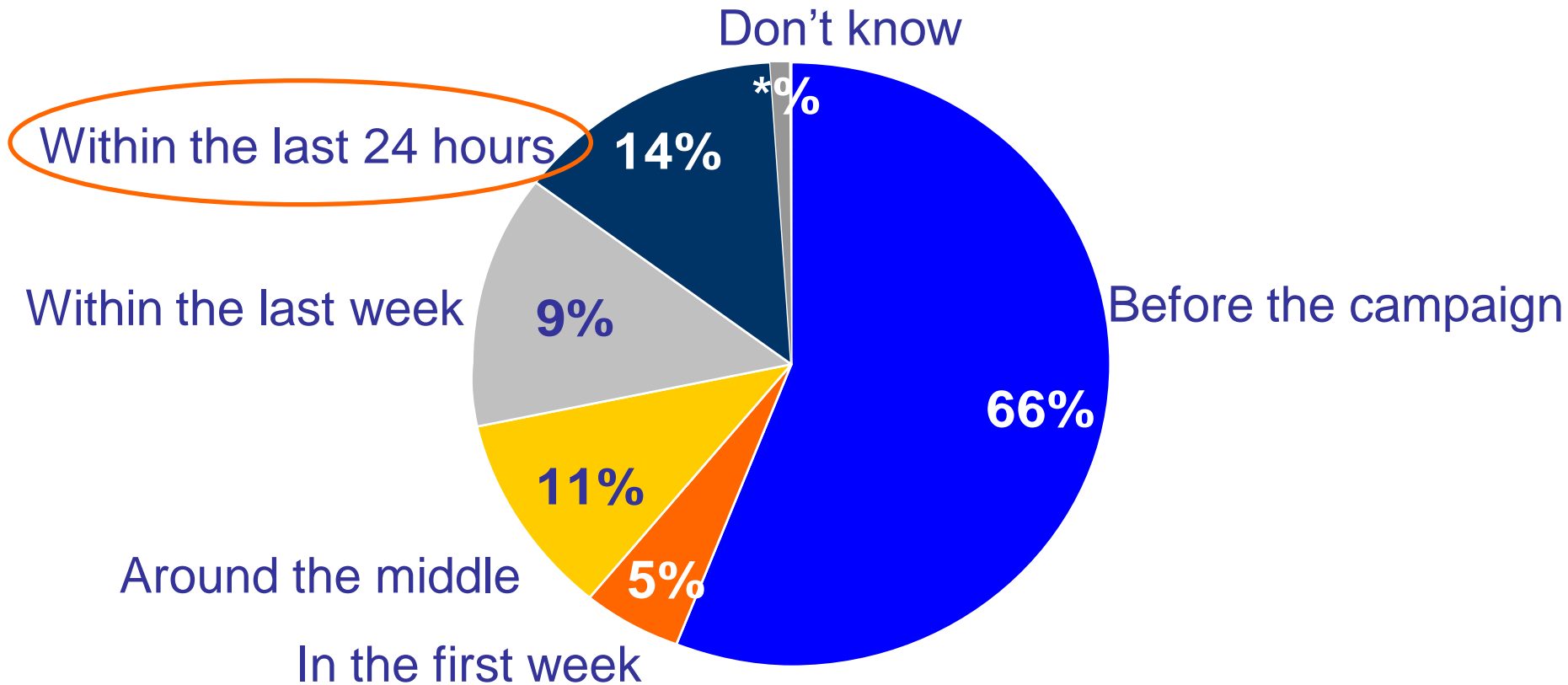
Final Exit  
poll poll

- **Eve of election poll includes adjustments not applied to other polls** – because the final prediction is not ‘pure’ polling
- Checklist:
  - Definitely decided or might change mind
  - How important is the result
  - How certain if raining
  - Have you been contacted by campaigners
- Plus:
  - Call-backs for late swing and imputed vote of refusers



# A difficult task

Q “When did you decide which party to vote for? Was it before the campaign began, in the first week of the campaign, around the middle, within the last week, or within the last 24 hours?”

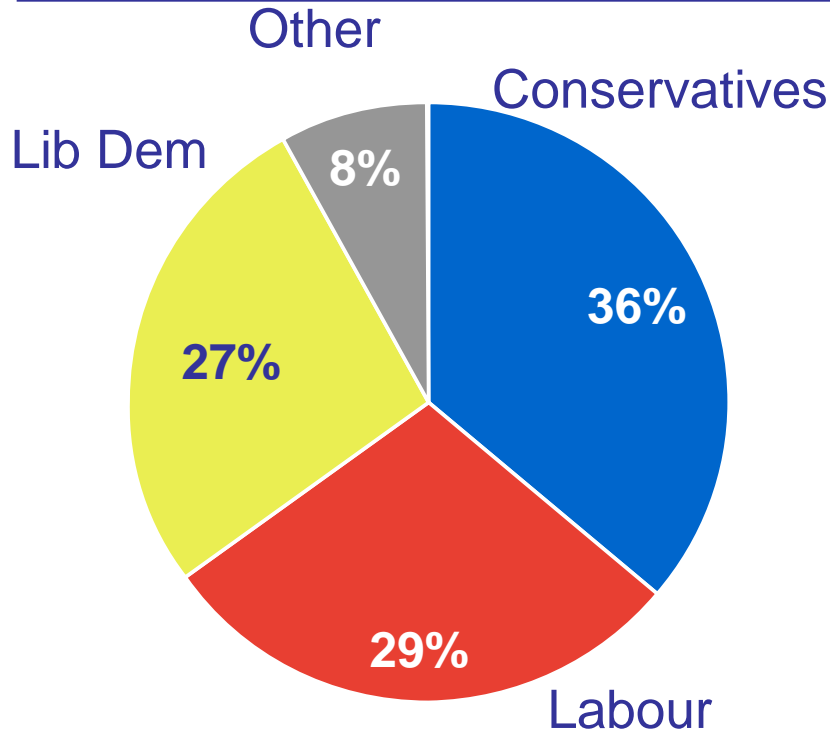






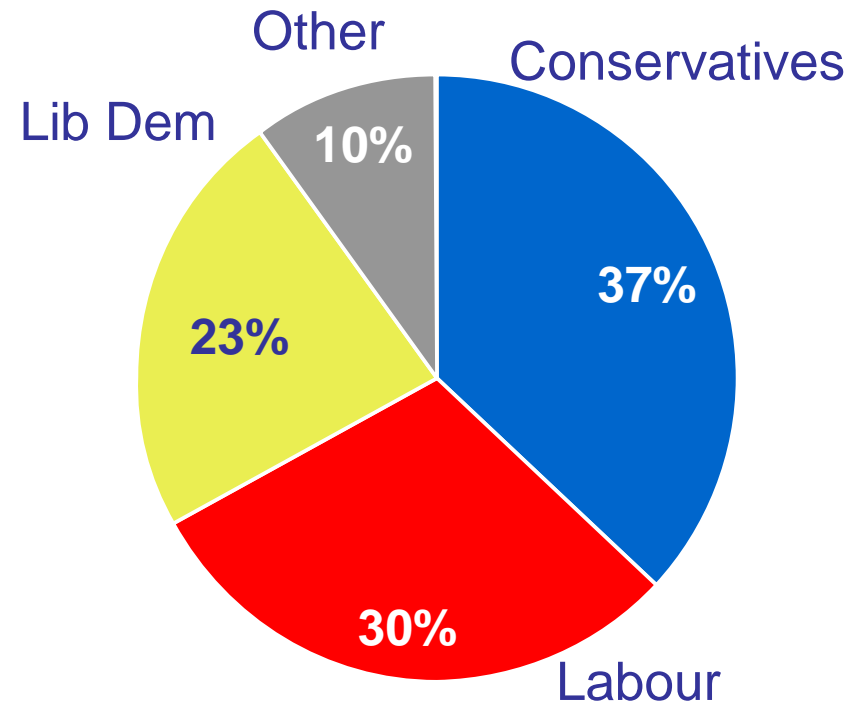
# How did we do? Pretty good compared to the result...

FINAL POLL – FW May 5th



Conservative lead = +7

RESULT – May 6th



Conservative lead = +7

Base: 930 British adults 18+, certain to vote or already voted by post, interviewed by telephone on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2010

General Election result in Great Britain only



Peacetime polls

Campaign  
polls

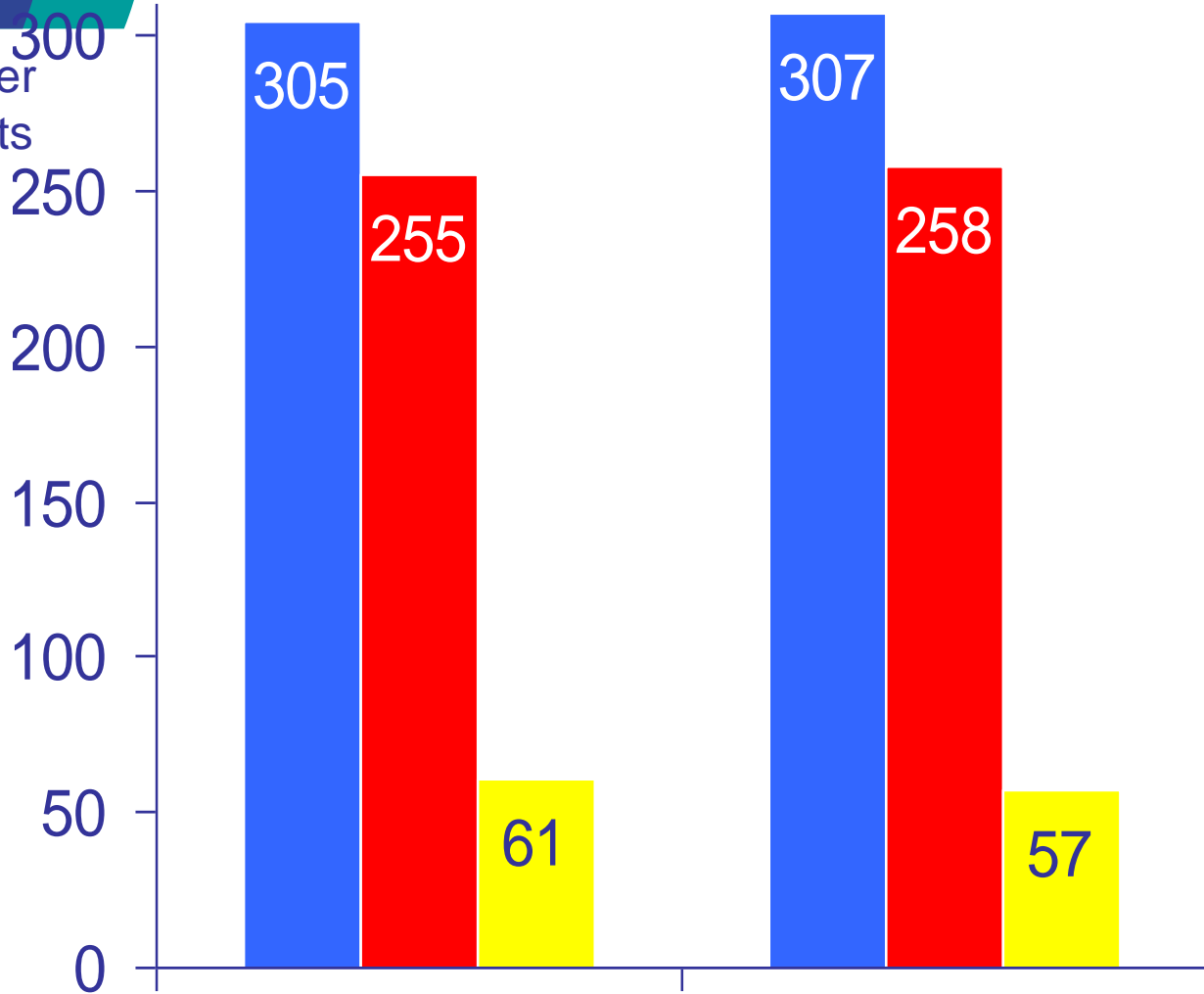
Final Exit  
poll poll





# Exit Poll vs. actual General Election result

Number of seats



- Conservative
- Labour
- Lib Dem

Exit Poll

Actual Result

Base: 17,607 voters at 130 polling stations across Great Britain. Ipsos MORI/GFK  
NOP/BBC/SKY/ITV News Nobody's Unpredictable

***“A crowning triumph of the  
opinion research business...”***

**John Rentoul, Chief Political  
Commentator, Independent on  
Sunday**



# 4. What makes a good poll?

## A few ground rules...





# No. 1: The art of asking questions

A good question should...

- Be relevant to the respondent
- Be easily understood by the respondent
- Be unambiguous in meaning
- Mean the same to the client, researcher, and all the respondents
- Relate to the survey objectives
- Not be influenced in any untoward way by the context of the question



## Golden rules

***Thinking about the Comprehensive*** ← Don't assume knowledge

***Spending Review, are***

***you in favour of the*** ← Be even-handed

***radical measures*** ← Be specific

***proposed by the***

***government to stimulate***

***fiscal recovery?***

Avoid loaded language →

Use simple, everyday language



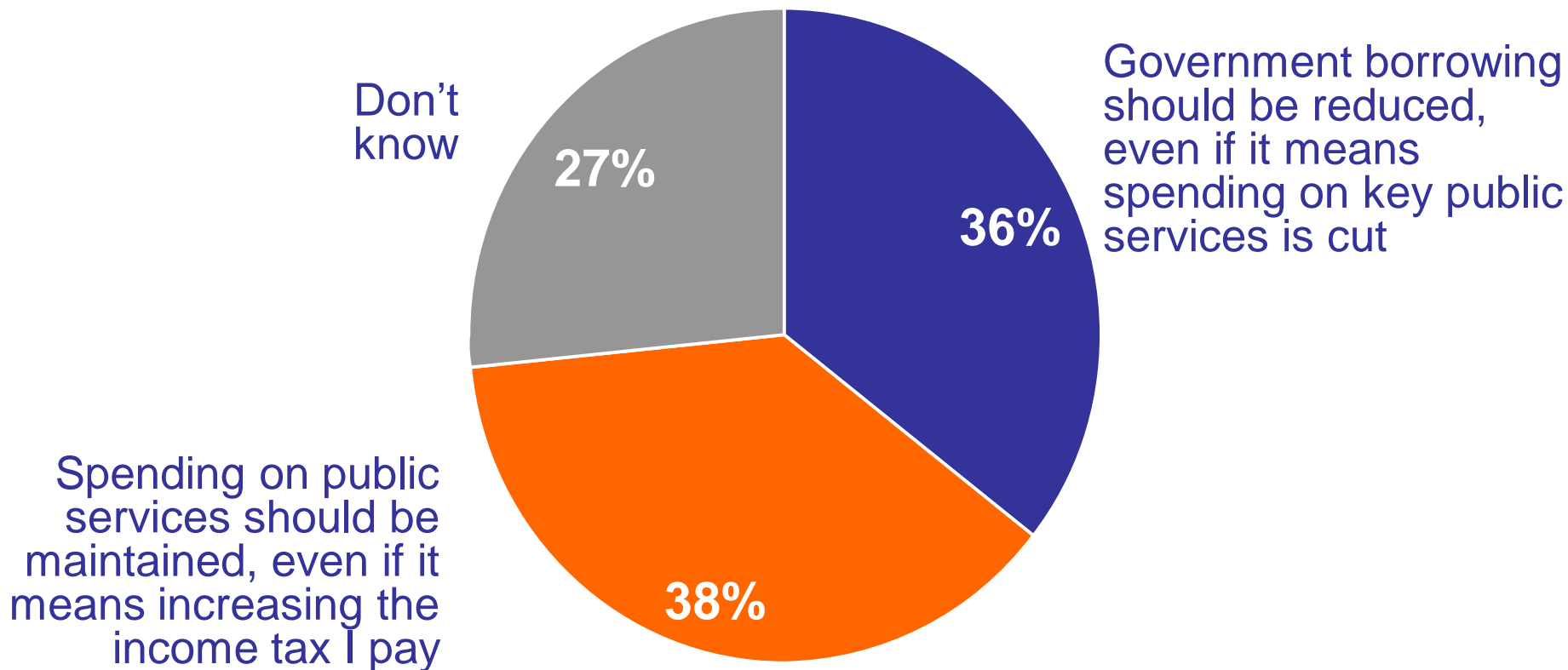
**More subtle  
differences can have  
a big impact...**





# Public split on hard choices: cut services or raise taxes?

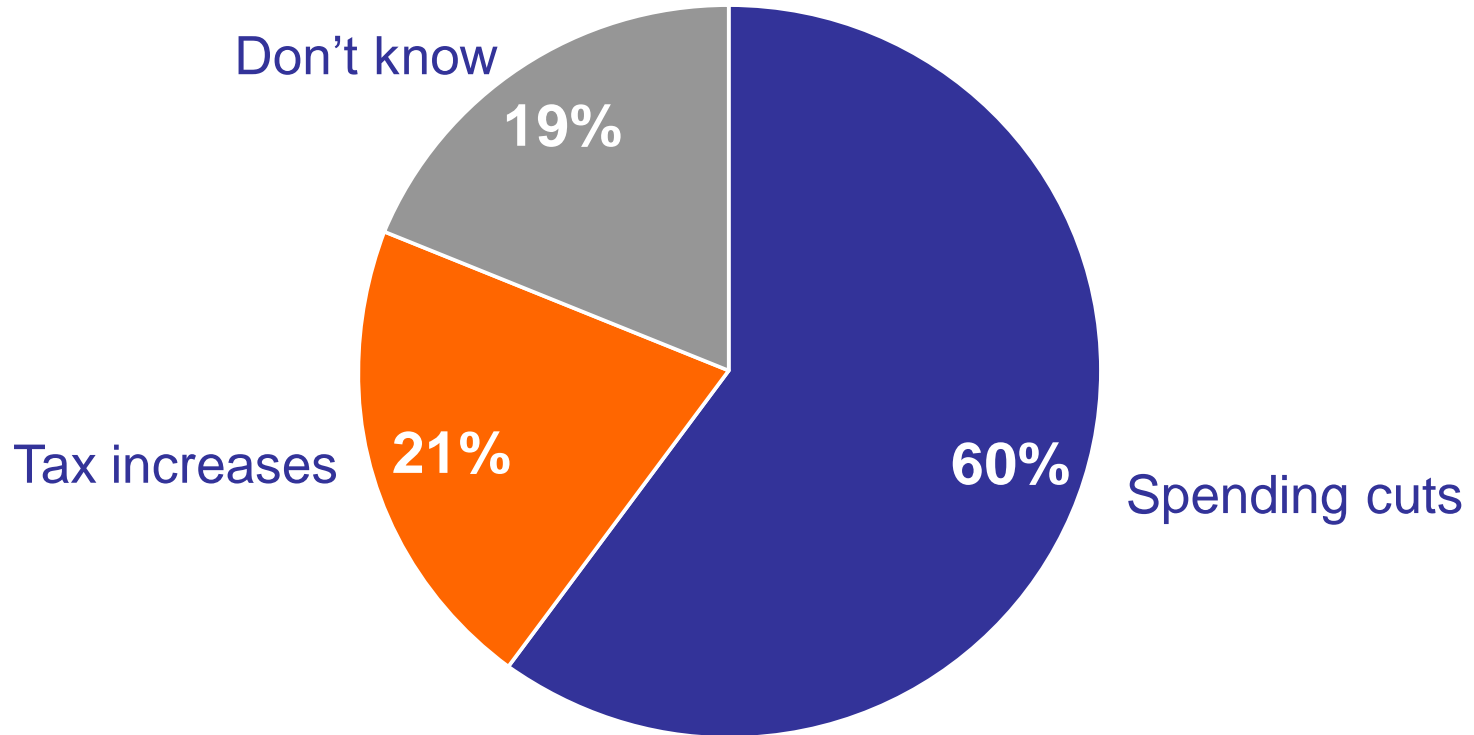
Government borrowing is now at record levels, and will need to be reduced in future. Which of these statements comes closest to your own view?





# So why does this YouGov poll say people want spending cuts rather than tax rises?

Should cutting the budget deficit be mainly through raising taxes or cutting public spending?



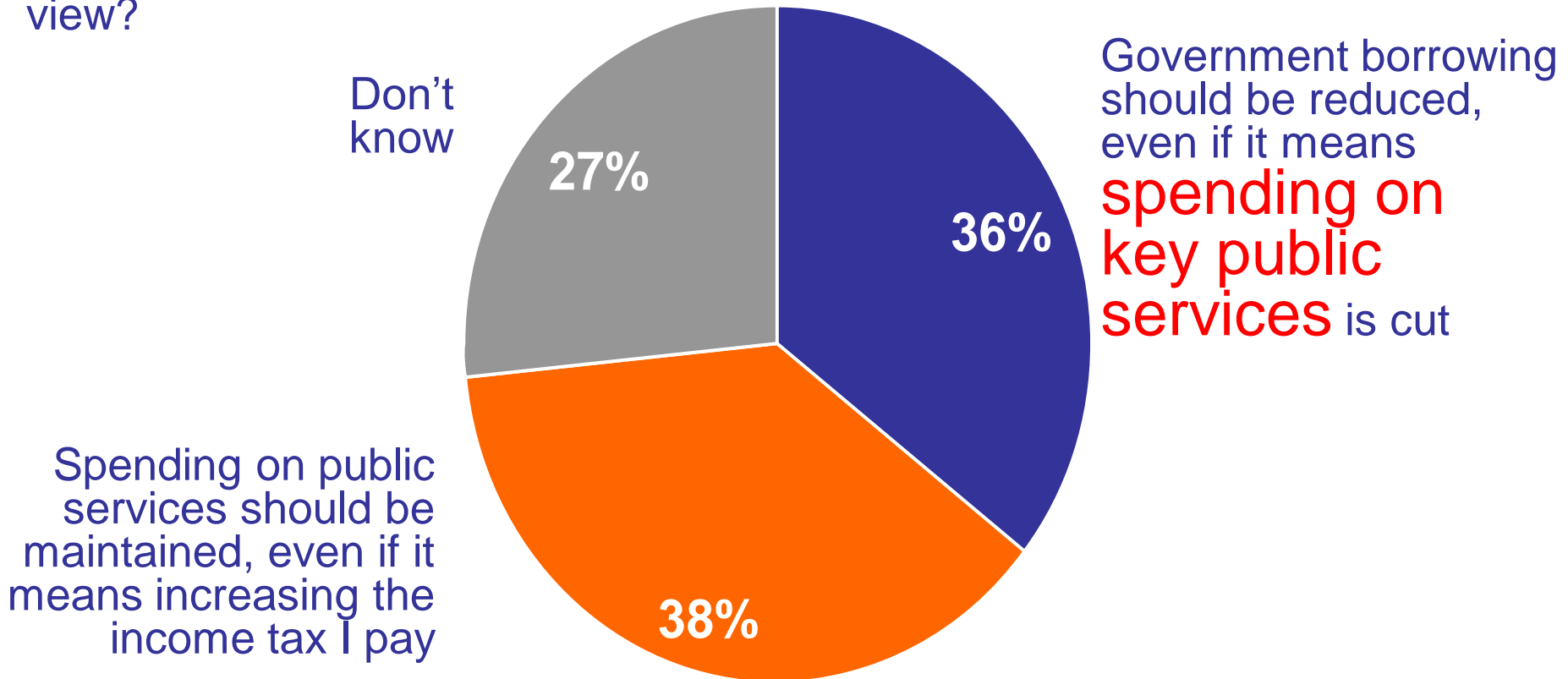
Base: 2,009 British adults aged 18+, 10-11 September 2009 (online)

Source: Sunday Times/YouGov



## Back to the Ipsos MORI question...

Government borrowing is now at record levels, and will need to be reduced in future. Which of these statements comes closest to your own view?





## No. 2: The science of sampling

Purely 'random' sampling is not used by any modern opinion polls (in Britain)

Well-conducted quota sampling produces weighted samples with a variance similar to random samples of the same size

### Survey Result

Sample size	10%	30%	50%
100	6	9	10
1,000	2	3	3
1,500	2	2	3
2,200	1	2	2

*"Margin of error"*



## **No 3. Fieldwork and validation**

- Briefings
- Training
- Qualifications
- Process: teams and supervisors



## No. 4: Analysis

- Rim weighting to official population statistics
- Demographic data
  - Sex, Age, Class, etc
  - Region
- Political
  - Voting intention
  - Economic expectations
  - Satisfaction with the government
- Attitudinal breaks
  - Cross-analysis with other questions
- Multi-variate and other analysis techniques

**Work status by gender**  
**Region**  
**Age**  
**Social class**  
**Tenure**  
**Car in household**  
**NEW: Public sector**  
**workers**



## No. 5: Reading (and reporting) the polls



### Crewe's four propositions



- However static public opinion actually is, the **polls provide the media with a basis for giving the impression of flux, change and excitements**. The more polls there are ... the more true this is.
- However improbable a poll finding is, the media will publish or broadcast it. **The more improbable a poll's finding is, the more likely the media will give it prominence.**
- However clear the election outcome and the election trend, polls **allow the media to hedge their bets.**
- The **duller an election is**, the greater use of and prominence given to the polls.



## Things to watch

- When were the fieldwork dates?
- Was the sample representative and large enough?
- Is it a panel study, face-to-face or a telephone poll?
- Are the questions unbiased?
- Are differences statistically significant?
- Watch for the brand name
- AND...
- Remember the margin of error for the gap or lead between the Parties is about twice that of the share







## Some concluding thoughts...

- If done well, polling provides credible, reliable data and valuable insight into public opinion
- Good polling uses robust methodological approaches...
- ...but also relies on responsible reporting
- Wide range of uses – by parties, media, government, academia, private sector, trade unions
- **Polls do NOT predict the future**



**Finally – it's always  
worth remembering that  
there are people behind  
the numbers....**

**Thanks for listening**  
**Any questions?**



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