

## The 1-2-3-4 Activity

Materials: a slip of paper with the numbers 1 2 3 4 for each student

In the San Francisco Chronicle on November 30, 1980, the following item appeared: "Write the numbers 1,2, 3, and 4 on a piece of paper. Ask somebody to circle anyone of these numbers. Four out of five so asked will circle the 3." Try an experiment to test this.

1. Distribute slips with 1 2 3 4 on them. Ask each child to circle a number and turn the slip face down, with no discussion.
2. Have each child write his or her answer, individually, to these questions: Do you think anyone number will be circled lots more than any other and, if so, which one? Why do you think that?
3. In their groups, ask students to come to consensus about the questions and choose one person to report back to the class.
4. List the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 on the board. Have students tape their papers next to the number they circled to graph the class data.
5. Analyze the results. Do they match the newspaper prediction? Would the results change with a larger sample?

### Extensions

1. Have each student take home three additional slips for others to circle a number. Have them predict how these additional samples will affect the graph.
2. What if the numbers had been in a different order? What if the slips had a b c d on them instead? What about other letters or shapes? Have interested students devise and carry out other investigations.