# Examples of List Experiments 

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## 1 Measuring Prejudice

### 1.1 Against African Americans

- Kuklinski, J. H., Cobb, M. D., and Gilens, M. (1997a). Racial attitudes and the New South. Journal of Politics 59, 2, 323 - 349.
Kuklinski, J. H., Sniderman, P. M., Knight, K., Piazza, T., Tetlock, P. E., Lawrence, G. R., and Mellers, B. (1997b). Racial prejudice and attitudes toward afrmative action. American Journal of Political Science 41, 2, 402- 419.

The baseline for both experiments was:
Now I am going to read you three things that sometimes make people angry or upset. After I read all three, just tell me HOW MANY of them upset you. I don't want to know which ones, just HOW MANY.
(1) The federal government increasing the tax on gasoline;
(2) Professional athletes getting million-dollar contracts;
(3) Large corporations polluting the environment

In Kulinski et al (1997a), the treatment group received the above baseline; the control group received the three baseline items and a fourth "sensitive item": (4) a black family moving in next door.

In Kulinski et al (1997b), the treatment group received the above baseline; the control group received the three baseline items and a fourth "sensitive item": (4) black leaders asking for affirmative action.

- Gilens, M., Sniderman, P. M., and Kuklinski, J. H. (1998). Afrmative action and the politics of realignment. British Journal of Political Science 28, 1, 159 - 183.

Gilens et al modify the above. The control group receives the list:
(1) The federal government increasing the tax on gasoline;
(2) Professional athletes earning large salaries;
(3) Requiring seat belts be used when driving;
(4) Large corporations polluting the environment

The treatment groups receive the above with either:
(5) Black leaders asking the government for affirmative action or
(5) Awarding college scholarships on the basis of race

- Sniderman, P. M. and Carmines, E. G. (1997). Reaching Beyond Race. Harvard University Press.

Wording of list experiments in this volume is identical to that in Gilens et al (1998), immediately above. Sniderman and Carmines conduct an additional list experiment. The baseline is from Gilens et al (1998), and the sensitive item is:
5. Interracial dating with black teenagers taking out white teenagers

- Flavin, P. and Keane, M. (2010). How angry am I? Let me count the ways: Question format bias in list experiments. Tech. rep., Department of Political Science, University of Notre Dame.

Here, the control group received the same baseline as in Kane et al (2004)
[see section 1.2, first item, below]. The treatment group received the baseline plus a fifth "sensitive item":
5. An African-American person becoming President of the United States.

- Redlawsk, D. P., Tolbert, C. J., and Franko, W. (2010). Voters, emotions, and race in 2008: Obama as the First black president. Political Research Quarterly 63, 4, 875 - 889 .

The control group received the following prompt and baseline:
Some people will vote for Barack Obama this fall and some people will not. Regardless of your overall feelings toward him, please indicate how many of the following five facts about Obama trouble you when you think about choosing the next president. I SHOULD ADD, TOO, THAT we are not interested in WHICH ONES trouble you, only HOW MANY. Are you ready?"

1. During the primary campaign, he described small-town Pennsylvanians as bitter and said that they cling to guns and religion.
2. He has served in the US Senate only since 2005.
3. He used to be a smoker.
4. He was a member of Jeremiah Wrights Trinity United Church of Christ for 20 years, before he resigned in May of 2008.

The treatment group received the above baseline with a fifth item:
5. If elected, he will be the first black president.

- Heerwig, Jennifer A., and Brian J. McCabe. Education and Social Desirability Bias: The Case of a Black Presidential Candidate. Social Science Quarterly, 90, 3, 674 - 686 .

In this experiment, the control group received the list:
I think presidential campaigns are too costly
I am willing to support stronger immigration laws
I think the war in Iraq will ultimately make the US safer
The treatment group received the above plus the item I am willing to support a black Presidential candidate

- Brueckner, Hannah, Ann Morning, and Alondra Nelson. 2005. The Expression of Biological Concepts of Race. Paper presented for the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association (2005).

These authors intended to measure the level of support for a "biologistic understanding of racial inequality", i.e., if racial inequality is associated with genetics. The baseline that both groups received was:
Please tell us with how many of the statements listed below you agree. We dont want to know which ones, just how many.

The U.S. military action in Iraq will ultimately make the United States safer.
The space program is a waste of taxpayer money. Immigration is good for the economy.

The treatment group received the above plus a fourth item:
Genetic differences contribute to income inequality between black and white people.

- Martinez, M. D., and Craig, S. C. (2010). Race and 2008 Presidential Politics in Florida: A List Experiment. The Forum, 8(2), Article 4. doi: 10.2202/15408884.1316

Martinez and Craig ask respondents I'm now going to read you four (five) things that sometimes make people angry or upset. After I read all four (five) statements, just tell me how many of them upset you. I don't want to know which ones, just how many. The baseline used is the same as Kane, Craig and Wald (2004), immediately below. Treatment groups receive this baseline plus one of the following sensitive items:
A black candidate running for president.
A black man being elected president.
The fact that a black candidate is able to win his party's nomination for president.
Blacks pushing themselves where they are not wanted.

### 1.2 Against Other Groups

- Kane, J. G., Craig, S. C., and Wald, K. D. (2004). Religion and presidential politics in Florida: A list experiment. Social Science Quarterly 85, 2, 281-293.

Kane et al employ a modified version of the four-item baseline of Gilens et al (1998) for the control group:

1. The way gasoline prices keep going up.
2. Professional athletes getting million dollar-plus salaries.
3. Requiring seat belts to be used when driving.
4. Large corporations polluting the environment.
. The Kane et al treatment group receives the baseline with either:
(5) A Jewish candidate running for Vice President
or
(5) A Jewish candidate running for President

- Janus, A. L. (2010). The inuence of social desirability pressures on expressed immigration attitudes. Social Science Quarterly 91, 4, 928-946.

Both groups were given the following prompt:
Now I am going to read you three/four things that sometimes people oppose or are against. After I read all three/four, just tell me HOW MANY of them you oppose. I dont want to know which ones, just HOW MANY.

The control group was given the baseline:
The federal government increasing assistance to the poor. Professional athletes making millions of dollars per year. Large corporations polluting the environment.

The treatment group was given the above baseline plus a sensitive item: Cutting off immigration to the United States.

- Streb, M. J., Burrell, B., Frederick, B., and Genovese, M. A. (2008). Social desirability effects and support for a female american president. Public Opinion Quarterly 72, 1, 76-89.

Streb et al employ the baseline of Kane et al (2004) for the control group
(see above). The treatment group receives the four baseline items plus a fifth sensitive item:
5. A woman serving as president.

- Rayburn, N. R., Earleywine, M., and Davison, G. C. (2003). An investigation of base rates of anti-gay hate crimes using the unmatched-count technique. Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment and Trauma 6, 137-152.

This paper uses the item count technique to measures the incidence of hate crimes against gay people. College students were split into two groups, with each group serving as the control group for the other. One group would receive some of the following lists without the sensitive items marked (s); the other would receive the same lists with these items.

```
I have been to Spain
I would consider myself to be a sports fan.
I have a brother.
I have more than one sister
I have gotten into a physical fight with a person because he was gay
(s)
I have read the book, "The Pelican Brief."
I read the local newspaper almost every day.
I read USA Today several times a week.
I usually choose sugar-free soft drinks.
I don't smoke cigarettes.
I have written graffiti about gay people or homosexuality (s)
I have more than two children.
I take vitamins almost every day
I read the book, "The Prince"
There's a shotgun in my house
I have verbally threatened a gay person (s)
I've lived in at least three different states
I've lived outside the US
I have been to Ireland
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My shoe size is over 7
I went to a private high school
I often watch television late at night
I have damaged someone's property because he was gay (s)
I like the editorial section of the newspaper
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- Corstange, D. (2009). Sensitive questions, truthful answers?: Modeling the list experiment with LISTIT. Political Analysis 17, 45 - 63.

Corstange uses one prompt for both treatment and control groups:
The control group was asked:
There has been some debate recently over who should have the right to vote in Lebanese elections. I'll read you some different groups of people: please tell me if they should be allowed to vote or not. 1. Young people between the ages of 18 to 21.
2. Lebanese expatriates living abroad.
3. Illiterate people.
4. Palestinians without Lebanese citizenship

The treatment group was asked how many, not which of the above items upset them.

## 2 Elections and Voting

- Gonzalez-Ocantos, E., Kiewet de Jonge, C., Melendez, C., Osorio, J., and Nickerson, D. W. (2010). Vote buying and social desirability bias: Experimental evidence from Nicaragua. Tech. rep., Department of Political Science, University of Notre Dame.

The control group was given the following prompt and nonsensitive items:
Im going to hand you a card that mentions various activities, and I would like for you to tell me if they were carried out by candidates or activists during the last electoral campaign. Please, do not tell me which ones, only HOW MANY.
they put up campaign posters or signs in your neighborhood/city; they visited your home;
they placed campaign advertisements on television or radio;
they threatened you to vote for them.
The treatment group was given the above baseline plus a sensitive item:
they gave you a gift or did you a favor

- Holbrook, A. L. and Krosnick, J. A. (2010). Social desirability bias in voter turnout reports: Tests using the item count technique. Public Opinion Quarterly 74, 1, 37-67.

The control group was asked the following:
Here is a list of four things that some people have done and some people have not. Please listen to them and then tell me HOW MANY of them you have done. Do not tell me which you have and have not done. Just tell me how many. Here are the four things: Owned a gun; Given money to a charitable organization; Gone to see a movie in a theater; Written a letter to the editor of a newspaper. How many of these things have you done?

The treatment group was asked the prompt above with the addition of a fifth item, Voted in the Presidential election held on November 7, 2000.

## 3 Attitudes About Food

- Haire, M. Projective techniques in marketing research. J. Marketing, 1950, 44, $649-656$.

This list experiment tries to elucidate why some consumers dislike instant coffee. One prompt and two lists, which differed with respect to the sensitive coffee item, were used. The prompt for both experiments was:
Read the shopping list below. Try to project yourself into the situation as far as possible until you can more or less characterize the woman who bought the groceries. Then write a brief description of her personality and character. Wherever possible indicate what factors influenced your judgement.

Every shopping list had the following six items:

```
Pound and a half of hamburger
2 loaves Wonder Bread
bunch of carrots
1 can Rumford's Baking Powder
2 cans Del Monte peaches
5 lbs potatoes
```

The first group was given the above list plus the item 1 lb Maxwell House Coffee (Drip Ground). The second group was given the above list plus the item Nescafe Instant Coffee

- Woodside, A. G. A shopping list experiment of beer brand images. J. Appl. Psychol., 1972, 56, 512 - 513.

Woodside uses a list experiment to ascertain people's perceptions of different brands of beer. The prompt for both experiments was:
Read the shopping list below. Then try to project yourself into the situation as far as possible until you can more or less describe the student who purchased the groceries for a small informal party. Then write a brief description of his personality and character. Whenever possible try to indicate what influenced your judgement. THis is a test to see how well you can size up an individual's personality on the basis of very little information.

Every shopping list had the following six items:
5 lbs hamburger
3 packages Sunbeam hamburger buns
3 large packages of potato chips
1 large onion dip
1 jar Del Monte dill pickles
10 oz. medium sharp cheese
The control group was given the above list. One treatment group was given the above list plus the item 2 cases Pabst Blue Ribbon beer. Another treatment group was given the above list plus the item 2 cases Brand X beer

## 4 Sensitive Behavior

### 4.1 Sexual Behavior

- LaBrie, J. W. and Earleywine, M. (2000). Sexual risk behaviors and alcohol: Higher base rates revealed using the unmatched-count technique. Journal of Sex Research 37, 4, 321 - 326.

This experiment uses a baseline similar to that in Dalton et al (1994), above. Respondents were given the following lists. Control groups received the lists without the items marked (s); treatment groups received all items in each list:

```
I have been to Spain
I would consider myself to be a sports fan.
I have a brother.
I have more than one sister
I've had sex without a condom (s)
I read the book, "The Pelican Brief."
I type reasonably well
I own at least one cordless phone
I own one or more handguns
I have one or more cats
I've consumed alcohol until I was intoxicated (s)
I know what a "balk is in baseball.
I read the local newspaper almost daily.
I read USA Today several times a week.
I usually choose "sugar-free" soft drinks.
I don't smoke cigarettes.
I've had sex after drinking (s)
I have more than two children.
I take vitamins almost every day
I read the book, "The Prince"
There's a shotgun in my house
I've had sexual intercourse (s)
I've lived in at least three different states
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I've lived outside the US
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I have been to Ireland
My shoe size is over 7
I went to a private high school
I often watch television late at night
I've had sex without a condom after consuming alcohol (s)
I like the editorial section of the newspaper

- Walsh, Jeffrey A. and Jeremy Braithwaite. Self-Reported Alcohol Consumption and Sexual Behavior in Males and Females: Using the Unmatched-Count Technique to Examine Reporting Practices of Socially Sensitive Subjects in a Sample of University Students. Journal of Alcohol and Drug Education, 52, 2, 49-74.

Respondents were given the following prompt:
How many of the statements are TRUE:
The control group was given the following lists without the sensitive items marked (s). The treatment group was given each list with all items:

```
Set A
I have more than one tattoo.
I follow a religion.
I own a car.
I have felt pressured to have sexual intercourse while under the influence
of alcohol.(s)
Set B
I have read "Grapes of Wrath."
I went to a public high school.
I watch t.v. game shows.
I have had sexual intercourse without a condom being used while under
the influence of alcohol. (s)
Set C
I like living in the United States.
I often eat dinner after 7 pm.
```

I never drink soda.
I have used coercion or force on someone to have sexual intercourse while $I$ was under the influence of alcohol. (s)

- Droitcour, J., Caspar, R. A., Hubbard, M. L., and Ezzati, T. M. (1991). Measurement Errors in Surveys (eds. P. P. Biemer, R. M. Groves, L. E. Lyberg, N. A. Mathiowetz, and S. Sudman), chap. The Item Count Technique as a Method of Indirect Questioning: A Review of Its Development and a Case Study Application, 185210. John Wiley and Sons, New York.

This paper compared the ability of direct questioning and the item-count technique to induce individuals to report HIV risk behavior . For their list experiment, Droitcour et al provided the control group with a list of non-sensitive items, such as I have bought a new car, I have traveled to England, I have gotten a speeding ticket and I have visited a shopping mall. The treatment groups received lists with sensitive items that asked about two types of HIV risk behaviors:

1) IV drug use, and
2) receptive anal sex.

### 4.2 Illegal or Socially Unacceptable Behavior

- Biemer P.P., Jordan, B.K., Hubbard, M. and Wright D. (2005) Evaluating and Improving methods used in the national survey on drug use and Health (eds. J Kennet and J. Gfroerer), chap. A Test of the Item Count Methodology for Estimating Cocaine Use Prevalence, 149-174. Rockville.

Authors estimate the frequency of cocaine use using a list experiment. The item Used cocaine, in any form, one of more times was added to each of the following lists:
Ran away form home and slept on the street; gained or lost more than 50 pounds; were seriously injured in a fight; used steroids to become more muscular
drove a car more than 100 miles per hours; gained or lost more than 50 pounds; were injured when you tried to stop a fight or an assault; used steroids to become more muscular

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crossed railroad tracks when a train was coming and almost got hit
by the train; used laxatives or vomited on purpose in order to keep
your weight down; hacked into a government computer system; was careless
and set a large or serious fire with a cigarette or match
crossed railroad tracks when a train was coming and almost got hit
by the train; used laxatives or vomited on purpose in order to keep
your weight down; passed another vehicle when you knew it was not
safe to pass; was careless and set a large or serious fire with a
cigarette or match
```

This question wording also appears in Biemer, Paul and Gordon Brown. 2005. "Model-based Estimation of Drug Use Prevalence Using Item Count Data." Journal of Official Statistics 21(2), 287-308.

- Dalton, Dan R., James C. Wimbush, and Catherine M. Daily. 1994. Using the Unmatched Count Technique (UCT) to Estimate Base Rates for Sensitive Behavior. Personnel Psychology 47: 817-28.

This paper compared the use of direct questioning and a list experiment to measure the frequency of certain behaviors among auctioneers from the US Midwest. The idea was to show that the item-count technique, when compared to a direct survey, would lead to more honest reporting of illicit behavior but would not affect the reporting rates for legal behavior. For the list experiment, auctioneers were split into two groups, with each group serving as the control group for the other. One group would receive some of the following lists without items marked (s) or (c); the other would receive the same lists with these items. The items of interest are referred to as:
"Control" items - those behaviors that are legal and marked by (c), and "Sensitive" items, which are illegal in auctioneering, marked by (s).

I have been to Spain
I would consider myself to be a sports fan.
I have a brother.
I have engaged in "self-dealing" in the auctioneer business. (s)
I have more than one sister
I have read the book, "The Pelican Brief."

I read the local newspaper almost every day.
I read the "USA Today" at least several times a week.
When I have a soft drink, I usually choose a "sugar-free" brand.
I do not currently smoke cigarettes.
I have more than two children.
I have used "buyer's premiums" in the auctioneer business. (c)
I know the name of the governor of Florida.
I have flown in a helicopter
I have serve in some branch of the US military
I normally eat dinner sometime after 7:00pm
I have "misrepresented experience" in the auctioneer business (s)
I have owned more than 6 cars so far in my lifetime.
I subscribe to three or more magazines
I speak more than one language reasonably well
I have been to the Bahamas
I have "misused the absolute" in the auctioneer business. (s)
I know what a "gigabyte" is
I could name all the teams in the Atlantic division of the National
Basketball Association.
I would say that I can type reasonably well
There is at least one cordless phone in the house/apartment where
I currently live.
I own one or more handguns
I currently have one or more cats
I have failed to "disclose a material fact" in the auctioneer business (s)

I know what a "balk" is in baseball.
I could name both US senators from the state in which I currently live
I know the name of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court
I normally wear a wristwatch
I eat dinner out at least once a week
I see one or more movies a month in theaters
I usually use both "audio and video" in the auctioneer business (c)

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I could tell you what time "22:00" is.
I have used a "phantom bid" in the auctioneer business (s)
I could tell you the name of the head football coach of the Dallas
Cowboys
I do not normally eat breakfast
I could tell you what a "canonical correlation" is
If I were to get a pet (or another pet), I wold prefer a cat to a
dog
I usually take a vitamin supplement almost every day
I have in engaged in "conspiracy nondisclosure" in the auctioneer
business (s)
I have read the book, "The Prince"
There is a shotgun in the house/apartment where I currently live
I have lived in three or more states
I have lived in a country other than the US
- Ahart, Allison M. and Paul R Sackett. A New Method of Examining Relationships between Individual Difference Measures and Sensitive Behavior Criteria: Evaluating the Unmatched Count Technique. Organizational Research Methods, 7, 1, 101 - 114
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Here, the control group received lists with non-sensitive items. Authors include I have a brother and I normally wear a wristwatch as examples. Each member of the treatment group received a list with these non-sensitive items plus one of the following sensitive items:

I have stolen more than $\$ 5$ from a past employer
In the past, I have called in sick when I wasn't actually ill
I have taken merchandise or supplies worth more than $\$ 5$ from a past employer
I have seen a fellow employee steal more than $\$ 5$ from a past employer I've done slow, sloppy work on purpose.

- Wimbush, J. C. and Dalton, D. R. (1997). Base rate for employee theft: Convergence of multiple methods. Journal of Applied Psychology 82, 5, 756-763.

This experiment was designed to measure the incidence of employee theft. The
control group was given each of the following lists without the sensitive items marked (s). The treatment group was given all items on each list:

I take a vitamin supplement almost every day
I have read the book, "The Prince"
I am/was involved in the theft from my employer of cash, supplies, or merchandise worth from $\$ 5.00$-- $\$ 9.99$ per month. (s)
There is a shotgun in the house/apartment where I currently live I have lived in three or more states
I have lived in a country other than the US
I have been to Spain
I would consider myself to be a sports fan.
I have a brother.
I am/was involved in the theft from my employer of cash, supplies, or merchandise worth from $\$ 10$-- $\$ 24.99$ per month. (s)
I have more than one sister
I have read the book, "The Pelican Brief."
I would say that I can type reasonably well
There is at least one cordless phone in the house/apartment where I currently live.
I own one or more handguns
I currently have one or more cats
I am/was involved in the theft from my employer of cash, supplies, or merchandise worth from $\$ 25$-- $\$ 49.99$ per month. (s)
I know what a "balk" is in baseball.
I read the local newspaper almost every day.
I read the "USA Today" at least several times a week.
When I have a soft drink, I usually choose a "sugar-free" brand.
I do not currently smoke cigarettes.
I have more than two children.
I am/was involved in the theft from my employer of cash, supplies, or merchandise worth more than $\$ 50.00$ per month. (s)

- Coutts, E. and Jann, B. (2011). Sensitive questions in online surveys: Experimental results for the randomized response technique (RRT) and the unmatched count technique (UCT). Sociological Methods and Research 40, 1, 169-193.
Respondents were asked to perform one of six randomized tasks whose outcomes would dictate whether they should respond truthfully or just with "yes" to different sensitive items.
The items were:

1. Have you ever received too much change and knowingly kept it? (Keeping too much change)
2. Have you ever knowingly used public transportation without buying a ticket?
(Freeriding)
3. Have you ever deliberately taken an article from a store without paying for it?
(Shoplifting)
4. Have you used marijuana in the past month?
(Marijuana use)
5. Have you ever driven a car although your blood alcohol was almost certainly over the legal limit?
(Driving under influence, DUI)
6. Have you ever cheated on your partner?
(Infidelity)

The tasks were:

1. Manual coin toss: Respondents were instructed to get a coin, toss the coin six times, and note the results of those tosses (heads or tails) one after the other on a sheet of paper. After they had done so, a new screen appeared with the rules for answering the six sensitive questions (answer the first question honestly if the first result is heads; simply answer with yes if the result is tails; etc.) and with a detailed example. The sensitive questions followed on the same page. The basic rule (Depending of the result of your nth coin toss, please answer the question either . . . , with n as the question number) was again displayed below each question.
2. Electronic coin toss: Respondents were instructed to press a

Toss Coin button that appeared next to each question and answer accordingly (answer honestly if the toss results in heads, simply answer yes if tails are tossed). Clicking on the button next to a question displayed the result of the toss (heads or tails) and the relevant instruction (Answer the question honestly or Simply answer with yes). The buttons were programmed in such a way that the respondents could press them as many times as they liked to convince themselves that random results were being generated. 2 Results of a previous study employing an electronic coin toss indicate that many respondents prefer it to a manual one (Lensvelt- Mulders et al. 2006).
3. Banknote serial numbers: Respondents were instructed to get two Euro bills and write the last three digits of their serial numbers one after the other on a sheet of paper. Afterward, a new screen appeared with the rules for answering the six questions as a function of the parity of the numbers (answer the first question honestly if the first number in the list is even; simply answer with yes if the number is odd; etc.) and a detailed example. As in (1), the sensitive questions followed on the same page and the rules were repeated for each of these questions.
4. Telephone numbers: The same as (3), except that the respondents were instructed to use the last three digits of two telephone numbers of their choice.
5. Banknote serial numbers, with the option to use telephone numbers instead: Similar to (3), but with the instruction to use telephone numbers if no banknotes were available.

- Tsuchiya, T., Hirai, Y., and Ono, S. (2007). A study of the properties of the item count technique. Public Opinon Quarterly 71, 2, 253 - 272.

Tsuchiya et al conduct multiple list experiments. The prompt was:
Among the responses provided for the items listed in the questionnaire, please select the response that is most applicable to you. Please provide honest answers. First, how many of the following items apply
to you?

First, the "key" item "Have made a blood donation." was added to each of the following "nonkey sets":

Consume some milk products every day; Know a person with the same name as you

Have sold something at a flea market; Have been stung by a bee; Have admonished others children

Have ridden in an ambulance; Have accepted a request from a street signature campaign; Have dropped your cell-phone into a toilet bowl; Have your own passometer

Have witnessed the first sunrise of the new year; Have suffered from a hangover; Brush your teeth more than twice a day; Wear (have worn) contact lenses; Have engaged in community-based volunteer activity

Second, the "key" item "Have shoplifted." was added to each of the following "nonkey sets":

Have abstained from voting; Have brought home flowers from a public garden

Have gotten athletes foot; Have littered in a train; Have returned unwanted goods after intentionally damaging them

Have written a letter or called to complain about a store or company; Have stolen an umbrella; Have intentionally arrived late for an appointment; Have cut in line.

Have received complaints from the neighbors regarding noise from your house; Have picked up a newspaper or magazine left on the train; Have failed to return a borrowed item; Have made a silent phone call; Have
broken an item in a store

