



**CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR
2003 PROJECT SUMMARY**

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Project Title Ignorance Is Bliss: Fact or Oxymoron?	
Objectives/Goals This project set out to quantify the knowledge of a sample of middle and high school students in three areas: sports, entertainment, and politics.	
Abstract Methods/Materials A questionnaire, with ten questions for each category, was distributed to boys and girls from grades 8, 10, and 12. For each gender-grade group, 29-50 students volunteered to participate in the survey. The data were analyzed with Excel and Sigma Plot.	
Results There was a statistically significant gender difference in the sports category. Males outscored females in all grades. For entertainment, there was no difference between male and female students, except for eight grade, where females performed better. For the politics category, there was no significant difference between male and females students in all three grades. Overall, student performance was best in entertainment, followed by sports, and politics.	
Conclusions/Discussion Most of those who were surveyed appear to be reasonably well informed about entertainment and sports, but are poorly informed about politics. This raises concern because teenagers and young adults may have a very poor understanding of events that can affect them in significant ways (e.g., taxes, new laws, wars). A poor understanding of politics may be a contributing factor to the poor turnout in local, state, and general elections.	
Summary Statement My project assesses the relative knowledge of politics, sports, and entertainment in middle and high school students.	
Help Received Prof. David Provost, Mr. Matt Karsevar, and my father advised on survey and analysis methods. My mother reviewed my writing and helped assemble my board.	