

Supplemental Materials

The full experimental design for study 1 was a 2 (language difficulty: Easy vs. Difficult) by 2 (Partisan cue manipulation: No partisan cues (NPC) vs. Partisan cues (PC)) by 3 (Example: No example presented (NE) vs. Example presented (E) vs. No example-length control (NELC)) between-subjects design. Thus, the full design included 12 experimental conditions. For the purposes of this experiment, the partisan cue conditions and the example conditions were collapsed into the language conditions (easy vs. difficult). Thus, the two language conditions included an equal mix of partisan cues and examples – balancing this design. The descriptive statistics presented in the manuscript represent aggregated values and Table 1 reports only the Easy/NPC/NELC, and the Difficult/NPC/NELC question wording. The full list of the items used for each of the twelve conditions, along with Flesch Reading Ease values for each question, are reported here in Tables S1 (NPC conditions) and S2 (PC conditions).

Condition	Easy/Difficult	No Partisan Cues/ Partisan Cues	No Example/ Example/ No Example–Length Control	<i>n</i>	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Reading Ease	
							<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1	Easy	NPC	NELC	84	8.25%	8.25%	65.29	9.02
2	Difficult	NPC	NELC	89	8.74%	16.99%	23.12	12.06
3	Easy	NPC	NE	81	7.96%	24.95%	64.19	11.86
4	Difficult	NPC	NE	84	8.25%	33.20%	17.39	20.92
5	Easy	NPC	E	86	8.45%	41.65%	64.97	10.6
6	Difficult	NPC	E	88	8.64%	50.29%	29.22	14.81
7	Easy	PC	NELC	85	8.35%	58.64%	55.09	9.75
8	Difficult	PC	NELC	73	7.17%	65.82%	18.46	12.91
9	Easy	PC	NE	93	9.14%	74.95%	52.96	12.90
10	Difficult	PC	NE	83	8.15%	83.10%	14.04	18.73
11	Easy	PC	E	85	8.35%	91.45%	54.57	10.76
12	Difficult	PC	E	87	8.55%	100.00%	23.59	14.29

The decision to collapse conditions was made for empirical, practical, and theoretical reasons. Empirically, including the partisan manipulation and/or the example manipulation did not substantively change results. To evidence this assertion, a 2x2x3 ANOVA assessing variance in metacognitive experiences, $F(11, 1006) = 6.42, p < .001, \eta^2 = .07$, revealed that language difficulty was the only significant main effect, $F(1, 1006) = 60.70, p < .001, \eta^2 = .06$. No other main effects nor interaction effects were significant (they all combined to explain 1% of the variance). Given that all hypothesis tests were predicated on changes to metacognitive experiences, these results statistically justify the decision to collapse conditions. In addition to statistical considerations, practically the decision to collapse these conditions was made to preserve manuscript space. Originally, our manipulations intended to tease out three potential strategies (language difficulty, partisan cues, examples) to induce variance in metacognitive experiences. Because only language difficulty mattered, devoting manuscript space to these other possibilities, absent a strong theoretical justification, seemed tangential to the purpose of this work.

Note regarding Tables S1 and S2. * Indicates items that were reverse-coded for testing Hypothesis 4. Condition numbers are indicated in brackets. Response options for all items include: “Strongly disagree” (1), “Disagree” (2), “Somewhat disagree” (3), “Neither agree nor disagree” (4), “Somewhat agree” (5), “Agree” (6), and “Strongly agree” (7). Additionally, a “Don’t know” response option was added, but responses were analyzed separately for Hypothesis 3.

Table S1
Political Attitudes Scale – No Partisan Cues Conditions (#1-6)

Topic: Economy		Topic: Education		Topic: Infrastructure	
No Example Easy (length control) [1]	No Example Difficult (length control) [2]	No Example Easy (length control) [1]	No Example Difficult (length control) [2]	No Example Easy (length control) [1]	No Example Difficult (length control) [2]
* U.S. bank regulators should raise interest rates to try to keep the prices of everyday items about the same. 67.33	* The U.S. Federal Reserve Bank should increase interest rates in an effort to inhibit price inflation on conventional merchandise. 31.71	* I support college scholarships that make it easier for students of certain backgrounds to attend school. 53.12	* I support collegiate scholarships earmarked towards making a university education accessible for students of certain backgrounds. 5.53	The U.S. government should be willing to provide money in an effort to support public projects. 58.41	The federal government should be willing to allocate resources in an effort to subsidize public projects. 37.26
* The struggling world market would be better off if more leaders agreed to trade goods fairly with others. 75.77	* The international state of economic stagnation could be counteracted if more leaders sign equitable commerce agreements with others. 19.37	U.S. public school teachers should be paid based on their students' performance, not how long they've worked at the school. 80.78	U.S. public educators should be remunerated based upon metrics of pupils' performance, rather than as a function of their tenure. 34.26	I would support some sort of government program that tries to increase the number of jobs within the area of construction. 60.63	I would support some sort of government initiative aimed at facilitating a higher level of employment within the domain of infrastructure. 20.35
Lawmakers help new businesses by reducing the number of rules and policies that are needed to do business. 56.97	Legislators can promote new business ventures by reducing the amount of corporate parameters and regulations required to operate. 14.67	State colleges should not use standardized test scores when they decide which students should be admitted. 68.98	Admissions committees at publicly funded universities should not use standardized test scores for their admissions decisions. 26.68	The transportation system in the U.S. is currently in need of much repair. 63.49	The infrastructure system within the U.S. is currently in a state of dilapidation. 37.46
Company presidents create jobs and they should not be asked to pay a lot of money in taxes. 71.07	Chief Executive Officers produce employment opportunities for people and should not be consigned to a higher tax bracket. 28.77	Classes in the creative arts are not important to a well rounded education. 50.47	Curricula focusing on creative arts are inessential to a holistic approach to instruction. 11.42	* Our main energy sources use technology that is out of date. 72.62	* Our primary energy system utilizes technologies that can be considered antiquated. 3.40
I believe that a smart economic plan is to give less U.S. government money to funding public assistance programs. 58.42	I believe that a sound fiscal strategy is to appropriate less federal revenue towards funding of public assistance programs. 31.71	* School choice programs that allow students to go to any school they want are a bad way to address the problems seen in public schools. 76.56	* School voucher programs that entitle students to attend the institution of their choosing are an ineffective way to address the problems inherent in public schools. 35.95	* It is the job of local government to make sure that all buildings located in the community are up to code. 64.66	* It is the responsibility of local municipalities to ensure that all construction within the district adheres to safety standards and regulations. 8.26
No Example Easy [3]	No Example Difficult [4]	No Example Easy [3]	No Example Difficult [4]	No Example Easy [3]	No Example Difficult [4]
* U.S. bank regulators should raise interest rates to keep prices of everyday items the same. 61.89	* The Federal Reserve Bank should increase interest rates to inhibit price inflation for conventional merchandise. 22.41	* I support college scholarships that make it easier for students of certain backgrounds to attend school. 53.12	* I support collegiate scholarships earmarked towards making a university education accessible for students of certain backgrounds. 5.53	The government should provide money in order to fund public projects. 57.23	The federal government should allocate monetary resources towards subsidizing public projects. -4.29
* World markets are better off if leaders agreed to trade goods fairly with others. 77.81	* Global economic stagnation could be counteracted if leaders signed equitable commerce agreements regarding products. 5.30	U.S. public school teachers should be paid based on students' performance, not how long they've worked at the school. 80.79	U.S. public educators should be remunerated based upon their pupils' performance, rather than as a function of their tenure. 36.16	I would support a government program that creates more jobs in the area of construction. 61.89	I would support a government initiative that facilitates more employment in the area of infrastructure. 16.77
Lawmakers help new businesses by reducing the number of rules and policies. 53.66	Legislators can promote new business ventures by condensing corporate parameters and regulations. -2.75	State colleges should not use test scores when deciding which students should be admitted. 71.77	Admissions committees at publicly funded universities should not use test scores in admissions decisions. 29.47	The U.S. transportation system needs to be repaired. 61.24	U.S. infrastructure is in a state of dilapidation. 40.09
Company presidents create jobs and should not have to pay more money in taxes. 65.73	CEO's produce employment opportunities and should not be consigned to a higher tax bracket. 50.61	Classes in the creative arts are not important to a well rounded education. 50.47	Curricula focusing on creative arts are inessential to a holistic approach to instruction. 11.42	* Our energy sources use old technology. 45.65	* Our energy system utilizes antiquated technologies. -24.85
A smart economic plan is to give less government money to public assistance programs. 59.68	A sound fiscal strategy is to appropriate less federal revenue towards public assistance programs. 23.43	* School choice programs that allow students to go to any school are a bad way to address the problems in public schools. 76.83	* School voucher programs that entitle students to attend any school are an ineffective way to address the problems inherent in public schools. 46.07	* It is the job of local government to make sure that all buildings are up to code. 85.07	* It is the responsibility of municipalities to ensure that all construction adheres to safety standards and regulations. 5.45
Example Easy [5]	Example Difficult [6]	Example Easy [5]	Example Difficult [6]	Example Easy [5]	Example Difficult [6]
* U.S. bank regulators should raise interest rates to keep prices of everyday things like food and clothing the same. 62.88	* The Federal Reserve Bank should increase interest rates to inhibit price inflation on conventional merchandise like food and clothing. 31.71	* I support college scholarships that make it easier for poor and minority students to attend school. 47.83	* I support collegiate scholarships earmarked towards making a university education accessible for poor and minority students. 0.25	The government should provide money in order to fund public projects such as roads and bridges. 68.98	The federal government should allocate monetary resources towards subsidizing public projects such as roads and bridges. 26.68
* World markets are better off if leaders agreed to trade goods like cars and computers fairly with others. 75.77	* Global economic stagnation could be counteracted if leaders signed equitable commerce agreements regarding products like cars and computers. 19.37	U.S. public school teachers should be paid based on students' test scores, not how long they've worked at the school. 88.83	U.S. public educators should be remunerated based upon their pupils' test scores, rather than as a function of their tenure. 46.95	I would support a government program that creates more jobs in the area of construction to help build roads and bridges. 68.69	I would support a government initiative that facilitates more employment in the area of infrastructure to help build roads and bridges. 36.46
Lawmakers help new businesses by reducing the number of rules and policies on topics such as minimum wage. 52.27	Legislators can promote new business ventures by reducing corporate parameters and regulations about topics such as minimum wage. 14.67	State colleges should not use SAT or ACT scores when deciding which students should be admitted. 74.27	Admissions committees at publicly funded universities should not use SAT or ACT scores in admissions decisions. 37.26	The U.S. transportation system, such as highways and pipelines, need to be repaired. 63.49	U.S. infrastructure, such as highways and pipelines, are in a state of dilapidation. 50.47
Company presidents create jobs and should not have to pay more money in taxes than the average person. 56.97	CEO's produce employment opportunities and should not be consigned to a higher tax bracket than the average person. 45.07	Classes like music and art are not important to a well rounded education. 56.98	Curricula such as music and art are inessential to holistic approaches to instruction. 24.44	* Our energy sources use old technology such as coal and oil. 72.62	* Our energy system utilizes antiquated technologies such as coal and oil. 34.16
A smart economic plan is to give less government money to public assistance programs such as foodstamps and Medicare. 53.97	A sound fiscal strategy is to appropriate less federal revenue towards public assistance programs such as foodstamps and Medicare. 27.26	* School choice programs that allow students to go to either private or magnet schools are a bad way to address the problems in public schools. 66.40	* School voucher programs that entitle students to attend either private or magnet schools are an ineffective way to address the problems inherent in public schools. 39.33	* It is the job of local government to make sure that all buildings, including offices and businesses, are up to code. 64.66	* It is the responsibility of municipalities to ensure that all construction, including offices and businesses, adhere to safety standards and regulations. 4.23

Table S2
Political Attitudes Scale – Partisan Cues Conditions (#7-12)

Topic: Economy			Topic: Education			Topic: Infrastructure					
No Example Easy (length control) [7]	No Example Difficult (length control) [8]		No Example Easy (length control) [7]	No Example Difficult (length control) [8]		No Example Easy (length control) [7]	No Example Difficult (length control) [8]				
* Congressman Newman (D) believes that U.S. bank regulators should raise interest rates to try to keep the prices of everyday items about the same.	55.58	* Congressman Newman (D) believes that the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank should increase interest rates in an effort to inhibit price inflation on conventional merchandise.	27.38	* Senator Mathews (D) supports college scholarships that make it easier for students of certain backgrounds to attend school.	42.87	* Senator Mathews (D) supports collegiate scholarships earmarked towards making a university education accessible for students of certain backgrounds.	0.56	Republicans argue that the U.S. government should be willing to provide money in an effort to support public projects.	49.52	Republicans argue that the federal government should be willing to allocate resources in an effort to subsidize public projects.	31.71
* Democrats argue that the struggling world market would be better off if more leaders agreed to trade goods fairly with others.	64.66	* Democrats argue that the international state of economic stagnation could be counteracted if more leaders sign equitable commerce agreements with others.	16.32	Congressman Bowden (R) believes that U.S. public school teachers should be paid based on their students' performance, not how long they've worked at the school.	66.56	Congressman Bowden (R) believes that U.S. public educators should be remunerated based upon metrics of pupils' performance, rather than as a function of their tenure.	29.18	Governor Jacobson (R) supports some sort of government program that tries to increase the number of jobs within the area of construction.	42.22	Governor Jacobson (R) supports some sort of government initiative aimed at facilitating a higher level of employment within the domain of infrastructure.	3.77
Lawmakers help new businesses by reducing the number of rules and policies that are needed to do business.	56.97	Legislators can promote new business ventures by reducing the amount of corporate parameters and regulations required to operate.	14.67	State colleges should not use standardized test scores when they decide which students should be admitted.	68.98	Admissions committees at publicly funded universities should not use standardized test scores for their admissions decisions.	26.68	The transportation system in the U.S. is currently in need of much repair.	63.49	The infrastructure system within the U.S. is currently in a state of dilapidation.	37.46
Republicans argue that company presidents create jobs and they should not be asked to pay a lot of money in taxes.	56.61	Republicans argue that Chief Executive Officers produce employment opportunities for people and should not be consigned to a higher tax bracket.	20.35	Republicans argue that classes in the creative arts are not important to a well rounded education.	37.26	Republicans argue that curricula focusing on creative arts are inessential to a holistic approach to instruction.	5.53	* Democrats argue that our main energy sources use technology that is out of date.	53.64	* Democrats argue that our primary energy system utilizes technologies that can be considered antiquated.	-0.75
Senator Alden (R) believes that a smart economic plan would be to give less U.S. government money to the funding public assistance programs.	51.07	Senator Alden (R) believes that a sound fiscal strategy would be to appropriate less federal revenue towards the funding of public assistance programs.	29.00	* Democrats argue that school choice programs that allow students to go to any school they want are a bad way to address the problems seen in public schools.	66.62	* Democrats argue that school voucher programs that entitle students to attend the institution of their choosing are an ineffective way to address the problems inherent in public schools.	30.37	* Governor Downing (D) believes that it is the job of local government to make sure that all buildings located in the community are up to code.	50.29	* Governor Downing (D) believes that it is the responsibility of local municipalities to ensure that all construction within the district adheres to safety standards and regulations.	4.74
No Example Easy [9]	No Example Difficult [10]		No Example Easy [9]	No Example Difficult [10]		No Example Easy [9]	No Example Difficult [10]				
* Congressman Newman (D) believes that U.S. bank regulators should raise interest rates to keep prices of everyday items the same.	51.18	* Congressman Newman (D) believes that the Federal Reserve Bank should increase interest rates to inhibit price inflation for conventional merchandise.	21.57	* Senator Mathews (D) supports college scholarships that make it easier for students of certain backgrounds to attend school.	42.87	* Senator Mathews (D) supports collegiate scholarships earmarked towards making a university education accessible for students of certain backgrounds.	0.56	Republicans argue that the government should provide money in order to fund public projects.	47.60	Republicans argue that the federal government should allocate monetary resources towards subsidizing public projects.	-0.75
* Democrats argue that world markets are better off if leaders agreed to trade goods fairly with others.	65.17	* Democrats argue that Global economic stagnation could be counteracted if leaders signed equitable commerce agreements regarding products.	5.45	Congressman Bowden (R) believes that U.S. public school teachers should be paid based on students' performance, not how long they've worked at the school.	66.40	Congressman Bowden (R) believes that U.S. public educators should be remunerated based upon their pupils' performance, rather than as a function of their tenure.	30.90	Governor Jacobson (R) supports a government program that creates more jobs in the area of construction.	37.26	Governor Jacobson (R) supports a government initiative that facilitates more employment in the area of infrastructure.	-5.04
Lawmakers help new businesses by reducing the number of rules and policies.	53.66	Legislators can promote new business ventures by condensing corporate parameters and regulations.	-2.75	State colleges should not use test scores when deciding which students should be admitted.	71.77	Admissions committees at publicly funded universities should not use test scores in admissions decisions.	29.47	The U.S. transportation system needs to be repaired.	61.24	U.S. infrastructure is in a state of dilapidation.	40.09
Republicans argue that company presidents create jobs and should not have to pay more money in taxes.	50.24	Republicans argue that CEO's produce employment opportunities and should not be consigned to a higher tax bracket.	38.17	Republicans argue that classes in the creative arts are not important to a well rounded education.	37.26	Republicans argue that curricula focusing on creative arts are inessential to a holistic approach to instruction.	5.53	* Democrats argue that our energy sources use old technology.	28.50	* Democrats argue that our energy system utilizes antiquated technologies.	-18.50
Senator Alden (R) believes that a smart economic plan is to give less government money to public assistance programs.	49.52	Senator Alden (R) believes that a sound fiscal strategy is to appropriate less federal revenue towards public assistance programs.	22.80	* Democrats argue that school choice programs that allow students to go to any school are a bad way to address the problems in public schools.	66.40	* Democrats argue that school voucher programs that entitle students to attend any school are an ineffective way to address the problems inherent in public schools.	39.33	* Governor Downing (D) believes that it is the job of local government to make sure that all buildings are up to code.	65.30	* Governor Downing (D) believes that it is the responsibility of municipalities to ensure that all construction adheres to safety standards and regulations.	3.77
Example Easy [11]	Example Difficult [12]		Example Easy [11]	Example Difficult [12]		Example Easy [11]	Example Difficult [12]				
* Congressman Newman (D) believes that U.S. bank regulators should raise interest rates to keep prices of everyday things like food and clothing the same.	52.05	* Congressman Newman (D) believes that the Federal Reserve Bank should increase interest rates to inhibit price inflation on conventional merchandise like food and clothing.	27.38	* Senator Mathews (D) supports college scholarships that make it easier for poor and minority students to attend school.	38.17	* Senator Mathews (D) supports collegiate scholarships earmarked towards making a university education accessible for poor and minority students.	-4.13	Republicans argue that the government should provide money in order to fund public projects such as roads and bridges.	58.42	Republicans argue that the federal government should allocate monetary resources towards subsidizing public projects such as roads and bridges.	22.80
* Democrats argue that world markets are better off if leaders agreed to trade goods like cars and computers fairly with others.	64.66	* Democrats argue that global economic stagnation could be counteracted if leaders signed equitable commerce agreements regarding products like cars and computers.	16.32	Congressman Bowden (R) believes that U.S. public school teachers should be paid based on students' test scores, not how long they've worked at the school.	73.07	Congressman Bowden (R) believes that U.S. public educators should be remunerated based upon their pupils' test scores, rather than as a function of their tenure.	39.33	Governor Jacobson (R) supports a government program that creates more jobs in the area of construction to help build roads and bridges.	49.91	Governor Jacobson (R) supports a government initiative that facilitates more employment in the area of infrastructure to help build roads and bridges.	19.15
Lawmakers help new businesses by reducing the number of rules and policies on topics such as minimum wage.	52.27	Legislators can promote new business ventures by reducing corporate parameters and regulations about topics such as minimum wage.	14.67	State colleges should not use SAT or ACT scores when deciding which students should be admitted.	74.27	Admissions committees at publicly funded universities should not use SAT or ACT scores in admissions decisions.	37.26	The U.S. transportation system, such as highways and pipelines, need to be repaired.	63.49	U.S. infrastructure, such as highways and pipelines, are in a state of dilapidation.	50.47
Republicans argue that company presidents create jobs and should not have to pay more money in taxes than the average person.	44.52	Republicans argue that CEO's produce employment opportunities and should not be consigned to a higher tax bracket than the average person.	34.53	Republicans argue that classes like music and art are not important to a well rounded education.	42.55	Republicans argue that curricula such as music and art are inessential to holistic approaches to instruction.	16.11	* Democrats argue that our energy sources use old technology such as coal and oil.	53.64	* Democrats argue that our energy system utilizes antiquated technologies such as coal and oil.	23.43
Senator Alden (R) believes that a smart economic plan is to give less government money to public assistance programs like foodstamps and Medicare.	43.72	Senator Alden (R) believes that a sound fiscal strategy is to appropriate less federal revenue towards public assistance programs like foodstamps and Medicare.	21.65	* Democrats argue that school choice programs that allow students to go to either private or magnet schools are a bad way to address the problems in public schools.	57.56	* Democrats argue that school voucher programs that entitle students to attend either private or magnet schools are an ineffective way to address the problems inherent in public schools.	33.39	* Governor Downing (D) believes that it is the job of local government to make sure that all buildings, including offices and businesses, are up to code.	50.29	* Governor Downing (D) believes that it is the responsibility of municipalities to ensure that all construction, including offices and businesses, adhere to safety standards and regulations.	1.48

Table S3
Items for the Metacognitive Experiences, Interest, and Efficacy Scale

Metacognitive Experiences (Shulman & Sweitzer, 2018b)

1. Overall, I felt that the language used in these questions was difficult. [reverse-coded]
2. The information presented in these questions felt new to me. [reverse-coded]
3. It was easy for me to provide my opinions when answering these questions.

Political Interest Scale (Shulman & Sweitzer, 2018b)

1. I enjoy learning about politics.
2. I enjoy talking about politics with others.
3. I often seek out political information.
4. I find politics interesting.

Internal Political Efficacy Scale (Niemi, Craig, Mattei, 1991)

1. I feel that I could do as good a job in public office as most other people.
2. I consider myself to be well qualified to participate in politics.
3. I think I am better informed about politics and government than most people.
4. I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing the country.

Note. Responses options include: “Strongly disagree” (1), “Disagree” (2), “Somewhat disagree” (3), “Neither agree nor disagree” (4), “Somewhat agree” (5), “Agree” (6), and “Strongly agree” (7).

Additional Analysis 1

In addition to the mediation test of Hypothesis 3 in study 1, we sought to also test this hypothesis using an item-level design. Though the method presented in the manuscript is more consistent with the reporting of the other hypotheses and the experimental design, this additional analysis has the added benefit of providing an interpretable coefficient that corresponds with the Flesch Reading Ease scale. Another benefit of this analysis was that it could be consistently employed across all three datasets investigated in this paper.

In order to construct this new model for study 1, the data first had to be transformed. Responses to all 15 public opinion questions were converted to a single vector with a length of 15,270 (15 responses x 1,081 participants). These responses were then recoded into a dichotomous variable indicating whether an opinion (0) or a “Don’t know” (1) response was selected. Next, another vector of similar length was created by taking each subject’s assigned condition, extrapolating the 15 Flesch Reading Ease scores for the corresponding public opinion questions (see Tables S1 and S2), and listing out those scores for each of the 1,081 participants. Finally, we opted to cluster standard errors around the topic of the question being asked, since that was shown to affect reading ease in study 3. Because each of the 15 questions were crafted to be identical across-language conditions, 15 topics exist. We thus created the “topic” variable by repeating the numbers 1 through 15, 1,081 times to create a vector of length 15,270 and transforming this to a categorical variable.

To model these effects, we estimated a mixed-effects logit model by regressing “Don’t know” responses on reading ease, clustering standard errors around topic. The model was fit using maximum likelihood estimation. Ease was found to significantly predict “Don’t know” responses; $B = -0.013$, $SE = .002$, $z = -7.15$, $p < .001$. In other words, the log likelihood of selecting “Don’t know” decreases by 0.013 for each unit increase in Flesch Reading Ease. Considering this measure ranges from -24.85 to 88.83 in our experimental conditions, the effect is quite drastic at this scale¹. Figures 1 and 2 in the manuscript illustrate the relative probability of selecting “Don’t know” across values of Flesch Reading Ease.

¹ Although this estimate cannot be said to reflect this relationship outside of the bounds of the experimental conditions, it is worth noting that the range of Flesch Reading Ease scores found in real world public opinion surveys (see study 3 and Figure S1) is from -68.96 to 121.22.

Table S4
Question Examples from Polls Included in Study 3

Polling Firm	Question	Ease	Percentile*	
			Total Sample	Within Poll
Fairleigh Dickinson University	In your opinion, do you believe the country is moving in the right direction or is it on the wrong track?	76.75	78.95%	78.06%
Marquette University Law	Looking ahead, over the next year do you expect the economy to get better, get worse, or stay about the same?	84.81	88.18%	93.89%
Monmouth University	Have you seriously considered voting in the Democratic primary instead of the Republican Primary, or have you not really given this serious consideration?	3.26	1.93%	0.22%
Muhlenberg College	What is the first word that comes to mind when you think of Donald Trump?	95.73	94.04%	98.36%
Public Policy Institute of California	Next, how important to you is it that some of the cap-and-trade revenues are spent on projects to improve environmental conditions in lower-income and disadvantaged communities?	17.75	4.72%	6.67%
Public Policy Polling	If a candidate for office supported privatizing the VA health care system and making it more like a private for profit system, would that make you much more likely, somewhat more likely, somewhat less likely, or much less likely to vote for them in the next election?	38.53	17.90%	19.05%
Quinnipiac University	If your candidate loses in November, would you think that the outcome was legitimate or would you think that the election was rigged?	62.11	57.41%	45.05%
Siena College	When it comes to the issue of undocumented immigrants or illegal aliens in the U.S., are you more in favor of deporting those here illegally, or creating a pathway for those here illegally to become citizens?	40.52	19.65%	15.57%
Suffolk University/USA Today	Last week Great Britain voted to leave the EU which shocked many observers and the financial markets. Do you believe this vote was just an isolated referendum or do you believe it was a signal that there is anger and dissatisfaction in other countries, including the U.S.?	62.38	57.62%	69.26%
SurveyUSA	When a person is charged with a serious crime, should the federal government be able to obtain access to all of the information on the person's phone?	54.54	43.46%	31.12%

Note. *Percentile was included to indicate representativeness of the selected examples. See Figure S1 for the distribution of Flesch Reading Ease scores.

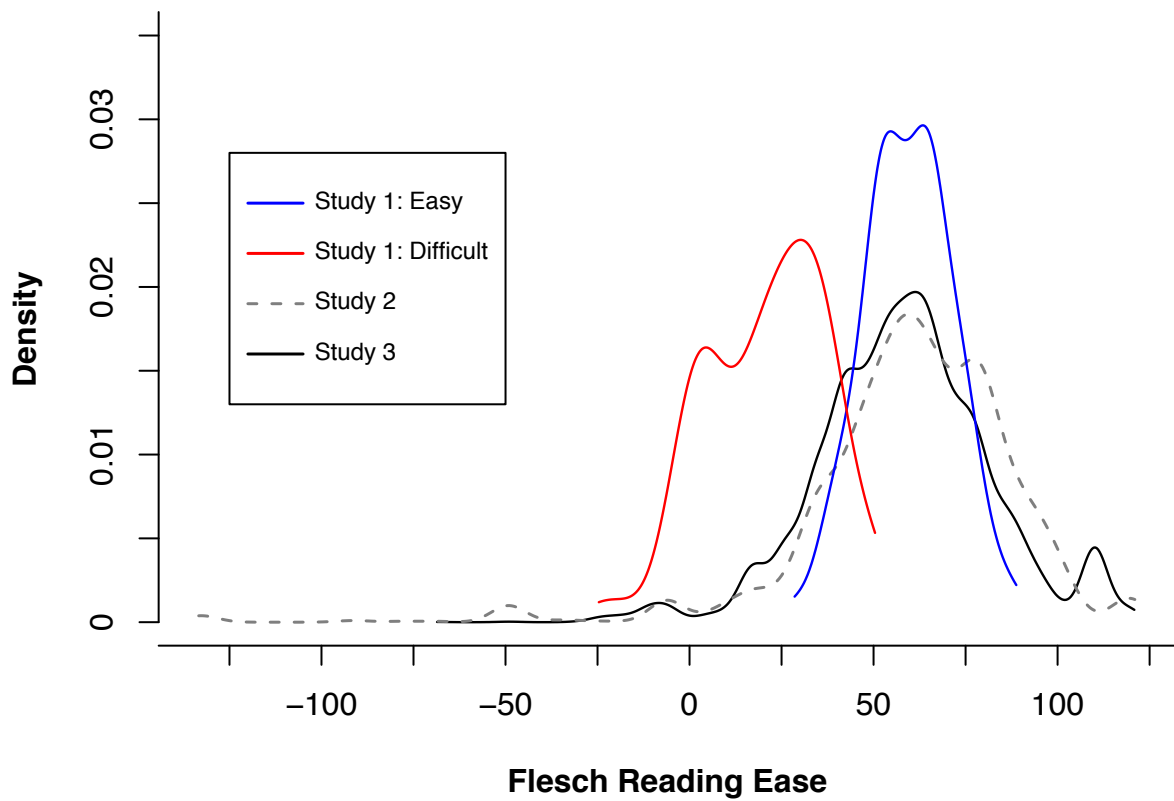


Figure S1. Kernel density of reading ease comparing studies 1, 2, and 3

Note. The blue and red lines represent the kernel density distributions of the Easy and Difficult conditions from study 1 (respectively; $n = 15$ each). The dashed gray line represents the kernel density distribution ($M = 59.89$, $SD = 29.61$) for all valid questions included from the Roper database in study 2 ($n = 1,817$). The solid black line represents the kernel density distribution ($M = 58.30$, $SD = 23.75$) for all valid questions included from the firms identified by FiveThirtyEight in study 3 ($n = 8,090$).

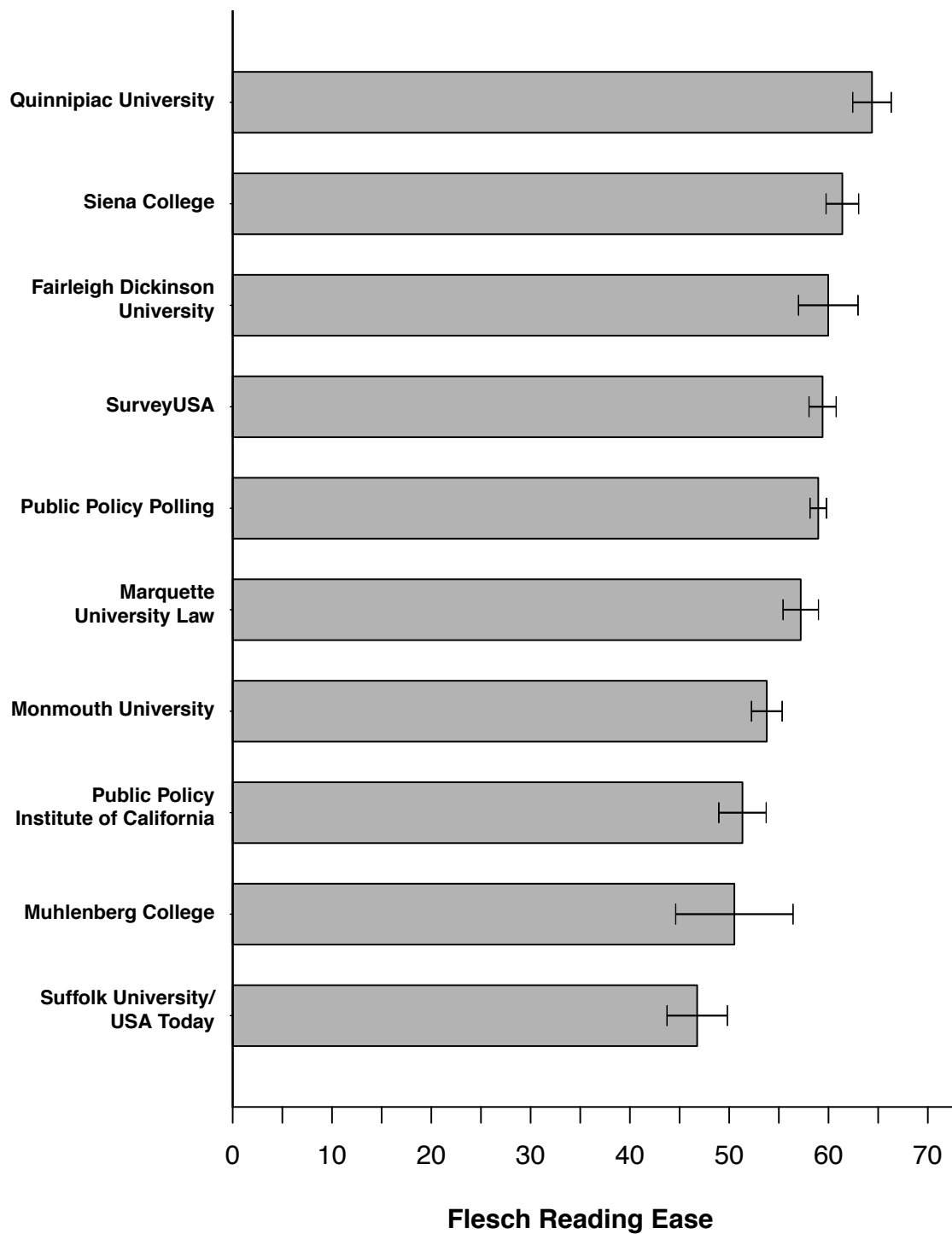


Figure S2. Reading ease by polling firm

Note. Estimates drawn from a logistic regression model predicting Flesch Reading Ease score by poll. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals of the estimates. The omnibus model results indicate significant differences between polling firms, $F(9, 8080) = 20.72, p < .001, R^2_{adj} = .02$.

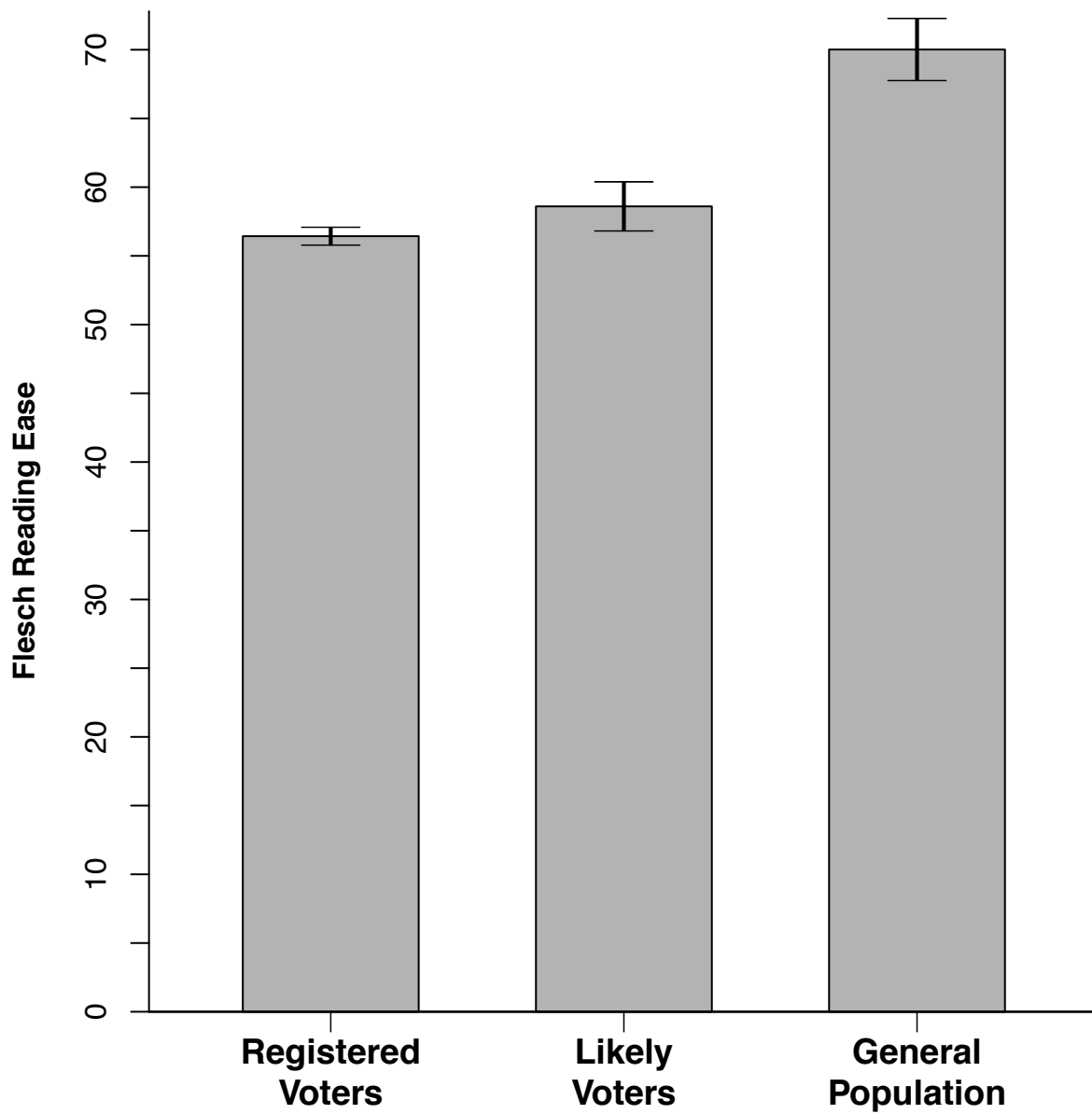


Figure S3. Reading ease by voter likelihood

Note. Estimates drawn from a logistic regression model predicting Flesch Reading Ease score by voter likelihood and poll. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals of the estimates. The omnibus model results indicate significant differences, $F(11, 8078) = 27.52, p < .001, R^2_{\text{adj}} = .04$.

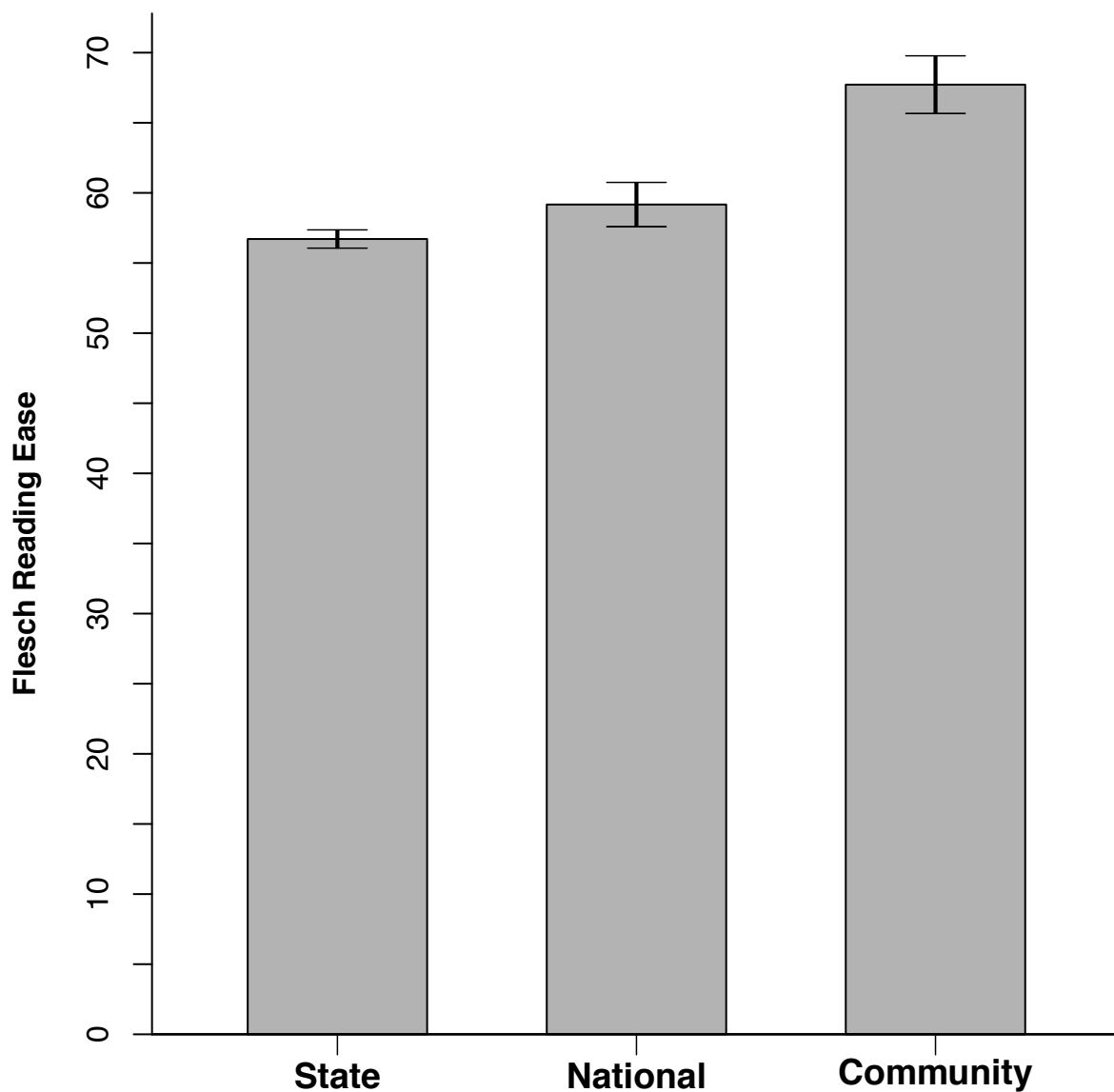


Figure S4. Reading ease by region

Note. Estimates drawn from a logistic regression model predicting Flesch Reading Ease score by geographic region and poll. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals of the estimates. The omnibus model results indicate significant differences between regions, $F(11, 8078) = 26.79, p < .001, R^2_{\text{adj}} = .03$.

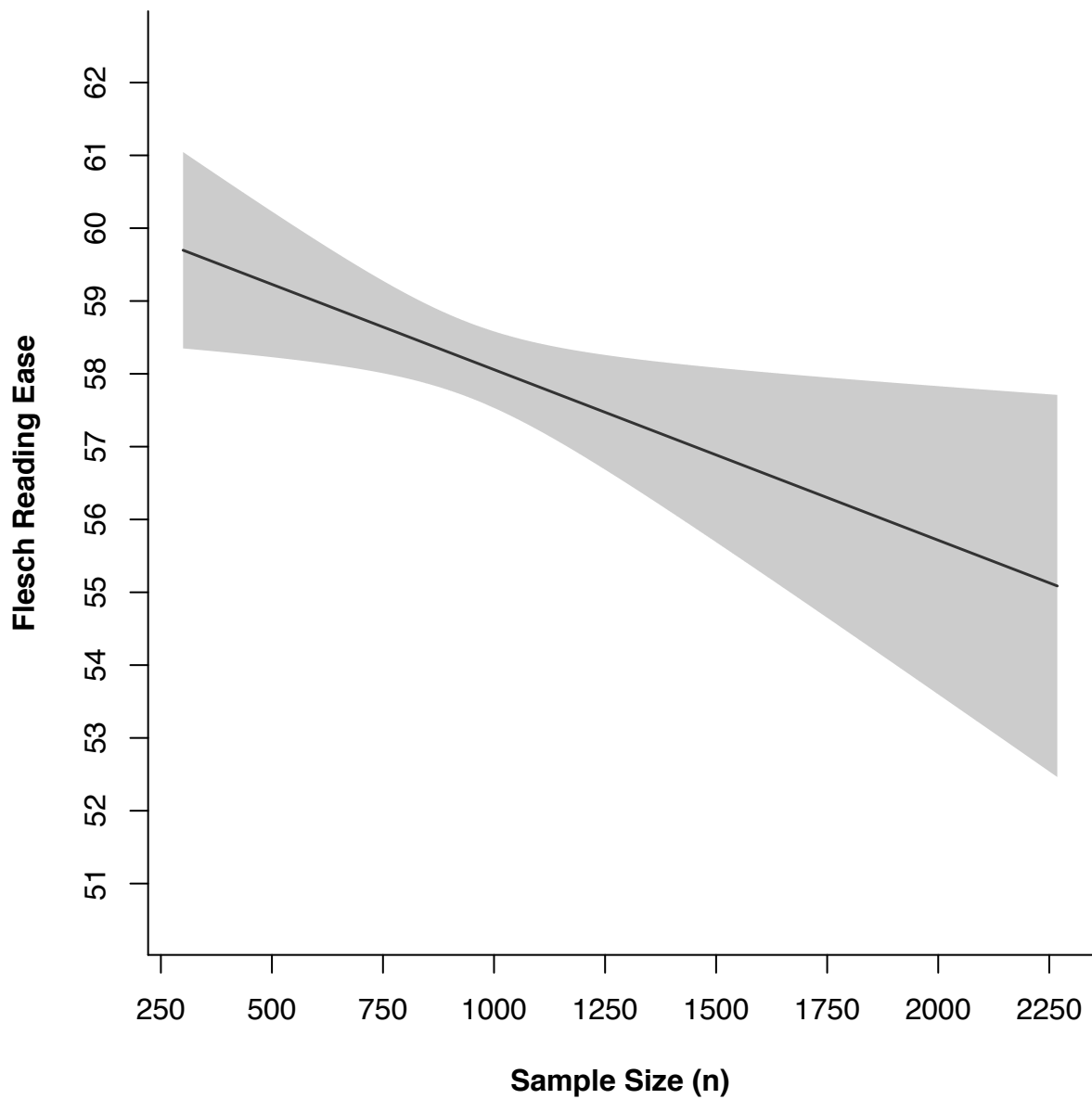


Figure S5. Reading ease by sample size

Note. Estimates drawn from a logistic regression model predicting Flesch Reading Ease score by sample size and poll. Shaded area represents a 95% confidence interval of the estimate across observed values of sample size. Sample size was a significant predictor of ease, $B = -0.002$, $SE = 0.001$, $t = 2.37$, $p < .05$.

Diagnostic Values by Number of Topics

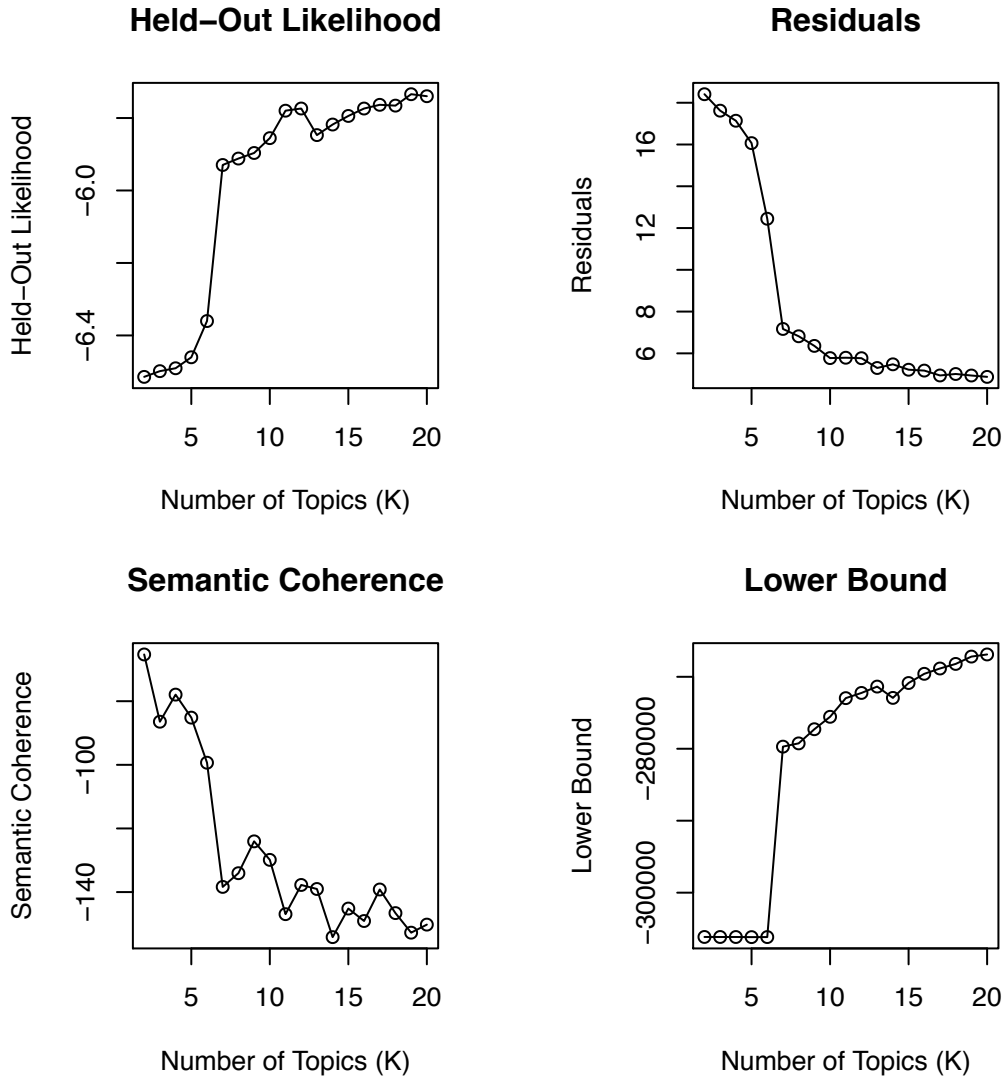


Figure S6. Diagnostic statistics for k -search algorithm

Note. The full k -search conducted for study 3 involved 2 through 100 topics; only the abridged statistics (2 through 20) are shown. All 4 statistics show convergence at $k = 7$ topics. We modeled structural topic models at $k = 6$ and $k = 8$ as well to see if interpretation of the FREX words was facilitated at either of these values. Interpretation was largely similar, and so we elected to use $k = 7$ for the model presented in the manuscript.

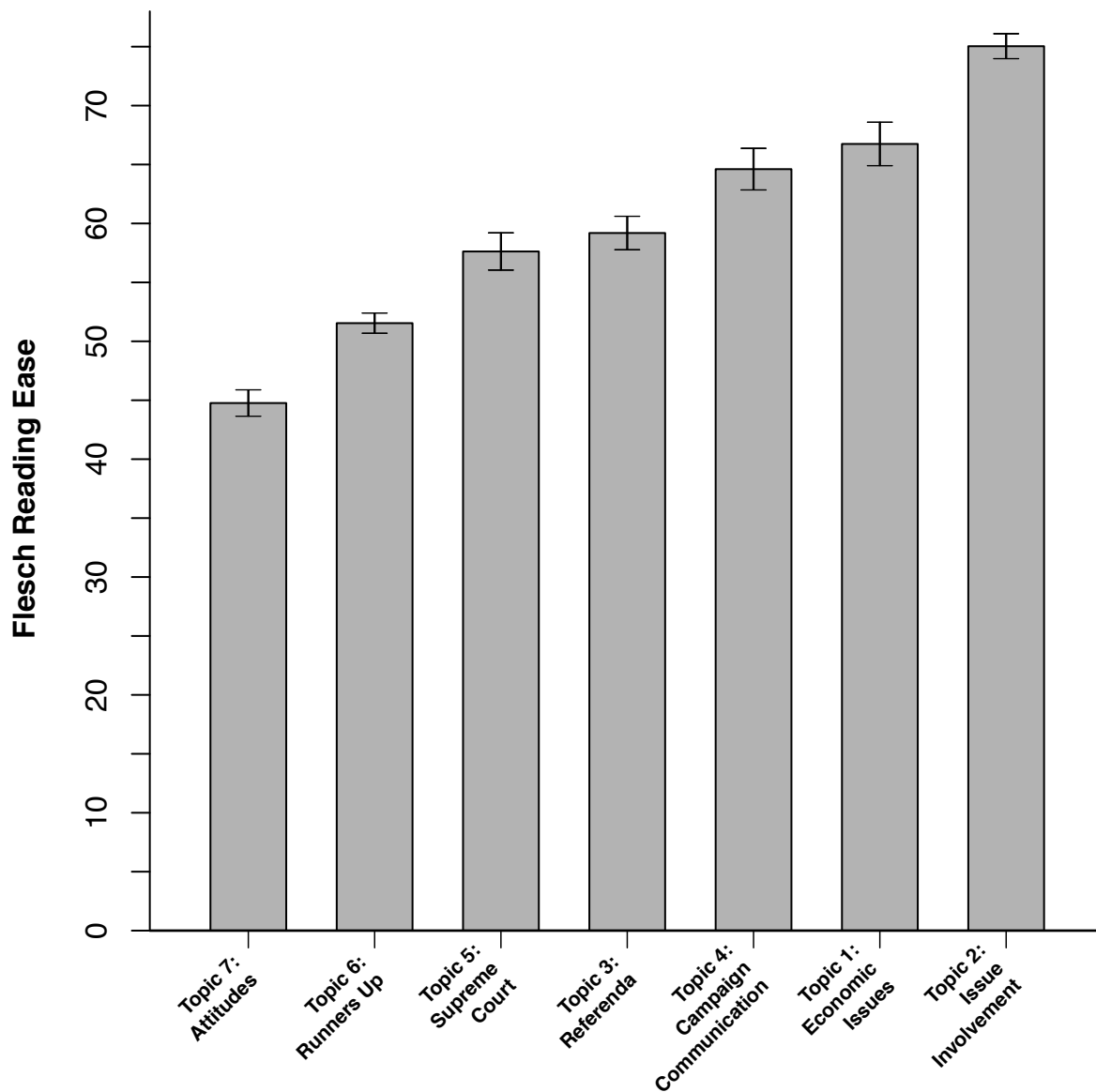


Figure S7. Reading ease by question topic

Note. Estimates drawn from a logistic regression model predicting Flesch Reading Ease score by question topic and poll. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals of the estimates. The omnibus model results indicate significant differences between topics, $F(15, 8078) = 140.40, p < .001$, $R^2_{\text{adj}} = .21$.