1 Modern theories have applied and extended early principles to understand people's behavior when people have the opportunity to interact with others while concealing their personal identity and remaining anonymous.

2 The term deindividuation was coined by Leon Festinger and colleagues in the 1950s to describe situations in which people cannot be individuated or isolated from others.

3 According to Festinger and colleagues, being deindividuated brings about a loss of individuality.

4 They proposed that being deindividuated reduces normal constraints on behavior and people can do things they normally would not do because they are not directly accountable for their actions.

5 They are, in a sense, liberated to do what they like.

6 Festinger and colleagues found support for this idea by demonstrating that participants who were engaged in a group discussion about their parents, while being dressed alike in a dimly lit room, were more likely to make negative comments about their parents than were participants in a control condition.

7 In other words, the deindividuated situation allowed participants to express views that they would normally keep to themselves.

1 Suppose you were participating in an experiment using a new saliva test to detect an enzyme deficiency that predicted pancreatic disease in later life.

2 How much would you believe in the accuracy of the new test?

3 According to a study done by Peter Ditto and David Lopez on Kent State University students, that would depend on whether the test identified you as possessing the worrisome deficiency.

4 Like the majority of those students, you would likely downgrade the accuracy of the test if it informed you that pancreas problems were in your future.

5 A second study showed how you might go about it.

6 Ditto and Lopez asked subjects if there were any irregularities in their diet, sleep, or activity patterns over the last 48 hours that might have affected the accuracy of the test.

7 Those who got health-threatening results listed three times more "irregularities" than did those receiving health-confirming results.

8 Thus, they searched for ways to weaken evidence contradicting their preferred image of healthiness.

1 Plants need water to give rigidity to their cells, but water stress also produces other, more subtle effects.

2 The stressed plant will spend more time with its stomata closed.

3 These are the pores, each opened and closed by the expansion and contraction of a pair of guard cells, through which gases are exchanged and from which water evaporates.

4 Keeping stomata closed reduces water loss, but a reduction in the rate of gas exchange implies a reduction in the rate of photosynthesis.

5 The plant will grow more slowly and will be smaller than it would otherwise be, and growth is inhibited before the plant is so short of water that it wilts visibly.

6 When an adequate amount of water becomes available to a formerly stressed plant it will increase its production of foliage, but in the case of a crop plant its final weight will never be greater than that of an unstressed plant and usually it will be smaller.

1 The interpretation of quantitative and numeric data is among the factors relevant to the processing of science

communication.

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2 Although communicators share numeric data (e.g., stock prices, disease risks, or weather forecasts) with lay publics because they presume it is useful in decision-making, the same data can evoke widely different interpretations and conclusions depending on the recipient.

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3 Recent work has found that people with less numeric literacy (numeracy) tend to extract very different meaning from data,

such as interpretation of expected likelihoods, than those with higher numeracy.

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4 But the more numerate also will interpret quantitative information heuristically to make faster judgments.

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5 This has been found in portrayals of risks and uncertainties when people overvalue gains following a loss or exaggerate

inferences made from the most recent data in a trend.

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6 Some work, however, suggests that less numerate people may be more inclined to rely on these heuristics, which tend to

yield biased interpretations of quantitative data.