

1. Go to <http://www.drdsk.com/articles.html#Illegals> and skim the article. What is the main claim the author makes?
2. Explore the entire site and find out more about the author of the article. Explain who she is and what work she does. Look at some of the other articles on the site. What, if any, biases do you think she may have?
3. Now read the article more carefully. Let's examine how the author uses statistical arguments to arrive at her conclusion and then critique her methods. First she says: "When examining ICE reports and public records, it is consistent to find sex offenders comprising 2% of illegals apprehended." What does ICE stand for? (hint: Scroll down to the bibliography and follow a link).
4. How does the author use this statistic of 2% to conclude that there are 240,000 illegal immigrant sex offenders in the U.S.?
5. In the next paragraph, the author concludes that there are 960,000 ("nearly a million") sex crimes committed by illegal immigrants in the U.S. Explain how she arrives at this figure.
6. Over how long a period of time were these offenses committed?
7. Can you see any flaws in this argument? (hint: Is the population of illegal immigrants apprehended by the ICE representative of the entire population of illegal immigrants? Who is likely to be apprehended?)
8. As a comparison, check out the website of the Minnesota Dept. of Public Safety: http://www.dps.state.mn.us/OJP/cj/publications/FS-2004-001_Sex_Offenders.pdf. Look on page 1 under the heading "Sex Offenders in the United States." In 2001, what percentage of the prison population were sex offenders?
9. The estimate of the number of people *in the general population* guilty of sex crimes varies - but it's generally cited as somewhere between 1/3 of 1%, and 1%. How do these two numbers compare with the percentage of illegals apprehended who were sex offenders?
10. This should give you an idea of how different statistics about people apprehended by the ICE can be different from the statistics about the public in general. Write a brief paragraph critiquing the author's argument that "nearly one million sex crimes were committed by illegal immigrants".

Thanks to Mark C. Chu-Carroll for his reference to this article, and interesting discussion.