

7.3 Misleading Statistics

Common Ways that Statistics
Can Mislead:

① Nonrepresentative Sample

Sample is too small or not random.

② Using Mean instead of Median

Better: "The average salary in Canada is \$70,000."
"The median salary..."

③ No Comparison

"Our device runs 10% faster."

Than what? A competitor's device?

④ No Context for Size

"Victoria's budget increased by \$15 million."

Better:

"Victoria's budget increased by 5%."

⑤ Vague

"Eating fish may lower cholesterol."

"Studies suggest that ..."

"Vitamin C prevents colds in some people."