

Student Comprehension Worksheet

Directions: Read the online *Science News* article "[Why do some people succeed when others fail? Outliers provide clues](#)," which describes how research into communities that defy expectations can reveal ways to help others, and answer the following questions. A version of the article, "Look to the outliers," appears in the February 26, 2022 issue of *Science News*.

- 1. Why are Somali villages with sustainable grazing considered outliers? Based on your answer, how would you define an outlier?**
- 2. What is "business as usual" for outliers in data analysis? What problem does this pose for social science researchers?**
- 3. How and why are some social scientists using outliers in their research? What is this approach called?**

Rebels among us

- 4. How did researchers use positive deviance to help malnourished children in Vietnam in the 1990s? What was the long-term result of the researchers' intervention?**
- 5. Name one drawback of the approach.**

Going bigger

- 6. Compare development researcher Basma Albanna's positive deviance approach with the approach used by researchers in Vietnam. What makes the approaches different?**
- 7. What is "big data" and what benefits does it offer to researchers using positive deviance?**

8. Summarize how Albanna and colleagues used positive deviance to study Somali villages in Africa. Make sure your summary identifies what the positive outliers were and what they revealed about how villages might be able to survive periods of severe drought.

Targeted interventions

9. What are nudges? Who do nudge interventions typically focus on?

10. How might a focus on outliers and positive deviance influence the effect of nudge interventions?

11. What is the next step for Albanna's team in the research of Somali villages?