

FOR RELEASE MAY 25, 2022

What Do Americans Know About International Affairs?

Liberal Democrats, conservative Republicans more knowledgeable than others

BY *Laura Silver, Christine Huang, Laura Clancy, Aidan Connaughton and Sneha Gubbala*

FOR MEDIA OR OTHER INQUIRIES:

Laura Silver, Senior Researcher
Hannah Klein, Communications Manager

202.419.4372
www.pewresearch.org

RECOMMENDED CITATION

Pew Research Center, May 2022, "What Do Americans Know About International Affairs?"

About Pew Research Center

Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan, nonadvocacy fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping the world. It does not take policy positions. The Center conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, computational social science research and other data-driven research. It studies politics and policy; news habits and media; the internet and technology; religion; race and ethnicity; international affairs; social, demographic and economic trends; science; research methodology and data science; and immigration and migration. Pew Research Center is a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts, its primary funder.

© Pew Research Center 2022

How we did this

Pew Research Center conducted this study to explore what Americans know about international affairs, how this varies across groups in society and how international knowledge is related to attitudes about foreign countries, foreign leaders and more. The measure of international knowledge that we developed is based on 12 questions and covers facts about global leaders, international institutions and geography, among other topics. For more on this measure, see [Appendix A](#) or “[How we designed a scale to measure Americans’ knowledge of international affairs.](#)”

For this analysis, we surveyed 3,581 U.S. adults from March 21 to 27, 2022. Everyone who took part in this survey is a member of the Center’s American Trends Panel (ATP), an online survey panel that is recruited through national, random sampling of residential addresses. This way nearly all U.S. adults have a chance of selection. The survey is weighted to be representative of the U.S. adult population by gender, race, ethnicity, partisan affiliation, education and other categories. Read more about the [ATP’s methodology](#).

Here are the [questions](#) used for the report, along with responses and its [methodology](#).

What Do Americans Know About International Affairs?

Liberal Democrats, conservative Republicans more knowledgeable than others

Before you read the report

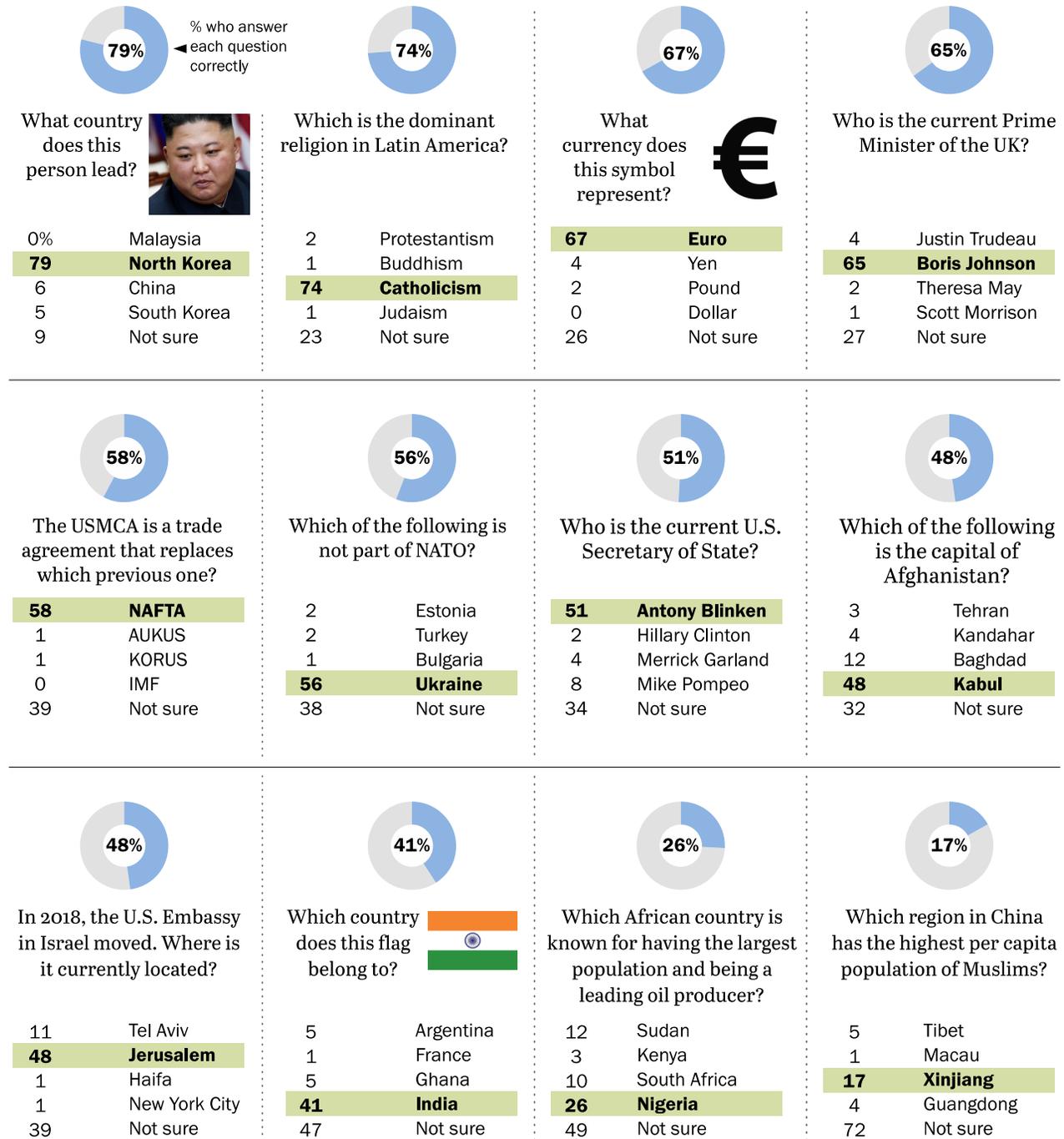
Test your international knowledge by taking the [interactive quiz](#). The short quiz tests your knowledge of questions recently asked in a national poll. After completing the quiz, you can compare your score with the general public and with people like yourself.

[Take the quiz](#)

Americans know a great deal about certain global leaders and institutions. For example, nearly eight-in-ten U.S. adults can look at a photo of Kim Jong Un and correctly identify him as the leader of North Korea, and nearly two-thirds know that Boris Johnson is the current prime minister of the United Kingdom. A slim majority also know that Ukraine is not a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

However, as a new Pew Research Center survey shows, Americans are less familiar with other topics. Despite the [U.S. government labeling the events](#) in Xinjiang, China, as genocide, only around one-in-five Americans are aware that it is the region in China with the most Muslims per capita. And only 41% can identify the flag of the second most populous country in the world, India.

Americans' international knowledge varies a great deal depending on the question



Note: Correct answers are highlighted and in **bold**. The order of the substantive responses were randomized and "not sure" appeared at the bottom of each option set. All questions are multiple choice; for full question wording, see topline.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 21-27, 2022. Q64-75.

"What Do Americans Know About International Affairs?"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

On average, Americans give more correct than incorrect answers to the 12 questions in the study. The mean number of correct answers is 6.3, while the median is 7. But the survey finds that levels of international knowledge vary based on who is answering. Americans with more education tend to score higher, for example, than those with less formal education. Men also tend to get more questions correct than women. Older Americans and those who are more interested in foreign policy also tend to perform better.

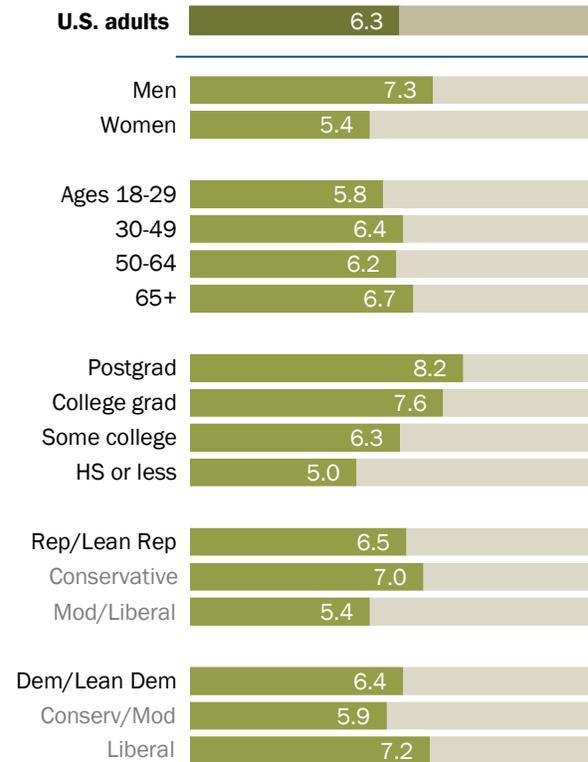
Political party groups are roughly similar in their overall levels of international knowledge, although conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats tend to score higher on the scale than do their more moderate counterparts.

International knowledge is also related to people's general interest in foreign policy: Those who report being very or somewhat interested in the topic answer a mean of 7.4 questions correctly, compared with only 4.6 correct questions for those who are not too or not at all interested in foreign policy. Those who follow international news also tend to have higher international knowledge than those who are less engaged. Those who have visited at least one country outside of the United States also score higher on the international knowledge scale than those who have not traveled abroad, even after accounting for differences in education and income.

Part of the goal of the survey was simply to understand these factors: what Americans know about international affairs and, more specifically, how knowledge varies across demographic subgroups. But another goal of the survey was also to understand how knowledge might affect attitudes.

International knowledge varies significantly by education, age and gender

Mean number of correct answers out of 12



Note: All questions are multiple choice; for full question wording, see topline.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 21-27, 2022. Q64-75.

"What Do Americans Know About International Affairs?"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

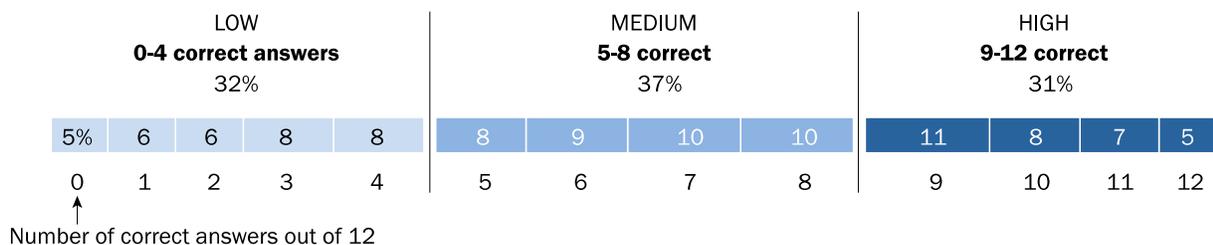
We find that people who know more about an issue often have different views about that issue. For example, people who are aware that Ukraine is not a member of NATO are more likely to have a favorable view of NATO and more likely to say that the U.S. benefits a great deal from its membership in the organization relative to those who do not know Ukraine is not a member nation. This same group is also more likely to have negative views of Russia, to have no confidence at all in Russian President Vladimir Putin and to describe Russia as an enemy.

Similarly, the survey also finds that those who know the capital of Afghanistan are more critical of the U.S. withdrawal and how it was handled than those who do not know the capital. Those who are aware of where the U.S. Embassy in Israel is located (following the [2018 move](#)) are also more likely to say U.S.-Israel relations are good than those who do not know. But there are few differences between the 17% of Americans who know that Xinjiang is the region of China with the most Muslims per capita and those who do not when it comes to views of China or Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Beyond the issue of how specific knowledge questions are related to attitudes about that topical area – e.g., how knowledge about NATO is related to views about NATO – we can also explore, more generally, whether people who have more international knowledge feel differently about myriad global issues than those with less international knowledge. To do this, we can use the entire 12-question scale, breaking people into groups of high (those who answered 9-12 questions correctly), medium (5-8 questions) and low knowledge (0-4 questions). Around a third of the American public falls into each of these three groups, respectively.

Americans span wide range of international knowledge

% with ___ correct answers out of 12



Note: The sum of the individual question scores may not match the categories of low, medium and high due to rounding. All questions are multiple choice; for full question wording, see topline.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 21-27, 2022. Q64-75.
 "What Do Americans Know About International Affairs?"

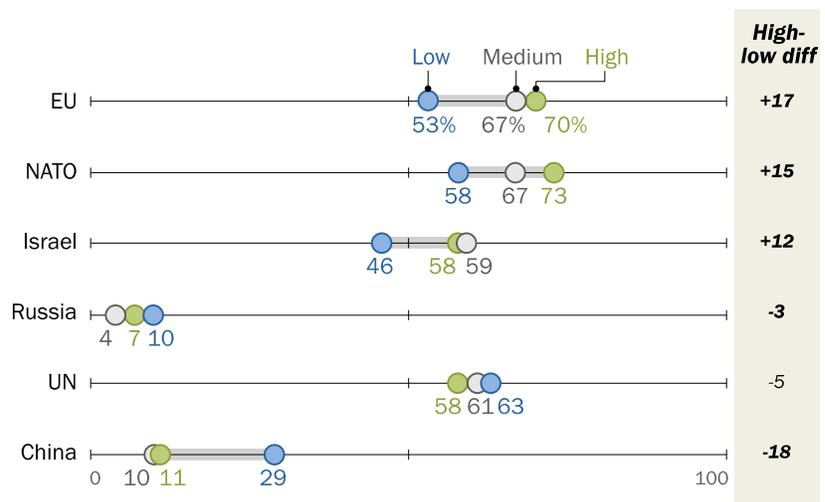
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Generally speaking, we see that international knowledge is related to attitudes about a host of issues. People with higher levels of knowledge have more positive views of the European Union (EU), NATO and Israel. They also have more confidence in Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and U.S. President Joe Biden.

When it comes to both Russia and China, though, those with higher levels of knowledge tend to be more critical. They are more likely to see the two countries unfavorably, to describe both countries as enemies of the U.S. and to have little or no confidence in Putin and Xi. And, whereas [Americans overall](#) are equally likely to describe China and the U.S. as the world's top economy, people with high levels of international knowledge are significantly more likely than those with less knowledge to say the U.S. is the world's leading economic power – mirroring the [gross domestic product assessments](#) compiled by the International Monetary Fund.

High knowledge individuals see EU, NATO more favorably and China less favorably

% who have a **favorable** view of ___, among those with ___ international knowledge



Note: Statistically significant differences shown in **bold**. "High international knowledge" includes those who answered 9-12 questions correctly, "medium international knowledge" includes those who answered 5-8 questions correctly and "low international knowledge" includes those who answered 0-4 questions correctly. All questions are multiple choice; for full question wording, see topline.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 21-27, 2022. Q5b-c,e-g.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

These are among the key findings of a new survey conducted by Pew Research Center on the Center's nationally representative American Trends Panel among 3,581 adults from March 21 to 27, 2022. The survey also finds that when it comes to the four questions that we have previously asked, Americans' level of international knowledge is similar – or higher – than it was in the past.¹

¹ Notably, these four questions were asked on different surveys and at different points in time. As a result, we can only compare each question to the last time it was fielded, rather than being able to compare performance across multiple questions or the entire scale over time.

In the case of identifying the leader of North Korea or the euro currency symbol, American knowledge has not changed significantly since the questions were last asked in 2015 and 2013, respectively. But when it comes to identifying the U.S. secretary of state, more can identify Secretary Antony Blinken (51%) than could identify Secretary Rex Tillerson (44%) in June 2017.² More Americans are also able to identify the British prime minister now (65%) than were able to do so in 2017 (56%) – though this most recent survey was conducted following a scandal that kept Johnson [in the news](#).

International knowledge varies markedly across demographic groups

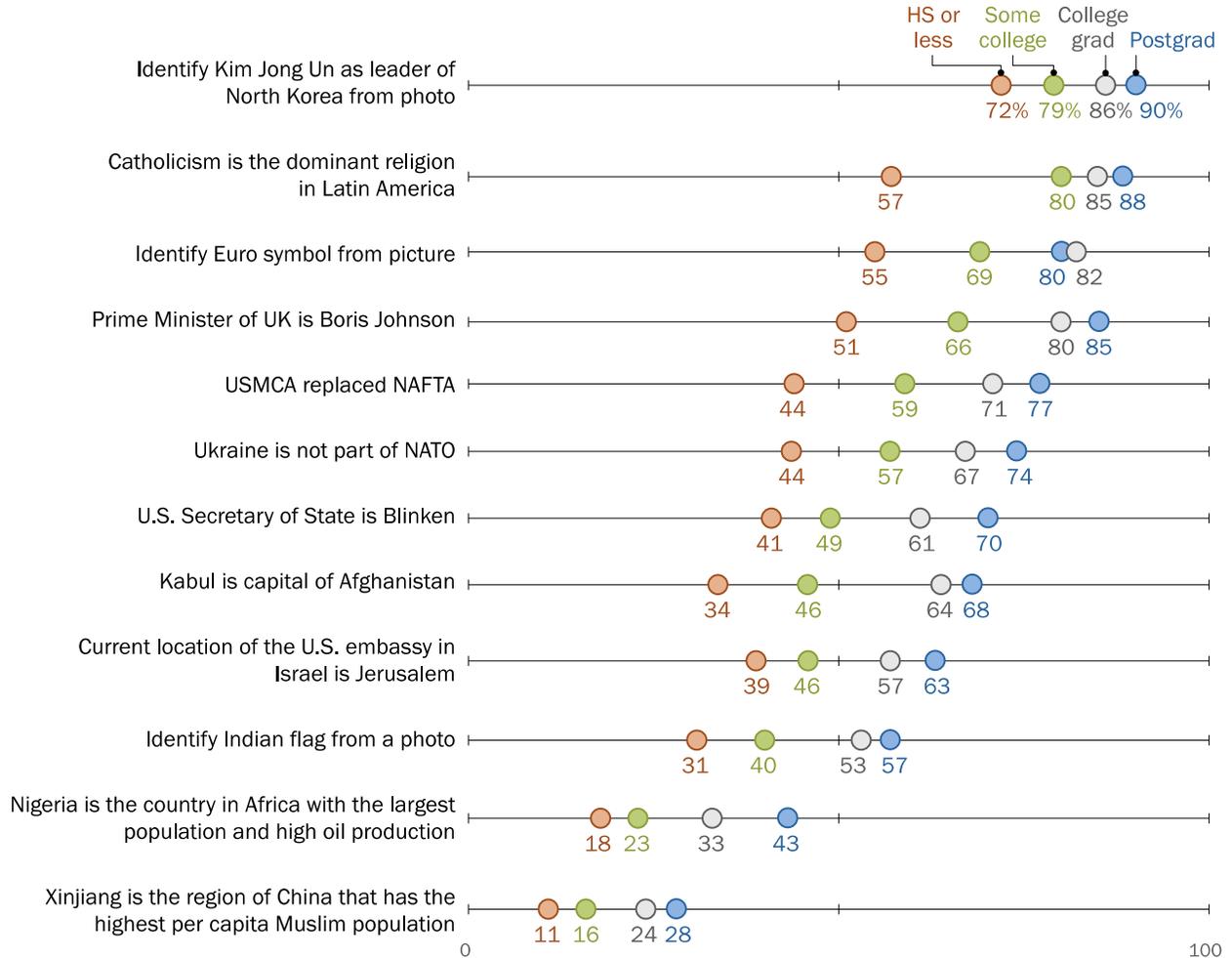
Americans with more education tend to score higher on the international knowledge scale compared with those with less education. College graduates get an average of 8.0 out of 12 international knowledge questions right, including around half (49%) who get at least nine of the 12 correct. Within this group, people who have a postgraduate degree do especially well, averaging 8.2 questions correct, including 55% who get at least nine questions right.

Scores are lower among Americans with less education. Among people who have some college experience, the average number of correct answers is 6.3. Those who have a high school diploma or less education get 5.0 questions right, on average. These large education differences are consistent with past Center surveys on [science knowledge](#) and [religious knowledge](#).

² Secretary Tillerson was confirmed in February 2017 and the survey was fielded in June 2017, meaning he had only been in office for around four months when the survey was conducted. Secretary Blinken was confirmed in January 2021 and the survey was fielded in March 2022.

Scores on international knowledge scale by education

% who answer each question *correctly*



Note: All differences shown are statistically significant. All questions are multiple choice; for full question wording, see topline.
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 21-27, 2022. Q64-75.
 "What Do Americans Know About International Affairs?"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Men tend to perform better on the international knowledge scale than women

Overall, men tend to score higher on the knowledge scale than women. On average, men answer 7.3 questions correctly out of 12, compared with an average of 5.4 correct answers for women. In fact, for each of the 12 questions individually, a higher share of men than women answer correctly. This mirrors previous findings for both [scientific knowledge](#) and [religious knowledge](#) in which men tended to score higher than women.

[Multiple studies](#) have found that [men are more likely than women to guess](#) on knowledge questions, even if they don't know the answer. If given the option, [women are often more likely than men to say they don't know](#). Indeed, on each of the 12 items tested in this survey, women are more likely than men to say they are not sure of the correct answer. On only four questions are women more likely to give an *incorrect* answer.

Men are more likely to get all international knowledge questions correct; women are more likely to say they are not sure

	% who answer each question <u>correctly</u>			% who say they are <u>not sure</u> for each question		
	Men	Women	Diff	Men	Women	Diff
USMCA replaced NAFTA	73	44	+29	26	52	-26
Ukraine is not part of NATO	69	45	+24	26	48	-22
Prime Minister of UK is Boris Johnson	76	56	+20	20	34	-14
Current location of the U.S. embassy in Israel is Jerusalem	58	38	+20	31	46	-15
Identify Kim Jong Un as leader of North Korea from photo	89	70	+19	4	14	-10
U.S. Secretary of State is Blinken	61	43	+18	29	38	-9
Kabul is capital of Afghanistan	55	42	+13	27	36	-9
Identify Indian flag from a photo	48	35	+13	42	53	-11
Catholicism is the dominant religion in Latin America	79	69	+10	18	27	-9
Identify Euro symbol from picture	73	63	+10	21	31	-10
Xinjiang is the region of China that has the highest per capita Muslim population	21	14	+7	67	76	-9
Nigeria is the country in Africa with the largest population and high oil production	29	23	+6	45	53	-8

Note: All differences shown are statistically significant. All questions are multiple choice; for full question wording, see topline.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 21-27, 2022. Q64-75.

"What Do Americans Know About International Affairs?"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

While men are more likely than women to answer each item correctly, this gap is larger on some questions than others. The largest gap between men and women is identifying the predecessor of the USMCA trade agreement. Nearly three-in-four men correctly answer NAFTA, compared with 44% of women. About half (52%) of women say they are not sure which trade agreement preceded the USMCA.

Older Americans have higher levels of international knowledge than younger ones

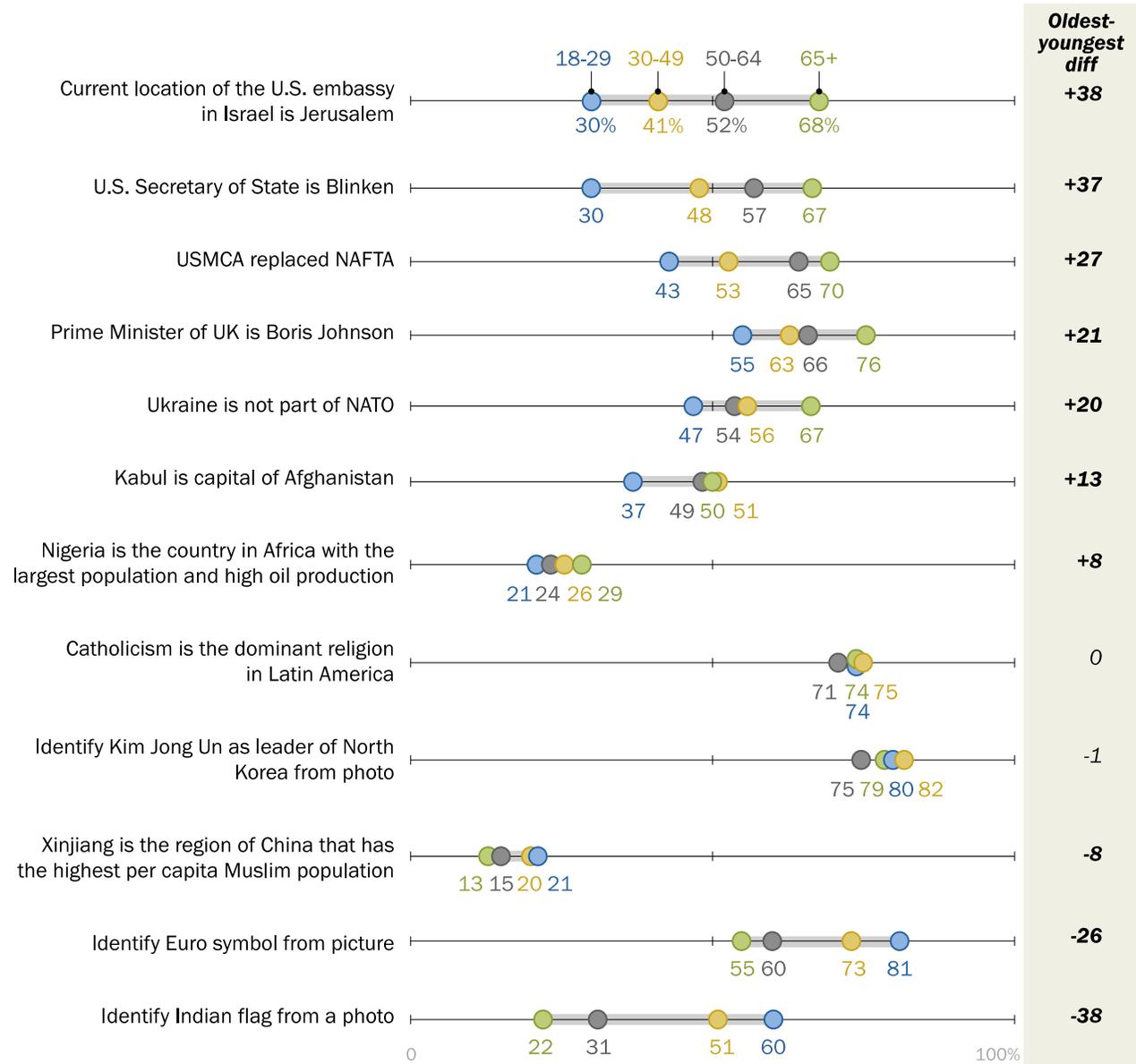
Overall, compared with younger Americans, older Americans – those ages 65 and older – perform best on the international knowledge scale, averaging 6.7 questions correctly relative to 6.2 for those ages 50 to 64, 6.4 for those 30 to 49, and 5.8 for those under 30. Around a third of this oldest age group answers at least nine of the 12 questions correctly, placing them in the “high” knowledge category, while only around a quarter of the youngest age group falls into the same group.

Across nearly all of the 12 questions, older adults are more likely than younger adults to answer them correctly. The gap is largest when it comes to three specific questions: current location of the U.S. embassy in Israel, prime minister of the UK and secretary of state of the U.S. In all three cases, the oldest age group is more than 20 percentage points more likely to answer correctly than the youngest group. But there are also three questions where younger adults noticeably outperform their older counterparts. Two of them are questions that relate to pictures: one identifying the euro symbol and the other identifying the Indian flag. Younger adults are also more likely to correctly identify the region of China with the highest per capita Muslim population.

While younger people are somewhat more likely to say they are not sure when it comes to six of the questions, they are *also* more likely to give incorrect answers for seven of the 12 questions. For example, when it comes to identifying the current U.S. secretary of state, 51% of those under age 30 said they were not sure, compared with 37% of those 30 to 49 and around three-in-ten or fewer of those ages 50 and older. But this youngest age group is *also* more likely to be wrong: 19% chose an incorrect multiple-choice answer from the list provided, while only 10% of those ages 65 and older chose an incorrect answer.

Older adults tend to have higher levels of international knowledge

% who answer each question *correctly*



Note: Statistically significant differences shown in **bold**. All questions are multiple choice; for full question wording, see topline.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 21-27, 2022. Q64-Q75.

"What Do Americans Know About International Affairs?"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

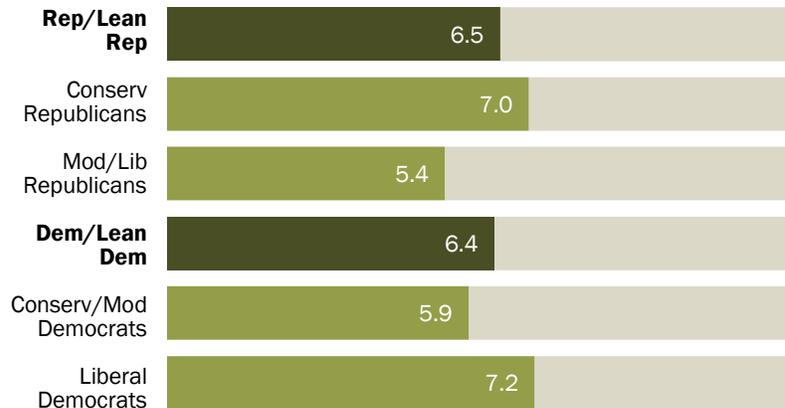
International knowledge highest at ends of the political spectrum

Republicans and Democrats have roughly the same levels of international knowledge. On the 12-point scale, Republicans and Republican-leaning independents answer an average of 6.5 questions correctly, while Democrats and Democratic leaners get an average of 6.4 right.

There are, however, a few questions where members of one party perform markedly better than the other. More Republicans and GOP leaners know that [the USMCA trade agreement replaced NAFTA](#) and that [the U.S. Embassy in Israel moved to Jerusalem in 2018](#) – both changes made under former U.S. President Donald Trump and pillars of his international policy. Republicans are also more likely to know the capital of Afghanistan. On the other hand, Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents are more likely to correctly identify the flag of India and the euro symbol.

Republicans and Democrats have similar levels of international knowledge

Mean number of correct answers out of 12

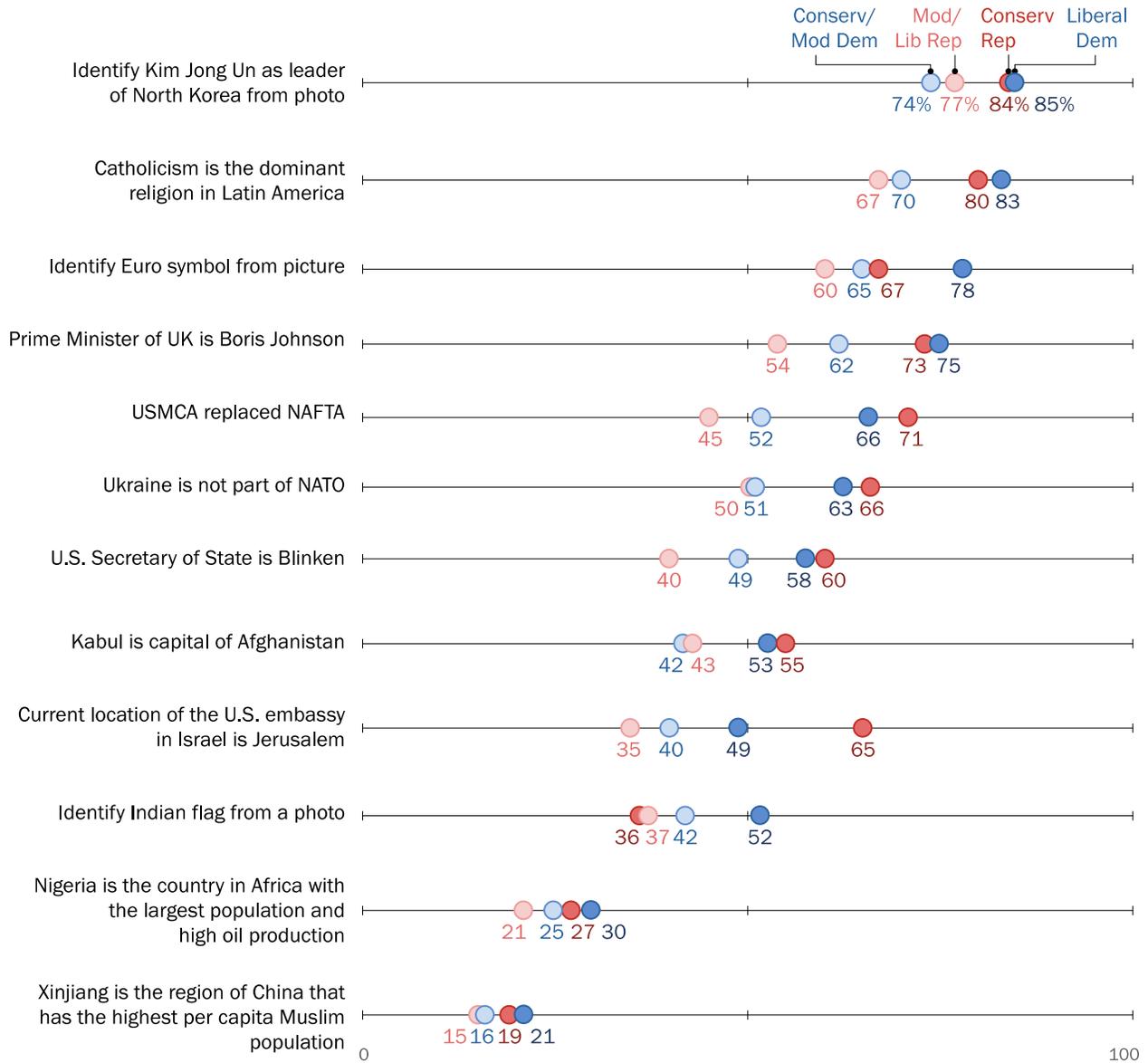


Note: All questions are multiple choice; for full question wording, see topline.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 21-27, 2022. Q64-75.
“What Do Americans Know About International Affairs?”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Conservative Republicans, liberal Democrats generally score higher on international knowledge scale than more moderate respondents

% who answer each question *correctly*



Note: All questions are multiple choice; for full question wording, see topline.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 21-27, 2022. Q64-75.

“What Do Americans Know About International Affairs?”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Generally, though, there are greater differences *within* parties than *between* them. Those at the ends of the political spectrum – conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats – score more than a point higher, on average, than the more moderate groups. While these groups both tend to be more likely to follow international news and interested in foreign affairs, this difference in knowledge persists even after statistically controlling for these factors. Liberal Democrats answer all but one of the 12 questions correctly at a higher rate than conservative and moderate Democrats. The same is true for conservative Republicans relative to liberal and moderate Republicans on three-quarters of the scale items. These patterns are [largely consistent with measures of scientific knowledge](#) conducted by the Center.

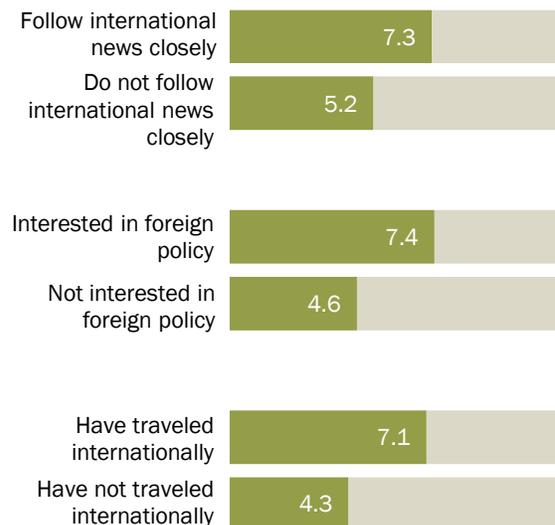
International engagement tied to higher international knowledge

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Americans who are more internationally engaged on a variety of fronts are more likely to have higher international knowledge than Americans who are not as engaged. For example, Americans who say they follow international news very or somewhat closely answer an average of 7.3 questions correctly; Americans who follow international news less closely answer only 5.2 questions correctly, on average. Only when it comes to identifying the flag of India are those who follow international news closely and those who do not equally likely to answer correctly. Following international news is a significant factor in international knowledge even after controlling for education and other key demographics including age, race and gender.

Interest in foreign policy also plays a part in international knowledge. Those who say they are very or somewhat interested in foreign policy answer a mean of 7.4 questions correctly, compared with only 4.6 correct questions for those who are not too or not at all interested in foreign policy. In some cases, the difference between those who are interested in foreign policy and those who are not can be quite large. On the question of which trade agreement the USMCA

International knowledge higher among those who follow international news, foreign policy or have traveled abroad

Mean number of correct answers out of 12



Note: All questions are multiple choice; for full question wording, see topline.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 21-27, 2022. Q64-75.

“What Do Americans Know About International Affairs?”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

replaced, 72% of those interested in foreign policy correctly answer NAFTA, while only 37% of those not interested in foreign policy are able to identify the correct answer. Once again, interest in foreign policy remains a significant factor in international knowledge even after controlling for education.³

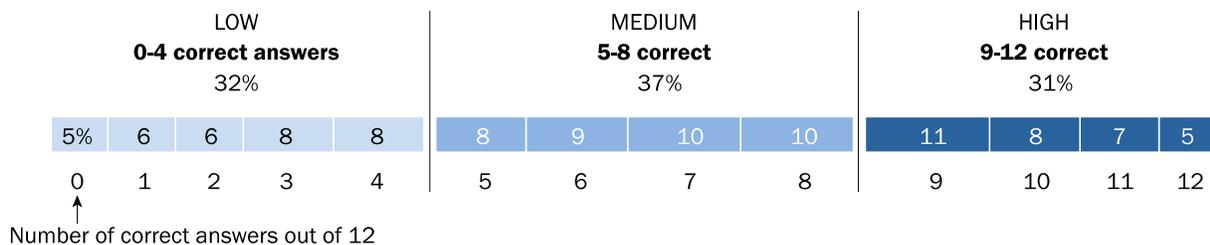
These differences don't just extend to hypothetical interest. Americans who have visited at least one other country outside of the U.S. answer an average of 7.1 questions correctly, compared with an average score of 4.3 correct for those who have never visited another country. And while international travel is associated with more education and higher incomes, this gap is significant even when controlling for those factors.

International knowledge and attitudes about foreign countries and leaders

Based on the individual performance of the 12 international knowledge questions, we are able to divide people into three roughly equal groups: those who answered at least nine of the 12 questions correctly (31%) are termed "high" knowledge; those who answered five to eight questions correctly (37%) or the "medium" knowledge group; and those who answered fewer than five questions correctly (32%) or the "low" knowledge group.

Americans span wide range of international knowledge

% with ___ correct answers out of 12



Note: The sum of the individual question scores may not match the categories of low, medium and high due to rounding. All questions are multiple choice; for full question wording, see topline.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 21-27, 2022. Q64-75.

"What Do Americans Know About International Affairs?"

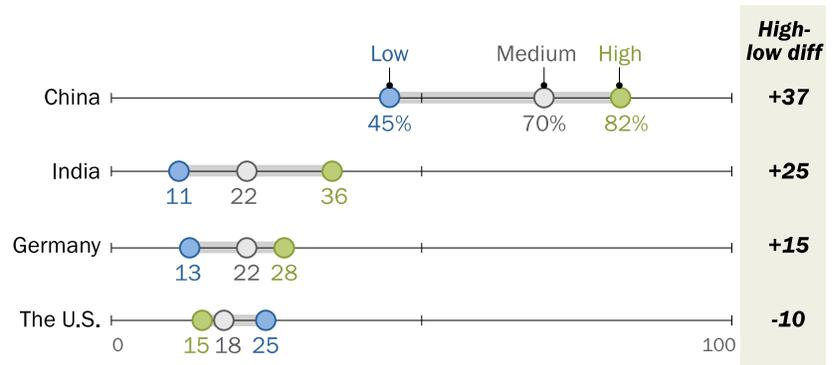
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

³ In regressions controlling for both foreign policy interest and following international news, alongside other key demographics including education, both foreign policy interest and following international news remain significant.

Performance on the international knowledge scale relates to views of other countries and multinational entities. Those who have a high score on the knowledge scale are more likely than those with a low score to hold favorable views of the EU, NATO and Israel. For example, 73% of those who answer at least nine of 12 questions correctly hold a favorable view of NATO, compared with 58% of those who answer four or fewer questions correctly. However, knowledge is not related to views of the United Nations: Those with high levels of international knowledge are as likely to feel favorable toward the UN as those with low levels of international knowledge.

Americans with more international knowledge more likely to see China's influence growing, U.S. influence waning

*% who say each country's influence in the world in recent years has been **getting stronger**, among those with ___ international knowledge*



Note: All differences shown are statistically significant. "High international knowledge" includes those who answered 9-12 questions correctly, "medium international knowledge" includes those who answered 5-8 questions correctly and "low international knowledge" includes those who answered 0-4 questions correctly. All questions are multiple choice; for full question wording, see topline.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 21-27, 2022. Q14a, b, d, e. "What Do Americans Know About International Affairs?"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Americans who score better on the international knowledge scale differ in their assessments of countries' place in the world. High scorers are 37 percentage points more likely than those who have a low score to say China's influence in the world in recent years has been increasing. They are also significantly more likely to say India and Germany's influence has been growing stronger. Conversely, they are 10 points less likely than Americans who answered four or fewer questions correctly to say the United States' influence in the world has increased.

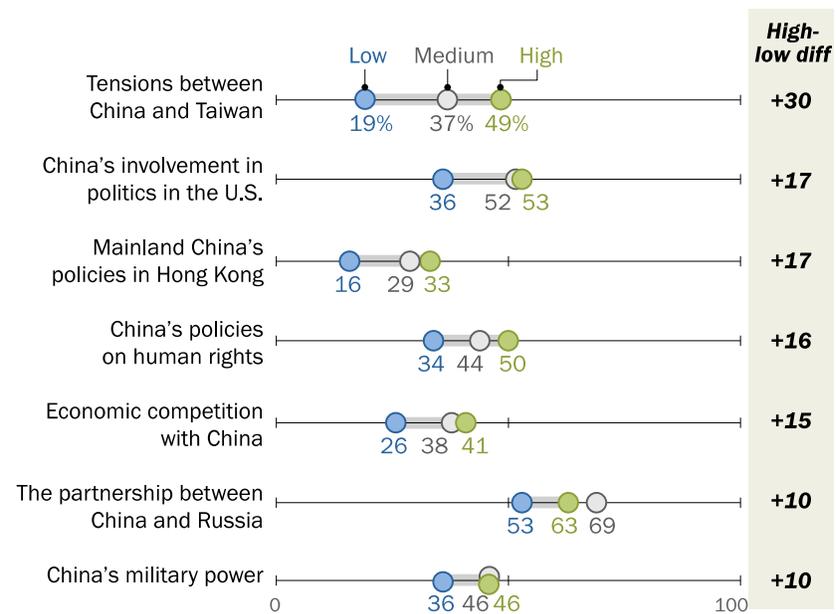
Evaluations of world leaders similarly differ by performance on the international knowledge scale. Confidence in Ukrainian President Zelenskyy is higher among Americans who answer at least nine questions correctly, compared with those with four or fewer correct responses. The same relationship holds for views of German Chancellor Scholz, French President Macron and U.S. President Biden.

High scores on the knowledge scale relate to more critical evaluations of Russia. While a majority of [Americans see Russia very unfavorably](#), those with a high level of knowledge are 10 points more likely than those with low knowledge to have a very negative view of the country. These unfavorable views are reflected in how Americans see Russia’s relationship with the U.S.: Americans who score highly on the international knowledge scale are more likely than those who have a low score to consider Russia an enemy. They are also more likely to say Russia’s influence in the world has been getting weaker in recent years. While 30% of those with low knowledge say Russia’s international influence is waning, 42% of those with high knowledge hold this opinion. Attitudes toward Russia’s leader show the same pattern. Majorities across all groups say they have no confidence at all in Russian President Putin, but those with higher scores are 15 points more likely than those with four or fewer correct answers to hold this view.

[Views of China](#) are also related to international knowledge. Those who have high levels of international knowledge are more likely to describe China as an enemy of the U.S., to say that current U.S.-China relations are bad and to say economic relations between the two countries are bad. And when it comes to seven potential issues in the U.S.-China relationship asked about, the low knowledge group is the least likely to call any one of them a *very serious problem*. The gap is particularly large when it comes to tensions between China and Taiwan, which those in the high knowledge group are 30 points more likely to describe as a very serious problem than those in the low knowledge group.

Americans with high international knowledge more likely to call issues with China very serious problems

% who say each is a *very serious problem* for the U.S., among those with ___ international knowledge



Note: All differences shown are statistically significant. “High international knowledge” includes those who answered 9-12 questions correctly, “medium international knowledge” includes those who answered 5-8 questions correctly and “low international knowledge” includes those who answered 0-4 questions correctly. All questions are multiple choice; for full question wording, see topline.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 21-27, 2022. Q17a-g.

“What Do Americans Know About International Affairs?”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Americans, overall, are equally likely to describe China and the U.S. as the world's leading economy, but people with high international knowledge are significantly more likely than those with lower levels of knowledge to describe the U.S. as the top economic power (55% vs. 37%). Notably, this accords with the [actual size of the two country's GDP's, according to IMF estimates](#).

Acknowledgments

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals.

Laura Silver, *Senior Researcher*

Christine Huang, *Research Analyst*

Laura Clancy, *Research Assistant*

Aidan Connaughton, *Research Assistant*

Sneha Gubbala, *Research Assistant*

Nick Bertoni, *Senior Panel Manager*

Alexandra Castillo, *Research Methodologist*

Janakee Chavda, *Editorial Assistant*

Moira Fagan, *Research Analyst*

Janell Fetterolf, *Senior Researcher*

Shannon Greenwood, *Digital Producer*

Michael Keegan, *Senior Information Graphics Designer*

Hannah Klein, *Communications Manager*

Gar Meng Leong, *Communications Associate*

Clark Letterman, *Senior Survey Manager*

Gracie Martinez, *Senior Administrative Coordinator*

J.J. Moncus, *Research Assistant*

Patrick Moynihan, *Associate Director, International Research Methods*

Reem Nadeem, *Associate Digital Producer*

Jacob Poushter, *Associate Director, Global Attitudes Research*

Anna Schiller, *Senior Communications Manager*

Shannon Schumacher, *Research Associate*

Richard Wike, *Director, Global Attitudes Research*

Adam Wolsky, *Research Methodologist*

Appendix A: Measurement properties of the international knowledge scale

Pew Research Center's survey on international knowledge covers facts about global leaders, international institutions and geography, among other topics.

The following criteria are used to evaluate how well the 12 items can be used as a scale or index of international knowledge more broadly: 1) the degree to which responses are internally consistent, 2) the degree to which the questions reflect a single underlying latent dimension, and 3) the degree to which the scale discriminates between people with high and low knowledge, providing information about people with varying levels of knowledge about foreign affairs.

The internal reliability of the scale as measured by

Cronbach's alpha is 0.83. Cronbach's alpha does not increase if any of the items are dropped.

An exploratory factor analysis finds that the first common factor explains 67% of the shared variance in the items. The second common factor explains only 15% of the common variance. The factor loadings show that each of the 12 items is at least moderately correlated with the first common factor. This suggests that the set of items is the result of a single underlying dimension.

Scale reliability and factor analysis

		Alpha for scale	Common variance explained by first factor
Knowledge index 12-items		0.83	67%
	Item-rest correlation	Alpha if item is dropped	Factor loadings
Identify Kim Jong Un as leader of North Korea from photo	0.41	0.82	0.47
Catholicism is the dominant religion in Latin America	0.48	0.82	0.54
Identify Euro symbol from picture	0.40	0.82	0.44
Prime Minister of UK is Boris Johnson	0.61	0.81	0.69
USMCA replaced NAFTA	0.56	0.81	0.64
Ukraine is not part of NATO	0.54	0.81	0.61
U.S. Secretary of State is Blinken	0.58	0.81	0.66
Kabul is capital of Afghanistan	0.55	0.81	0.60
Current location of the U.S. embassy in Israel is Jerusalem	0.51	0.82	0.58
Identify Indian flag from a photo	0.43	0.82	0.48
Nigeria is the country in Africa with the largest population and high oil production	0.42	0.82	0.46
Xinjiang is the region of China that has the highest per capita Muslim population	0.35	0.83	0.38

Note: Items are ordered by the percent who answered the question correctly. All questions are multiple choice; for full question wording, see topline.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 21-27, 2022. Q64-75.

"What Do Americans Know About International Affairs?"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Note that all the international knowledge items are coded as binary variables (either correct or incorrect). Both Cronbach's alpha and factor analysis are based on a Pearson's correlation matrix. Pearson's correlations with binary variables are restricted to a limited range, underestimating the association between two variables. We do not anticipate the use of a Pearson's correlation matrix will affect the unidimensional factor solution for the scale.

We conducted item response modeling for the scale to evaluate how well it discriminates between people at different levels of

knowledge. The analysis fits a two-parameter logistic model, allowing discrimination and difficulty to vary across items. Discrimination shows the ability of the question to distinguish between those with higher and lower international knowledge. Difficulty shows how easy or hard each question is for the average respondent.

All the items have acceptable discrimination estimates. The difficulty parameter estimates are negative for seven of the 12 items, and positive for five of the items. This shows that the average respondent had a good chance of getting the correct answer on most of the items.

Two parameter item response theory analysis

	% Correct	Discrimination	Difficulty
Identify Kim Jong Un as leader of North Korea from photo	79	1.56	-1.20
Catholicism is the dominant religion in Latin America	74	1.65	-0.90
Identify Euro symbol from picture	67	1.09	-0.83
Prime Minister of UK is Boris Johnson	65	3.18	-0.44
USMCA replaced NAFTA	58	2.24	-0.25
Ukraine is not part of NATO	56	1.91	-0.21
U.S. Secretary of State is Blinken	51	2.60	-0.02
Kabul is capital of Afghanistan	48	2.08	0.08
Current location of the U.S. embassy in Israel is Jerusalem	48	1.81	0.08
Identify Indian flag from a photo	41	1.15	0.39
Nigeria is the country in Africa with the largest population and high oil production	26	1.50	0.99
Xinjiang is the region of China that has the highest per capita Muslim population	17	1.42	1.47

Note: All questions are multiple choice; for full question wording, see topline.

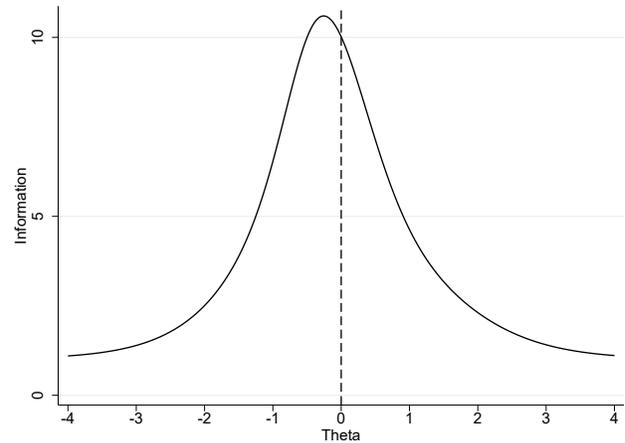
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 21-27, 2022. Q64-75.

"What Do Americans Know About International Affairs?"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The test information function shows the amount of information the scale provides about people with different levels of knowledge of foreign affairs. The test function approximates a normal curve and is centered below zero (Theta) at about -0.25. This indicates that the scale provides the most information about those with slightly below-average international knowledge. The scale provides comparatively less information about those with high international knowledge, especially those with *very* high levels of knowledge. Notably, being able to distinguish among those highly knowledgeable about foreign and international topics was not an important goal of this study. Moreover, the inclusion of the very difficult questions needed to make distinctions among the very informed could potentially have negative effects on the morale of the rest of the people taking the quiz.

Test information function for international knowledge scale



Note: All questions are multiple choice; for full question wording, see topline.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 21-27, 2022. Q64-75.

"What Do Americans Know About International Affairs?"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Methodology

The American Trends Panel survey methodology

Overview

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. Panelists participate via self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access at home are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish. The panel is being managed by Ipsos.

Data in this report is drawn from the panel wave conducted from March 21 to March 27, 2022. A total of 3,581 panelists responded out of 4,120 who were sampled, for a response rate of 87%. The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 3%. The break-off rate among panelists who logged on to the survey and completed at least one item is 1%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 3,581 respondents is plus or minus 2.3 percentage points.

Panel recruitment

The ATP was created in 2014, with the first cohort of panelists invited to join the panel at the end of a large, national, landline and cellphone random-digit-dial survey that was conducted in both English and Spanish. Two additional recruitments were conducted using the same method in 2015 and 2017, respectively. Across these three surveys, a total of 19,718 adults were invited to join the ATP, of whom 9,942 (50%) agreed to participate.

In August 2018, the ATP switched from telephone to address-based recruitment. Invitations were sent to a stratified, random sample of

American Trends Panel recruitment surveys

Recruitment dates	Mode	Invited	Joined	Active panelists remaining
Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014	Landline/ cell RDD	9,809	5,338	1,598
Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015	Landline/ cell RDD	6,004	2,976	938
April 25 to June 4, 2017	Landline/ cell RDD	3,905	1,628	470
Aug. 8 to Oct. 31, 2018	ABS	9,396	8,778	4,425
Aug. 19 to Nov. 30, 2019	ABS	5,900	4,720	1,625
June 1 to July 19, 2020; Feb. 10 to March 31, 2021	ABS	3,197	2,812	1,694
May 29 to July 7, 2021				
Sept. 16 to Nov. 1, 2021	ABS	1,329	1,162	935
	Total	39,540	27,414	11,685

Note: Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves or who did not complete an annual profiling survey are removed from the panel. Panelists also become inactive if they ask to be removed from the panel.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

households selected from the U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File. Sampled households receive mailings asking a randomly selected adult to complete a survey online. A question at the end of the survey asks if the respondent is willing to join the ATP. Starting in 2020, another stage was added to the recruitment. Households that do not respond to the online survey are sent a paper version of the questionnaire, \$5 and a postage-paid return envelope. A subset of the adults returning the paper version of the survey are invited to join the ATP. This subset of adults receive a follow-up mailing with a \$10 pre-incentive and invitation to join the ATP.

Across the four address-based recruitments, a total of 19,822 adults were invited to join the ATP, of whom 17,472 agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey. In each household, the adult with the next birthday was asked to go online to complete a survey, at the end of which they were invited to join the panel. Of the 27,414 individuals who have ever joined the ATP, 11,685 remained active panelists and continued to receive survey invitations at the time this survey was conducted.

The U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File has been estimated to cover as much as 98% of the population, although some studies suggest that the coverage could be in the low 90% range.⁴ The American Trends Panel never uses breakout routers or chains that direct respondents to additional surveys.

Sample design

This study featured a stratified random sample from the ATP. The overall target population for this survey was non-institutionalized persons ages 18 and older, living in the U.S., including Alaska and Hawaii.

Questionnaire development and testing

The questionnaire was developed by Pew Research Center in consultation with Ipsos. The web program was rigorously tested on both PC and mobile devices by the Ipsos project management team and Center researchers. The Ipsos project management team also populated test data that was analyzed in SPSS to ensure the logic and randomizations were working as intended before launching the survey.

Incentives

All respondents were offered a post-paid incentive for their participation. Respondents could choose to receive the post-paid incentive in the form of a check or a gift code to Amazon.com or

⁴ AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. "[AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling](#)."

could choose to decline the incentive. Incentive amounts ranged from \$5 to \$20 depending on whether the respondent belongs to a part of the population that is harder or easier to reach. Differential incentive amounts were designed to increase panel survey participation among groups that traditionally have low survey response propensities.

Data collection protocol

The data collection field period for this survey was March 21 to March 27, 2022. Postcard notifications were mailed to all ATP panelists with a known residential address on March 21, 2022.

Invitations were sent out in two separate launches: Soft Launch and Full Launch. Sixty panelists were included in the soft launch, which began with an initial invitation sent on March 21, 2022. The ATP panelists chosen for the initial soft launch were known responders who had completed previous ATP surveys within one day of receiving their invitation. All remaining English- and Spanish-speaking panelists were included in the full launch and were sent an invitation on March 22, 2022.

All panelists with an email address received an email invitation and up to two email reminders if they did not respond to the survey. All ATP panelists that consented to SMS messages received an SMS invitation and up to two SMS reminders.

Invitation and reminder dates

	Soft Launch	Full Launch
Initial invitation	March 21, 2022	March 22, 2022
First reminder	March 24, 2022	March 24, 2022
Final reminder	March 26, 2022	March 26, 2022

Data quality checks

To ensure high-quality data, the Center's researchers performed data quality checks to identify any respondents showing clear patterns of satisficing. This includes checking for very high rates of leaving questions blank, as well as always selecting the first or last answer presented. As a result of this checking, four ATP respondents were removed from the survey dataset prior to weighting and analysis.

Weighting

The ATP data is weighted in a multistep process that accounts for multiple stages of sampling and nonresponse that occur at different points in the survey process. First, each panelist begins with a base weight that reflects their probability of selection for their initial recruitment survey. The base weights for panelists recruited in different years are scaled to be proportionate to the effective sample size for all active panelists in their cohort and then calibrated to align with the population benchmarks in the accompanying table to correct for nonresponse to recruitment surveys and panel attrition. If only a subsample of panelists was invited to participate in the wave, this weight is adjusted to account for any differential probabilities of selection.

Among the panelists who completed the survey, this weight is then calibrated again to align with the population benchmarks identified in the accompanying table and trimmed at the 1st and 99th percentiles to reduce the loss in precision stemming from variance in the weights. Sampling errors and tests of statistical significance take into account the effect of weighting.

Some of the population benchmarks used for weighting come from surveys conducted prior to the coronavirus outbreak that began in February 2020. However, the weighting variables for panelists recruited in 2021 were measured at the time they were recruited to the panel. Likewise, the profile variables for existing panelists were updated from panel surveys conducted in July or August 2021.

This does not pose a problem for most of the variables used in the weighting, which are quite stable at both the population and individual levels. However, volunteerism may have changed over the intervening period in ways that made their 2021 measurements incompatible with the

Weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Age x Gender	2019 American Community Survey (ACS)
Education x Gender	
Education x Age	
Race/Ethnicity x Education	
Born inside vs. outside the U.S. among Hispanics and Asian Americans	
Years lived in the U.S.	
Census region x Metro/Non-metro	
Volunteerism	2019 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Voter registration	2018 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Party affiliation	2021 National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS)
Frequency of internet use	
Religious affiliation	

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on non-institutionalized adults. Voter registration is calculated using procedures from Hur, Achen (2013) and rescaled to include the total U.S. adult population.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

available (pre-pandemic) benchmarks. To address this, volunteerism is weighted using the profile variables that were measured in 2020. For all other weighting dimensions, the more recent panelist measurements from 2021 are used.

For panelists recruited in 2021, plausible values were imputed using the 2020 volunteerism values from existing panelists with similar characteristics. This ensures that any patterns of change that were observed in the existing panelists were also reflected in the new recruits when the weighting was performed.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey.

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	3,581	2.3 percentage points
Half sample	At least 1,764	3.2 percentage points
Rep/Lean Rep	1,600	3.3 percentage points
Half sample	At least 790	4.6 percentage points
Dem/Lean Dem	1,881	3.1 percentage points
Half sample	At least 927	4.4 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

Dispositions and response rates

Final dispositions	AAPOR code	Total
Completed interview	1.1	3,581
Logged onto survey; broke-off	2.12	44
Logged onto survey; did not complete any items	2.1121	27
Never logged on (implicit refusal)	2.11	463
Survey completed after close of the field period	2.27	1
Completed interview but was removed for data quality		4
Screened out		0
Total panelists in the survey		4,120
Completed interviews	I	3,581
Partial interviews	P	0
Refusals	R	538
Non-contact	NC	1
Other	O	0
Unknown household	UH	0
Unknown other	UO	0
Not eligible	NE	0
Total		4,120
AAPOR RR1 = $I / (I+P+R+NC+O+UH+UO)$		87%

Cumulative response rate	Total
Weighted response rate to recruitment surveys	12%
% of recruitment survey respondents who agreed to join the panel, among those invited	69%
% of those agreeing to join who were active panelists at start of Wave 105	43%
Response rate to Wave 105 survey	87%
Cumulative response rate	3%

© Pew Research Center, 2022

**2022 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL
WAVE 105
FINAL TOPLINE
MARCH 21 – 27, 2022
TOTAL N = 3,581**

OTHER QUESTIONS PREVIOUSLY RELEASED OR HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:

Here's a different kind of question. (If you don't know the answer, select "Not sure.") As far as you know...

ASK ALL:

Q64. Which of the following countries is NOT a member of NATO, or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization?
[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS]

Mar 21 – Mar 27

2022

2	Estonia
2	Turkey
1	Bulgaria
56	Ukraine (Correct)
38	Not sure

ASK ALL:

Q65. What country does this person lead? **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS]**



Mar 21 – Mar 27

2022

0	Malaysia
79	North Korea (Correct)
6	China
5	South Korea
9	Not sure

Mar 10 – Apr 6

2015¹

1
82
4
9
4 (no explicit option provided)

¹ In this web-based survey respondents were prompted to skip questions they did not know the answer to and there was no explicit "not sure" option provided.

ASK ALL:Q66. Which of the following is the dominant religion in Latin America? **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS]**

Mar 21 – Mar 27

2022

2	Protestantism
1	Buddhism
74	Catholicism (Correct)
1	Judaism
23	Not sure

ASK ALL:Q67. What currency does this symbol represent? **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS]**

Mar 21 – Mar 27

2022

67	Euro (Correct)
4	Yen
2	Pound
0	Dollar
26	Not sure

Jan 18 – Jan 24

2013¹

69	
14	
5	
*	
12	(no explicit option provided)

ASK ALL:Q68. Who is the current U.S. Secretary of State? **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS]**

Mar 21 – Mar 27

2022

51	Antony Blinken (Correct)
2	Hillary Clinton
4	Merrick Garland
8	Mike Pompeo
34	Not sure

June 22 – June 25 2017
(PHONE TREND FOR COMPARISON)

44	Rex Tillerson (Correct)
13	Mitt Romney
15	John Kerry
7	Scott Pruitt
22	DK/Refused

ASK ALL:Q69. Who is the current Prime Minister of the United Kingdom? **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS]**

Mar 21 – Mar 27

2022

4	Justin Trudeau
65	Boris Johnson (Correct)
2	Theresa May
1	Scott Morrison
27	Not sure

Feb 22 – Mar 4

2018¹

4	Kate Middleton
56	Theresa May (Correct)
22	David Cameron
11	Jeremy Corbyn
8	(no explicit option provided)

ASK ALL:

Q70. Which of the following regions or provinces of China has the highest per capita population of Muslims?
[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS]

Mar 21 – Mar 27

2022

5	Tibet
1	Macau
17	Xinjiang (Correct)
4	Guangdong
72	Not sure

ASK ALL:

Q71. The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) is a trade agreement that replaces which previous trade agreement? **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS]**

Mar 21 – Mar 27

2022

58	NAFTA (Correct)
1	AUKUS
1	KORUS
0	IMF
39	Not sure

ASK ALL:

Q72. Which country does this flag belong to? **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS]**



Mar 21 – Mar 27

2022

5	Argentina
1	France
5	Ghana
41	India (Correct)
47	Not sure

ASK ALL:

Q73. In 2018, the U.S. Embassy in Israel moved from one city to another. Where is it currently located? **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS]**

Mar 21 – Mar 27

2022

11	Tel Aviv
48	Jerusalem (Correct)
1	Haifa
1	New York City
39	Not sure

ASK ALL:

Q74. Which of the following is the capital of Afghanistan? **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS]**

Mar 21 – Mar 27

2022

3	Tehran
4	Kandahar
12	Baghdad
48	Kabul (Correct)
32	Not sure

ASK ALL:

Q75. Which country in Africa is known for both having the largest population and for being one of the largest oil producers on the continent? **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS]**

Mar 21 – Mar 27

2022

12	Sudan
3	Kenya
10	South Africa
26	Nigeria (Correct)
49	Not sure

TOTAL NUMBER CORRECT Q64 THROUGH Q75²:

Mar 21 – Mar 27

2022

5	12 out of 12
7	11 out of 12
8	10 out of 12
11	9 out of 12
10	8 out of 12
10	7 out of 12
9	6 out of 12
8	5 out of 12
8	4 out of 12
8	3 out of 12
6	2 out of 12
6	1 out of 12
5	0 out of 12
31	High (9-12 correct)
37	Medium (5-8 correct)
32	Low (0-4 correct)

² All percentages are rounded and may not total 100 for respective low, medium and high categories.