

**2020 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL  
WAVE 76 PATHWAYS  
FINAL TOPLINE  
October 6-12, 2020  
N=10,059**

**ASK ALL:**

CAMPNII How closely have you been following news about candidates for the 2020 presidential election?

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<u>No answer</u>
<b>2020 election</b>					
Oct 6-12, 2020	39	36	18	6	*
Aug 31-Sep 7, 2020	30	35	23	11	*
Jun 4-10, 2020	21	23	29	17	1
Apr 20-26, 2020	19	33	31	16	*
Feb 18-Mar 2, 2020	23	37	29	12	*
July 22-Aug 4, 2019	15	37	34	14	*
<b>2016 election</b>					
Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016 <sup>1</sup>	41	37	16	6	*
Sept 27-Oct 10, 2016	35	40	18	7	*
June 7-July 5, 2016	35	43	18	4	*

**ASK IF FOLLOWING ELECTION AT LEAST NOT TOO CLOSELY (CAMPNII=1-3) [N=9,791]:**

CAMPNIIIFREQ And about how often do you get news about the candidates for the 2020 presidential election?

**BASED ON TOTAL:**

Oct 6-12	
<u>2020</u>	
22	Almost all the time
35	Several times a day
22	About once a day
9	Several times a week
6	Less often
1	No answer
6	<i>Following news about candidates not at all closely</i>
*	<i>No answer to following news about candidates</i>

**ASK ALL:**

PRESRESULTFOL How closely, if at all, do you plan on following the results of the presidential election after polls close on Election Day?

Oct 6-12	
<u>2020</u>	
48	Very closely
32	Fairly closely
13	Not too closely
6	Not at all closely
1	No answer

<sup>1</sup> In surveys conducted in 2016, question asked about 2016 presidential election.

**ASK IF FOLLOWING RETURNS ON ELECTION NIGHT (PRESRESULTFOL=1-3) [N=9,674]:**

PRESRESULTPLAT Do you plan to use any of these ways of getting news to follow the results of the presidential election after polls close on Election Day? **[RANDOMIZE]**

**BASED ON TOTAL:**

	Yes, plan <u>to use</u>	No, do not <u>plan to use</u>	No <u>answer</u>	<i>Not following election results</i>	<i>No answer following results</i>
a. National network TV news, such as ABC, CBS, NBC, or PBS Oct 6-12, 2020	60	32	1	6	1
b. Cable TV news, such as CNN, Fox News, or MSNBC Oct 6-12, 2020	55	36	1	6	1
c. Social media Oct 6-12, 2020	42	50	1	6	1
d. News website or app Oct 6-12, 2020	54	38	1	6	1
e. A presidential candidate or their campaign Oct 6-12, 2020	28	63	2	6	1

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****ASK ALL:**

CAMPCOVEROWN Overall, how well do you think the news sources YOU TURN TO MOST OFTEN have covered the 2020 presidential election?

Oct 6-12  
2020

30	Very well
53	Somewhat well
12	Not too well
4	Not at all well
1	No answer

**ASK ALL:**

CAMPCOVEROWN2

And how well do you think the news sources YOU TURN TO MOST OFTEN have covered each of the following aspects of the 2020 presidential election?

**[RANDOMIZE ITEMS a-e; ALWAYS ASK ITEM f LAST]**

	Very <u>well</u>	Somewhat <u>well</u>	Not too <u>well</u>	Not at <u>all well</u>	No <u>answer</u>
a. The candidates' backgrounds and experience Oct 6-12, 2020	28	44	21	6	1
b. The candidates' stances on issues Oct 6-12, 2020	26	48	19	6	1
c. Which candidate is leading in the race Oct 6-12, 2020	28	46	20	6	1
d. The candidates' comments and statements Oct 6-12, 2020	35	45	14	5	1
e. What voters need to do in order to cast a ballot in the election Oct 6-12, 2020	35	43	17	5	1
f. How the coronavirus outbreak is impacting the election <b>[ANCHOR]</b> Oct 6-12, 2020	33	45	16	5	1

**RANDOMIZE CANDACCURACY AND CANDOFFENSE****ASK ALL:**

CANDACCURACY

Thinking about how the news media covers the presidential campaign and candidates, if a candidate makes a statement that is inaccurate, which comes closer to your view about what the news media should do? **[RANDOMIZE 1 AND 2 IN SAME ORDER AS CANDOFFENSE]**

Oct 6-12 <u>2020</u>		Sept 27- Oct 10 <u>2016</u>
71	Emphasize the statement because it is important for the public to know	76
26	NOT emphasize the statement because it unfairly gives the candidate extra attention	21
3	No answer	3

**RANDOMIZE CANDACCURACY AND CANDOFFENSE****ASK ALL:**

CANDOFFENSE Thinking about how the news media covers the presidential campaign and candidates, if a candidate makes a statement that many people might find offensive, which comes closer to your view about what the news media should do? **[RANDOMIZE 1 AND 2 IN SAME ORDER AS CANDACCURACY]**

Oct 6-12 <u>2020</u>		Sept 27- Oct 10 <u>2016</u>
66	Emphasize the statement because it is important for the public to know	62
31	NOT emphasize the statement because it unfairly gives the candidate extra attention	35
4	No answer	4

**ASK ALL:**

CANDRESP More broadly, in covering political campaigns and candidates, how much of a responsibility is it of the news media to correct statements that a candidate makes that are inaccurate?

Oct 6-12 <u>2020</u>		Sept 27- Oct 10 <u>2016</u>
67	A major responsibility	62
21	A minor responsibility	19
12	Not a responsibility	17
1	No answer	1

**ASK ALL:**

CAMPINFODIFF When you get news and information about the presidential campaign and candidates, do you generally find it... **[RANDOMIZE]**

Oct 6-12 <u>2020</u>	
55	Difficult to determine what is true and what is not
45	Easy to determine what is true and what is not
1	No answer

**ASK ALL:**

ELECTFTIGUE Thinking about the coverage of the presidential campaign and candidates, which comes closer to your view? **[RANDOMIZE]**

Oct 6-12 <u>2020</u>		June 7-July 5 <u>2016</u>
37	I like seeing a lot of coverage of the campaign and candidates	39
61	I am worn out by so much coverage of the campaign and candidates	59
2	No answer	1

**ASK ALL:**

NEWSHEARD Thinking about some stories covered by news organizations in the past several weeks...

Regardless of your own views and opinions, how much, if anything, have you heard or read about each of the following? **[RANDOMIZE ORDER OF ITEMS; PLEASE ADD A LINE OF SPACE BETWEEN THE QUESTION STEM AND FIRST SUB-ITEM; SPLIT ITEMS RANDOMLY ACROSS TWO SCREENS]**

**NO ITEMS a-w**

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Nothing at all</u>	<u>No answer</u>
x. Concerns that foreign governments are trying to influence the U.S. presidential election Oct 6-12, 2020	35	48	16	*
y. Concerns that the losing candidate in the U.S. presidential election will not accept the results Oct 6-12, 2020	49	37	14	*
z. The views of Amy Coney Barrett, Donald Trump's Supreme Court nominee, on key issues that may come before the court Oct 6-12, 2020	36	43	20	*
aa. Recent news and announcements about the development of a vaccine for the coronavirus Oct 6-12, 2020	40	51	9	*
bb. The impact Donald Trump testing positive for the coronavirus is having on the U.S. presidential election Oct 6-12, 2020	55	35	10	*

**ASK ALL:**

ELECTCALLCONF How much confidence, if any, do you have in the news sources YOU TURN TO MOST OFTEN to make the right call when announcing a winner of the presidential election after polls close on Election Day?

Oct 6-12

2020

36	A lot of confidence
46	Some confidence
13	Not much confidence
5	No confidence at all
1	No answer

**ASK ALL:**

KNOWELECTCALL

From what you have seen or heard, which of the following best describes how news organizations decide to announce who has won the presidential election in a state? Would you say that they announce who won when... **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS 1 & 2; ALWAYS ASK OPTION 3 LAST]**

Oct 6-12

2020

44	They feel confident about the outcome based on vote returns and other information
26	State officials are ready to formally certify the results after counting all ballots
30	Not sure
1	No answer

**ASK ALL:**

CONVOP

How often does the 2020 presidential election come up in the conversations you have, either in person, over the phone or online?

Oct 6-12

2020

24	Very often
39	Somewhat often
28	Not too often
9	Not at all
*	No answer

June 7-July 5

2016<sup>2</sup>

21
40
29
9
1

**ASK IF CONVERSE ABOUT ELECTION (CONVOP=1-3) [N=9,602]:**

CAMPISSUE

Overall, would you say your recent conversations about the 2020 presidential election have been mostly about... **[RANDOMIZE]**

**BASED ON TOTAL:**

Oct 6-12

2020

60	The candidates' personalities and comments
30	Specific issues or policy positions
1	No answer

June 7-July 5

2016<sup>2</sup>

57
30
2

9	<i>Election comes up not at all</i>
*	<i>No answer to election comes up</i>

9
1

<sup>2</sup> Question asked about 2016 presidential election.

**ASK ALL:**  
STOPTALK

Have you ever stopped talking to someone about political and election news, whether in person or online, because of something they said?

Oct 6-12 <u>2020</u>		Oct 29-Nov 11 <u>2019</u>
42	Yes	45
58	No	54
1	No answer	1

**TREND FOR COMPARISON:**

Have you ever stopped talking to someone about political news, whether in person or online, because of something they said about government and politics?

Feb 28-Mar 12, <u>2017</u>	
44	Yes
56	No
0	No answer

**ASK ALL:**  
FOLELECT

How closely do you follow political and election news?

Oct 6-12 <u>2020</u>		Oct 29-Nov 11 <u>2019</u>
30	Very closely	24
40	Somewhat closely	38
22	Not too closely	25
8	Not at all closely	13
*	No answer	1

**RANDOMIZE TCFAC TS AND NEWSFACTS****ASK ALL:**  
TCFACTS

When it comes to important issues facing the country, would you say most Trump and Biden supporters... **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS]**

Oct 6-12 <u>2020</u>		Sept 27- Oct 10 <u>2016</u> <sup>3</sup>
13	Can agree on the basic facts, even if they often disagree over plans and policies	19
85	Not only disagree over plans and policies, but they also cannot agree on the basic facts	79
2	No answer	2

<sup>3</sup> 2016 question wording asked about "Trump and Clinton supporters"

**RANDOMIZE TCFACTS AND NEWSFACTS****ASK ALL:**

NEWSFACTS When it comes to important issues facing the country, would you say most Americans...  
**[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS]**

Oct 6-12

2020

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 19 | Generally get the same basic facts regardless of the news sources they turn to |
| 80 | Often get different basic facts depending on the news sources they turn to     |
| 1  | No answer  |

**ASK ALL:**

CAMPINFOCONF How much do you think each type of news and information leaves Americans confused about the 2020 presidential election? **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

	<u>A great deal</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not much</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Made-up information that is intended to mislead the public Oct 6-12, 2020	59	31	8	2	*
b. Breaking information that hasn't been fully verified Oct 6-12, 2020	47	41	9	2	*
c. Factual information presented to favor one side of an issue Oct 6-12, 2020	42	43	11	3	*

**ASK ALL:**

MAINMISINFO Do you think the news sources YOU TURN TO MOST OFTEN have done any of the following in their coverage of the 2020 presidential election? **[DISPLAY ITEMS IN SAME ORDER AS CAMPINFOCONF]**

	<u>Yes, they have done this</u>	<u>No, they have not done this</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Reported made-up information intended to mislead the public Oct 6-12, 2020	37	62	2
b. Published breaking information that hasn't been fully verified Oct 6-12, 2020	56	42	2
c. Presented factual information to favor one side of an issue Oct 6-12, 2020	67	32	1



On a different topic...

**ASK ALL:**

COVIDFOL How closely have you been following news about the outbreak of the coronavirus strain known as COVID-19?

Oct 6-12 <u>2020</u>		Aug 31-Sep 7 <u>2020</u>	Jun 4-10 <u>2020</u>	Apr 20-26 <u>2020</u>	Mar 19-24 <u>2020</u>	Mar 10-16 <u>2020</u>
37	Very closely	35	39	46	57	51
42	Fairly closely	46	46	42	35	38
16	Not too closely	14	11	10	7	9
4	Not at all closely	4	3	2	1	2
*	No answer	*	*	*	*	*

**ASK ALL:**

COVIDDEAL All in all, do you think that the coronavirus outbreak has been... **[RANDOMIZE ANSWER CHOICES 1 AND 2; ALWAYS ASK ANSWER CHOICE 3 LAST]**

Oct 6-12 <u>2020</u>		Aug 31-Sep 7 <u>2020</u>	Jun 4-10 <u>2020</u>	Apr 20-26 <u>2020</u>
36	Made a BIGGER deal than it really is	39	38	29
30	Made a SMALLER deal than it really is	26	21	27
33	Approached about right	33	40	42
1	No answer	2	1	1

**ASK ALL:**

COVIDCONTROL Which statement comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right?

Oct 6-12 <u>2020</u>		Aug 31-Sep 7 <u>2020</u>
38	The U.S. has controlled the outbreak as much as it could have	37
61	The U.S. has not controlled the outbreak as much as it could have	61
1	No answer	2

**ASK ALL:**

KNOWCOVIDDEATH Just your best guess, which of the following is closest to the official count for the number of people who have died from the coronavirus in the U.S.? **[RANDOMLY DISPLAY ANSWERS 1-6 OR 6-1; ALWAYS ASK OPTION 7 LAST]**

Oct 6-12 <u>2020</u>	
4	About 50,000 people
7	About 100,000 people
65	About 200,000 people (correct)
6	About 300,000 people
2	About 400,000 people
5	About 500,000 people
11	Not sure
*	No answer

Before we finish the survey...

**ASK ALL:**

ANTIFHRD How much, if anything, have you heard or read about Antifa?

Oct 6-12

2020

22	A lot
50	A little
27	Nothing at all
*	No answer

**ADDITIONAL QUESTION HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

**ASK IF HEARD AT LEAST A LITTLE ABOUT ANTIFA (ANTIFHRD=1,2) [N=8,311]:**

ANTIFARATE Do you think Antifa is a... **[RANDOMLY DISPLAY RESPONSES 1-4 OR 4-1]**

Oct 6-12

2020

50	Very bad thing for the country
22	Somewhat bad thing for the country
18	Somewhat good thing for the country
6	Very good thing for the country
4	No answer

**ASK ALL:**

PARTY In politics today, do you consider yourself a:

**ASK IF INDEP/SOMETHING ELSE (PARTY=3 or 4) OR MISSING:**

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to...<sup>4</sup>

<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Something else</u>	<u>No answer</u>	<u>Lean Rep</u>	<u>Lean Dem</u>
27	30	28	13	1	17	22

<sup>4</sup> PARTY and PARTYLN asked in a prior survey.