

Methodology

More details about our international survey methodology and country-specific sample designs are [available here](#).

For this post, we analyzed the open-ended responses to the question, “What one word comes to mind first when you think about the United States today?” In Canada, responses were collected in both English and French and translated into English by the vendor. In Mexico, responses were collected in Spanish and translated into English by the vendor. Of the 1,004 Canadians surveyed, 970 gave a response. Of the 1,028 Mexicans surveyed, 869 gave a response.

Two bilingual English-Spanish coders independently read each response to verify translation, condensed the response into one word and coded it for sentiment.

When more than one word was provided by the respondent, coders distilled the phrase into a single word, if possible. When a sentence was provided, responses were coded into a single word that captured the main idea. If a short phrase would be distorted if shortened, the phrase was kept intact. For the purpose of analysis, words coders deemed as expressing the same concept in different forms were usually grouped together, while words expressing similar yet different concepts were usually left separate. For example, “migration” and “migrate” were grouped, but “migrants” was left on its own. Responses were coded as “bad” and “good” only when the response was precisely the one word “bad” or “good.” If the response could not be feasibly condensed into one idea, the response was treated as not codable.

Each word or phrase was then coded for sentiment. Words such as “good” and “opportunity” were coded as positive. Words like “terrible,” “racism,” “destruction” or “bad president” were coded as negative. Mentions of “Trump,” “president” and other words such as “wall” or “migration” were coded as neutral. Neutral was also chosen whenever the response was explicitly neutral, when the intended sentiment was unclear, or when the response could be interpreted as either positive and negative.