

2025 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL
Wave 182: Trust in Science Survey
OCTOBER 20-26, 2025

TOPLINE
N=5,111

Note: All numbers are percentages unless otherwise noted. Rows/columns may not total 100% due to rounding. The questions presented below are part of a larger survey conducted on the American Trends Panel.

"No answer" includes web respondents who do not answer the question as well as telephone respondents who refuse to answer or who say they don't know how to answer. In cases where "Not sure" was offered as an explicit option to web and telephone respondents, the "No answer" category includes only web skips and telephone refusals.

This survey was conducted primarily online, with some interviews conducted by live telephone. This topline shows the programming language for online administration. For details on how questions were slightly modified for phone administration, visit the questionnaire.

American Trends Panel surveys conducted between October 2016 and June 2024 were conducted fully online (with tablets and data plans provided to adults without home internet). American Trends Panel surveys conducted prior to October 2016 were conducted primarily online, with some respondents completing by mail. For additional details, visit the methodology.

PN = Programming note

	Sample size	Margin of error at 95% confidence level
U.S. adults	5,111	+/- 1.7 percentage points

CONF**ASK ALL:****[PN: RANDOMIZE ITEMS ACROSS TWO SCREENS]**

How much confidence, if any, do you have in each of the following to act in the best interests of the public?

		A great deal of confidence	A fair amount of confidence	Not too much confidence	No confidence at all	No answer
a.	Elected officials					
	Oct 20-26, 2025	3	25	52	20	<1
	Oct 21-27, 2024	2	31	51	15	<1
	Sep 25-Oct 1, 2023	2	23	52	23	<1
	Sep 13-18, 2022	2	26	50	21	<1
	Nov 30-Dec 12, 2021	2	22	52	23	<1
	Nov 18-29, 2020	4	32	47	15	1
	Apr 20-26, 2020	3	33	49	14	1
	Jan 7-21, 2019	4	32	50	14	<1
	Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	4	33	48	15	<1
	Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	3	22	52	23	<1
	May 10-Jun 6, 2016	3	24	54	19	1
b.	Journalists					
	Oct 20-26, 2025	8	39	36	17	<1
	Oct 21-27, 2024	7	38	37	19	<1
	Sep 25-Oct 1, 2023	6	36	37	21	<1
	Sep 13-18, 2022	6	38	36	19	<1
	Nov 30-Dec 12, 2021	6	34	36	24	1
	Nov 18-29, 2020	9	37	31	23	<1
	Apr 20-26, 2020	9	39	33	19	<1
	Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	15	41	28	16	<1
TREND FOR COMPARISON:						
<i>The news media</i>						
	Jan 7-21, 2019	9	38	34	19	<1
	Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	10	38	33	19	<1
	Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	8	32	35	25	<1
	May 10-Jun 6, 2016	5	33	40	21	1
c.	The military					
	Oct 20-26, 2025	31	45	18	6	<1
	Oct 21-27, 2024	30	48	16	5	<1
	Sep 25-Oct 1, 2023	26	48	19	6	<1
	Sep 13-18, 2022	29	48	17	6	<1
	Nov 30-Dec 12, 2021	25	49	18	7	1
	Nov 18-29, 2020	39	44	13	4	<1
	Apr 20-26, 2020	38	45	13	4	<1
	Jan 7-21, 2019	36	46	14	4	<1
	Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	41	41	12	4	1
	Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	39	41	15	4	<1
	May 10-Jun 6, 2016	33	46	15	5	1

CONF CONTINUED ...

		<u>A great deal of confidence</u>	<u>A fair amount of confidence</u>	<u>Not too much confidence</u>	<u>No confidence at all</u>	<u>No answer</u>
d.	Religious leaders					
	Oct 20-26, 2025	12	44	30	13	<1
	Oct 21-27, 2024	11	44	30	14	<1
	Sep 25-Oct 1, 2023	11	43	31	15	1
	Sep 13-18, 2022	12	41	31	16	<1
	Nov 30-Dec 12, 2021	12	43	30	15	1
	Nov 18-29, 2020	15	45	29	12	<1
	Apr 20-26, 2020	17	46	26	11	1
	Jan 7-21, 2019	13	44	30	12	<1
	Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	15	47	27	11	1
	Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	9	40	34	16	1
	May 10-Jun 6, 2016	13	39	32	14	1
e.	Business leaders					
	Oct 20-26, 2025	3	33	47	16	<1
	Oct 21-27, 2024	4	36	46	13	<1
	Sep 25-Oct 1, 2023	3	32	48	16	<1
	Sep 13-18, 2022	4	35	46	14	<1
	Nov 30-Dec 12, 2021	4	36	45	15	1
	Nov 18-29, 2020	5	41	41	12	<1
	Apr 20-26, 2020	5	43	41	11	1
	Jan 7-21, 2019	6	40	43	11	<1
	Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	4	39	43	14	<1
	Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	5	40	42	13	<1
	May 10-Jun 6, 2016	4	37	44	14	1
f.	Medical scientists					
	Oct 20-26, 2025	29	50	16	5	1
	Oct 21-27, 2024	30	48	18	4	<1
	Sep 25-Oct 1, 2023	25	53	17	5	<1
	Sep 13-18, 2022	30	50	16	4	<1
	Nov 30-Dec 12, 2021	29	49	17	5	<1
	Nov 18-29, 2020	40	45	12	2	<1
	Apr 20-26, 2020	43	46	9	2	<1
	Jan 7-21, 2019	35	52	11	2	<1
	May 10-Jun 6, 2016	24	60	12	3	1

ASK FORM 1 ONLY**[N=2,546]:**

CONF CONTINUED ...

		<u>A great deal of confidence</u>	<u>A fair amount of confidence</u>	<u>Not too much confidence</u>	<u>No confidence at all</u>	<u>No answer</u>
ASK FORM 2 ONLY						
[N=2,565]:						
g.	Scientists					
	Oct 20-26, 2025	28	49	19	3	1
	Oct 21-27, 2024	26	51	19	4	<1
	Sep 25-Oct 1, 2023	23	50	22	5	1
	Sep 13-18, 2022	28	49	18	5	1
	Nov 30-Dec 12, 2021	29	49	17	5	1
	Nov 18-29, 2020	39	45	13	3	<1
	Apr 20-26, 2020	39	48	10	2	1
	Jan 7-21, 2019	35	51	11	2	<1
	Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	33	49	14	3	<1
	Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	27	52	17	5	<1
	May 10-Jun 6, 2016	21	55	18	4	1
NO ITEM H						
i.	Public school principals for grades K-12					
	Oct 20-26, 2025	16	54	23	7	1
	Oct 21-27, 2024	17	55	22	7	<1
	Sep 25-Oct 1, 2023	14	52	26	8	<1
	Sep 13-18, 2022	15	53	23	8	<1
	Nov 30-Dec 12, 2021	14	51	26	9	1
	Nov 18-29, 2020	21	54	19	6	<1
	Apr 20-26, 2020	28	55	14	3	<1
	Jan 7-21, 2019	21	56	18	4	1
	Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	25	55	16	4	<1
TREND FOR COMPARISON:						
<i>Public school principals and superintendents for grades K-12</i>						
	Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	22	55	17	5	1
	May 10-Jun 6, 2016	13	53	27	7	1
j.	Police officers					
	Oct 20-26, 2025	20	50	22	7	<1
	Oct 21-27, 2024	21	52	21	7	<1
	Sep 25-Oct 1, 2023	19	50	22	8	1
	Sep 13-18, 2022	21	49	22	8	<1
	Nov 30-Dec 12, 2021	20	49	22	9	<1
	Nov 18-29, 2020	26	48	19	7	<1
	Apr 20-26, 2020	24	54	17	4	<1
	Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	30	48	16	5	<1

SCI_EFFECT¹**ASK ALL:**

Overall, would you say science has had a mostly positive effect on our society or a mostly negative effect on our society?

	<u>Mostly positive</u>	<u>Mostly negative</u>	<u>Equal positive and negative effects</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Oct 20-26, 2025	61	7	31	<1
Sep 25-Oct 1, 2023	57	8	34	<1
Nov 1-7, 2021	65	7	28	<1
Feb 16-21, 2021	67	6	27	1
Jan 7-21, 2019	73	3	23	<1
Mar 2-28, 2016	67	4	27	2

SCI_WORLDLEADER²**ASK ALL:**

Thinking about all the important goals for the United States, how important do you think it is for the U.S. to be a world leader in scientific achievements?

	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Not too important</u>	<u>Not at all important</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Oct 20-26, 2025	57	34	7	1	1
Sep 25-Oct 1, 2023	52	37	8	2	1
Sep 13-18, 2022	54	37	7	1	1

TREND FOR COMPARISON:

Pew Research Center survey conducted by telephone: *Thinking about all the important goals for the United States, how important do you think it is for the United States to be a world leader in scientific achievements? Do you think it is very important, somewhat important, not too important or not at all important?*

Oct 1-28,

2019

69	<i>Very important</i>
24	<i>Somewhat important</i>
3	<i>Not too important</i>
3	<i>Not at all important</i>
1	<i>DK/Refused</i>

¹ In all surveys prior to October 2025, this question label was SC1.

² In the surveys conducted in 2023 and 2022, this question label was SCI_US1.

SCI_INVESTMENTS³**ASK ALL:****[PN: ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-2/2-1]**

Do you think government investments in scientific research aimed at advancing knowledge are usually...

	<u>Worthwhile investments for society over time</u>	<u>Not worth the investments</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Oct 20-26, 2025	84	15	1
Sep 25-Oct 1, 2023	78	20	2
Sep 13-18, 2022	81	18	1

TREND FOR COMPARISON:

Pew Research Center survey conducted by telephone: *In your opinion, are government investments in scientific research aimed at advancing knowledge usually worthwhile for society over time, or are they not worth the investment?*

Oct 1-28,

2019

82	<i>Yes, they are worthwhile for society over time</i>
15	<i>No, they are not worth the investment</i>
3	<i>DK/Refused</i>

TREND FOR COMPARISON:

SCI3 *In your opinion, do you think government investments in the following usually pay off in the long run, or are they not worth it? [RANDOMIZE ITEMS]*

	<u>Government investments usually pay off in the long run</u>	<u>Government investments usually aren't worth it</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. <i>Basic scientific research</i> Apr 23-May 6, 2018	77	22	1

TREND FOR COMPARISON:

Pew Research Center survey conducted by telephone: *In your opinion, do government investments in [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] usually pay off in the long run, or are they not worth it?*

	<u>Yes, pay off in the long run</u>	<u>No, aren't worth it</u>	<u>DK/Ref (VOL.)</u>
a. <i>Basic scientific research</i> Aug 15-25, 2014	71	24	5
<i>Apr 28-May 12, 2009</i>	73	18	9

³ In the surveys conducted in 2023 and 2022, this question label was SCI_US2.

SCI_GOVPRIV⁴**ASK ALL:****[PN: ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-2/2-1]**

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

	Government investment in research is <u>essential</u> for scientific progress	Private investment will ensure that enough scientific progress is made, even without government <u>investment</u>	No answer
Oct 20-26, 2025	61	37	2
Apr 23-May 6, 2018	57	42	2

TREND FOR COMPARISONPew Research Center surveys conducted by telephone: Which of these comes closer to your view?
[READ AND RANDOMIZE RESPONSE OPTIONS]

		Aug 15-25 2014	Apr 28-May 12 2009
<i>Government investment in research is ESSENTIAL for scientific progress [OR]</i>		61	60
<i>Private investment will ensure that enough scientific progress is made, even without government investment</i>		34	29
<i>Don't know/Refused (VOL.)</i>		5	11

SCI_WORLDCOMP⁵**ASK ALL:****[PN: ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-2/2-1 HOLDING 3 LAST]**

When it comes to scientific achievements, compared with other countries around the world, do you think the United States is...

	<u>Gaining ground</u>	<u>Losing ground</u>	<u>Staying in about the same place</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Oct 20-26, 2025	13	47	38	1
Sep 25-Oct 1, 2023	14	39	45	1
Sep 13-18, 2022	14	38	47	1

⁴ In the 2018 survey, this question label was SCI4.⁵ In the surveys conducted in 2023 and 2022, this question label was SCI_US3.

SCICONTRIB**ASK ALL:****[PN: RANDOMIZE ITEMS; ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-5/5-1 HOLDING 6 LAST]**

How much do you think each of the following contributes to scientific achievements in the U.S.?

		A great deal	Quite a bit	Some	Not too much	Not at all	Not sure	No answer
a.	Colleges and universities Oct 20-26, 2025	28	30	25	6	2	8	<1
b.	Private companies Oct 20-26, 2025	17	32	31	7	2	11	<1
c.	Federal government agencies Oct 20-26, 2025	14	25	35	13	3	11	<1
d.	Charitable foundations Oct 20-26, 2025	9	22	39	14	4	13	<1

OTHER QUESTIONS PREVIOUSLY RELEASED OR HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

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...⁶

<u>Republican</u> 29	<u>Democrat</u> 27	<u>Independent</u> 28	Something else 13	No answer 2	Lean Rep 17	Lean Dem 19
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⁶ PARTY and PARTYLN asked in a prior survey.