

SEPTEMBER 5, 2013

## What the Public Knows – In Words, Pictures, Maps and Graphs

Take the Latest Quiz Online

**Before you read the report**, we invite you to test your own News IQ by taking the latest interactive knowledge quiz now available on the Pew Research Center website. The short quiz tests your knowledge of questions recently asked in a national poll. After completing the quiz, you can compare your scores with the general public and with people like you. To take the latest quiz, click on this link:

<http://pewresearch.org/quiz/the-news-iq-quiz/>

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# What the Public Knows – In Words, Pictures, Maps and Graphs

The latest Pew Research Center News IQ quiz measures the public's knowledge of current affairs with several different question formats, including graphs, charts and pictures. (Take the quiz yourself before reading this report, by clicking [here](#).)

A substantial majority of Americans (77%) are able to correctly identify Edward Snowden from a photograph of the former government contractor who leaked classified information about the NSA. Nearly as many (74%) know that the Federal Reserve is primarily responsible for monetary policy and not tax, trade or energy policy.

Other questions are more challenging. The most difficult question on the quiz asks respondents to identify the trend in the stock market since 2008 from four charts. Just (21%) correctly select the chart showing a steep drop in the Dow from 2008 to 2009, followed by a gradual and steady recovery.

Another question presents the pictures and names of four Supreme Court justices and asks respondents to identify the justice who has most often been the court's swing vote in recent years; just 28% select the picture of Justice Anthony Kennedy. [Previous news quizzes](#) also have shown that the public is not knowledgeable about the Supreme Court and its members

Overall, the new quiz proved difficult: Majorities answered 5 of 13 questions correctly. In the previous News IQ quiz [in January](#), majorities correctly answered 11 of the 13 items. The new quiz was conducted Aug. 7-14 among 1,052 adults. ([Full question wording](#).)

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## The Public's News IQ

Percent able to identify...

Edward Snowden (from photo)\*



Fed's primary policy responsibility (Monetary)



States allowing gay marriage (on map)\*



What's the Common Core (School Curriculum standards)



More women than men graduate college



Florida Sen. Marco Rubio (from a set of four photos)\*



Egypt highlighted on map of Middle East\*



% of congressional seats held by women (about 20%)



Country in population pyramid (Nigeria)\*



What is Google Glass? (computer you can wear)



Marissa Mayer, CEO of Yahoo (from photo)\*



Supreme Court's swing vote (Kennedy)\*



Level of Dow Jones 2008-2013 (from set of four charts)\*



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Aug. 7-14, 2013

\* Indicates a visual question for which respondents were shown images.

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## Age Differences in Knowledge

Past News IQ surveys have often found young people to be less knowledgeable than older people about current events, but in the current poll the results are more mixed.

When shown a map of the U.S. with several states shaded, 62% of those under 30 know the shaded states allow same-sex marriage. Comparable majorities of those 30-49 (57%) and 50-64 (58%) answer this question correctly. About half (51%) of those 65 and older know this.

Older people struggled with a question that showed a country's population pyramid – a graphic of the relative size of age groups in a population. The country depicted has a substantial youth population and fewer older people. Just 29% of those 65 and older correctly selected Nigeria (from a list of four countries) as the country represented by the pyramid. That compares with at least four-in-ten among younger groups.

Younger adults fared worse than older people on some political questions. Only about four-in-ten (42%) of those younger than 30 and 46% of those 30-49 could identify Marco Rubio as a U.S. senator from Florida from a group of four prominent Hispanics whose pictures and names were shown. Majorities of older Americans correctly select Rubio's photograph. Younger people also are less likely to know that women currently hold about 20% of the seats in Congress.

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### Younger People Less Aware of Marco Rubio, Women in Congress

	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
<i>% who could identify ...</i>	%	%	%	%
Fed responsible for (Monetary policy)	57	69	82	82
▼ Marco Rubio (from set of four photos)	42	46	56	65
▼ Edward Snowden (from photo)	70	71	84	84
Women are (about 20%) of Congress	41	40	54	56
Common Core (Curriculum standards)	47	60	61	51
▼ Egypt highlighted on map of Middle East	46	45	55	53
More women than men graduate college	51	54	58	59
▼ Dow 2008-2013 (from set of four charts)	17	19	24	24
▼ Marissa Mayer, Yahoo CEO (from photo)	29	38	36	31
▼ Kennedy is court's swing vote (from four photos)	28	28	27	30
▼ Map of states allowing same-sex marriage	62	57	58	51
▼ Nation in population pyramid (Nigeria)	47	45	43	29
Google Glass (computer you can wear)	48	47	42	28
Average number correct overall	5.9	6.2	6.8	6.4
N	160	276	356	260

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▼ indicates a visual question for which respondents are shown images.

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## Gender and News Knowledge

There are no significant differences between women and men on the three quiz questions about women.

Comparable majorities of women (55%) and men (56%) know that more women than men graduate from college with bachelor's degrees. Similarly, 45% of women and 49% of men know that women make up about one-fifth of the members of Congress.

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### No Real Gender Differences in Questions about Women

	Total	Men	Women	M-W diff
<i>% who could identify ...</i>	%	%	%	
<b>V</b> Marissa Mayer, Yahoo CEO (from photo)	34	38	31	+7
Women are (about 20%) of Congress	47	49	45	+4
More women than men graduate college	55	56	55	+1
N	1052	522	530	

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**V** indicates a visual question for which respondents are shown images.

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A question about Marissa Mayer, the CEO of Yahoo, proved difficult for both women and men. A photograph of Mayer was shown and respondents were asked to identify the person pictured. Just 31% of women and 38% of men chose Mayer from a list of prominent women.

On other questions, men are 13 points more likely than women to know that Google Glass is a computer you can wear (49 % vs. 36%) and to pick out Marco Rubio as the senator from Florida (58% vs. 45%). In addition, men are more likely than women to be able to identify Egypt as the country highlighted on a map of the Middle East (55% vs. 44%).

## Educational Differences

As with previous knowledge tests, college graduates are more likely than those with a high school degree or less to answer every question correctly. About eight in-ten of those with at least a college degree (78%) correctly identify the term “Common Core” as a set of school curriculum standards in language and math. Just half as many (39%) of those with no college experience answered this question correctly.

College graduates are 37 points more likely than those with no college experience to correctly identify Egypt on a map. Similarly, 62% of college graduates selected Nigeria as the country represented by the population pyramid, compared with 29% of those with no college experience.

Educational differences are more modest when it comes to awareness of Edward Snowden and the states that allow same-sex marriage.

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### Better Educated, Better Informed

	HS or less	Some coll	Coll grad+	Coll-HS diff
<i>% who could identify ...</i>	%	%	%	
Common Core (Curriculum standards)	39	59	78	+39
▼ Egypt highlighted on map of Middle East	34	51	71	+37
▼ Nation in population pyramid (Nigeria)	29	41	62	+33
Fed responsible for (Monetary policy)	61	72	90	+29
▼ Marco Rubio (from set of four photos)	42	51	66	+24
Google Glass (computer you can wear)	33	42	56	+23
▼ Marissa Mayer, Yahoo CEO (from photo)	25	36	47	+22
More women than men graduate college	47	56	68	+21
▼ Kennedy is court’s swing vote (from four photos)	19	29	40	+21
▼ Dow 2008-2013 (from set of four charts)	15	19	32	+17
▼ Edward Snowden (from photo)	72	78	84	+12
Women are (about 20%) of Congress	42	49	53	+11
▼ Map of states allowing same-sex marriage	54	55	64	+10
Average number correct overall	5.1	6.4	8.1	+3.0
N	420	289	343	

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Aug. 7-14, 2013.

▼ indicates a visual question for which respondents are shown images.

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## Partisan Differences in Knowledge

Republicans (63%) are more likely than Democrats (53%) to know that the Common Core refers to curriculum standards in language and math.

But there are only slight partisan differences on most other questions. Republicans and Democrats are about equally unfamiliar with who on the Supreme Court is most often the swing vote in closely divided cases. Just 33% of Democrats and 26% of Republicans correctly select Justice Anthony Kennedy. Republicans are about as likely to say that Antonin Scalia (21%) or Clarence Thomas (20%) often serve as the court's swing vote.

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### Few Republicans or Democrats Able to Identify Justice Kennedy as Court's Swing Vote

	Rep	Dem	Ind	R-D diff
<i>% who could identify ...</i>	%	%	%	
Common Core (Curriculum standards)	63	53	58	+10
▼ Dow 2008-2013 (from set of four charts)	26	18	22	+8
▼ Nation in population pyramid (Nigeria)	46	38	45	+8
Fed responsible for (Monetary policy)	78	70	76	+8
▼ Marco Rubio (from set of four photos)	57	53	50	+4
▼ Marissa Mayer, Yahoo CEO (from photo)	35	35	38	0
▼ Map of states allowing same-sex marriage	57	60	57	-3
▼ Egypt highlighted on map of Middle East	46	49	56	-3
▼ Edward Snowden (from photo)	77	80	79	-3
Women are (about 20%) of congress	46	50	49	-4
More women than men graduate college	54	59	56	-5
Google Glass (computer you can wear)	39	44	47	-5
▼ Kennedy is court's swing vote (from four photos)	26	33	28	-7
Average number correct overall	6.5	6.4	6.6	+0.1
N	279	364	366	

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Aug. 7-14, 2013.

▼ indicates a visual question for which respondents are shown images.

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## About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on a survey conducted August 7-14, 2013 among a sample of 1,052 adults, 18 years of age or older. The survey was conducted by the GfK Group using KnowledgePanel, its nationally representative online research panel. KnowledgePanel members are recruited through probability sampling methods and include both those with internet access and those without. KnowledgePanel provides internet access for those who do not have it and, if needed, a device to access the internet when they join the panel. A combination of random digit dialing (RDD) and address-based sampling (ABS) methodologies have been used to recruit panel members (in 2009 KnowledgePanel switched its sampling methodology for recruiting panel members from RDD to ABS). The panel comprises households with landlines and cellular phones, including those only with cell phones, and those without a phone. Both the RDD and ABS samples were provided by Marketing Systems Group (MSG). KnowledgePanel continually recruits new panel members throughout the year to offset panel attrition as people leave the panel. The survey was conducted in English. Respondents were selected randomly from eligible adult household members of the panel. All sampled members received an initial email August 7-8, 2013 to notify them of the survey and included a link to the survey questionnaire. One follow-up reminder was sent three days later to those who had not yet responded.

The final sample for this survey was weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin, household income, metropolitan area or not, and region to parameters from the July 2013 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS). In addition, the sample is weighted to match current patterns of internet access from the July 2011 CPS survey. This weight is multiplied by an initial base or sampling weight that corrects for differences in the probability of selection of various segments of the sample and by a panel weight that adjusts for any biases due to nonresponse and noncoverage at the panel recruitment stage (using all of the parameters mentioned above as well home ownership status).

Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting at each of these stages. Sampling error for the total sample of 1,052 respondents is plus or minus 3.7 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence. 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.

## About the News IQ Quizzes

News IQ quizzes have been conducted at least twice a year since 2007. The quizzes pose questions to the public about specific policy proposals, concepts, events, places and people in the news. For previous reports see [February 2013](#), [August 2012](#), [April 2012](#), [October 2011](#), [March 2011](#), [November 2010](#), [July 2010](#), [January 2010](#), [October 2009](#), [April 2009](#), [December 2008](#), [February 2008](#), [September 2007](#) and [April 2007](#). The results from these nationally representative samples of the public are then used to create the quizzes found on [PewResearch.org](#), where visitors can compare their level of knowledge with the public's.

The current News IQ is the third in the series to employ visual questions (the first was in [October 2011](#)). Because the questions asked about people's knowledge using pictures, charts and maps, a web-based survey was used so people could see and respond to the pictures in the questions. The survey was conducted using GfK Knowledge Networks' KnowledgePanel, an online nationally representative panel of households recruited through probability-based (random) sampling methods. More typically, the News IQ quizzes are administered to a random sample of respondents reached on landlines or cell phones.

The specific questions used in the News IQ quizzes are selected to reflect a range of topical areas and different levels of familiarity to the public. The goal is to include questions that cover facts and concepts that can serve as indicators of the public's awareness of information about important issues in the news.

In addition to the News IQ surveys, the Pew Research Center also regularly includes measures of knowledge in its other survey research. These are typically used to help assess how awareness of and knowledge about issues relates to people's attitudes and opinions on those issues.



**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS**  
**AUGUST 2013 KNOWLEDGE SURVEY**  
**August 7-14, 2013**  
**TOPLINE**  
**N=1,052**

**ASK ALL**

This survey asks questions about some people and things that have been in the news. Please answer the questions as best as you can. If you don't know the answer to a question, just move on to the next one.

**RANDOMIZE QUESTIONS 1-14****ASK ALL**

Q.1 In recent years, which of the following Supreme Court justices has most often been the swing vote in closely divided court cases?

**1**

Antonin Scalia

**2**

Anthony Kennedy

**3**

Clarence Thomas

**4**

Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Aug 7-14

2013

20	Antonin Scalia (#1)
28	Anthony Kennedy (#2) <i>(Correct)</i>
15	Clarence Thomas (#3)
18	Ruth Bader Ginsburg (#4)
18	No answer

**RANDOMIZE QUESTIONS 1-14****ASK ALL**

Q.2 Who is this? [**RANDOMIZE**]



Aug 7-14

2013

77	Edward Snowden <i>(Correct)</i>
4	Martin O'Malley
4	Rory McIlroy
3	Julian Assange
12	No answer

**RANDOMIZE QUESTIONS 1-14****ASK ALL:**

Q.3 Which one is a U.S. Senator from Florida? **[RANDOMIZE]**

**1**

Marco Rubio

**2**

Ray Suarez

**3**

Julian Castro

**4**

Jorge Ramos

Aug 7-14

2013

52	Marco Rubio (#1) <i>(Correct)</i>
12	Ray Suarez (#2)
6	Julian Castro (#3)
13	Jorge Ramos (#4)
17	No answer

**RANDOMIZE QUESTIONS 1-14****ASK ALL**

Q.4 Who is this? **[RANDOMIZE]**



Aug 7-14

2013

34	Marissa Mayer, CEO of Yahoo <i>(Correct)</i>
14	Wendy Davis, state senator from Texas
13	Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of Health and Human Services
11	Lindsey Vonn, professional alpine skier
28	No answer

**RANDOMIZE QUESTIONS 1-14****ASK ALL:**

Q.5 What Middle Eastern country is highlighted on this map? **[RANDOMIZE]**



Aug 7-14

2013

49	Egypt (Correct)
15	Syria
10	Saudi Arabia
10	Turkey
16	No answer

**TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:**

What Middle Eastern country is highlighted on this map...? **[RANDOMIZE]**

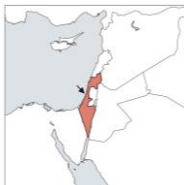


Jan 18-24

2013

50	Syria (Correct)
19	Turkey
11	Saudi Arabia
5	Egypt
15	No answer

What Middle Eastern country is highlighted on this map...? **[RANDOMIZE]**



Sept 30-Oct 11

2011

57	Israel (Correct)
12	Saudi Arabia
10	Turkey
4	Egypt
17	No answer

**RANDOMIZE QUESTIONS 1-14****ASK ALL:**

Q.6 About what percentage of seats in the U.S. congress are currently held by women? **[SHOW OPTIONS IN ORDER]**

Aug 7-14

2013

47	About 20% (Correct)
33	About 30%
8	About 40%
1	About 50%
11	No answer

**RANDOMIZE QUESTIONS 1-14****ASK ALL:**

Q.7 What kind of policy is the U.S. Federal Reserve primarily responsible for? **[RANDOMIZE]**

Aug 7-14

2013

- |    |                                    |
|----|------------------------------------|
| 73 | Monetary policy ( <i>Correct</i> ) |
| 11 | Tax policy                         |
| 7  | Trade policy                       |
| 2  | Energy policy                      |
| 7  | No answer                          |

**RANDOMIZE QUESTIONS 1-14****ASK ALL:**

Q.8 What does the term "Common Core" refer to? **[RANDOMIZE]**

Aug 7-14

2013

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 56 | School curriculum standards for language and math ( <i>Correct</i> ) |
| 16 | The military's code of conduct                                       |
| 7  | A newly developed microprocessor                                     |
| 3  | Abdominal exercises  |
| 17 | No answer  |

**RANDOMIZE QUESTIONS 1-14****ASK ALL:**

Q.9 What does the gold shaded area on this map represent? All states that currently... **[RANDOMIZE]**



Aug 7-14

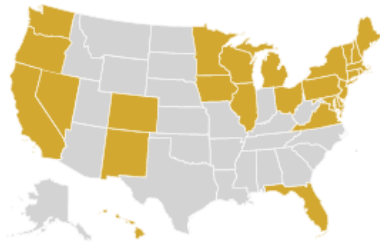
2013

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 57 | allow same-sex marriage ( <i>Correct</i> )     |
| 15 | have a minimum wage above the national minimum |
| 13 | allow the recreational use of marijuana        |
| 5  | have the largest Asian populations             |
| 10 | No answer                                      |

**Q.9 CONTINUED...**

**TREND FOR COMPARISON:**

What does the gold shaded area on this map represent? States in 2012 that... **[RANDOMIZE]**



Jan 18-24

2013

75

8

5

4

8

Obama won in the election (*Correct*)

Legalized the recreational use of marijuana

Had the highest obesity rates

Experienced the most severe drought conditions

No answer

**RANDOMIZE QUESTIONS 1-14**

**ASK ALL:**

Q.10 Which of the following shows the trend in the Dow Jones Industrial Average between January 2008 and July 2013?

**1**



**2**



**3**



**4**



Aug 7-14

2013

21

Chart #1 (*Correct*)

20

Chart #2

13

Chart #3

30

Chart #4

17

No answer

**TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:**

*Is the Dow Jones Industrial Average currently closer to ...? [LIST IN ORDER]*

Sep 30- Oct 11 <u>2011</u> <sup>1</sup>	Jan 14-17 <u>2010</u>	Oct 1-4 <u>2009</u>	Mar 26-29 <u>2009</u>
12 3,000	7 3,000	7 3,000	20 3,000
15 6,000	6 5,000	5 6,000	14 5,000
52 11,000 (Correct)	36 10,000 (Correct)	33 10,000 (Correct)	40 8,000 (Correct)
4 16,000	3 20,000	2 16,000	4 11,000
17 DK/Ref (VOL.)	48 DK/Ref (VOL.)	52 DK/Ref (VOL.)	22 DK/Ref (VOL.)
Dec 4-7 <u>2008</u>	Feb 28- Mar 2 <u>2008</u>	Aug 16-19 <u>2007</u>	May 2000 <u>2000</u>
18 2,000	16 4,000	16 2,000	5 3,000
8 4,000	9 5,000	14 4,000	4 5,000
45 8,000 (Correct)	16 10,000	13 8,000	28 10,000 (Correct)
5 13,000	31 12,000 (Correct)	41 13,000 (Correct)	1 20,000
24 DK/Ref (VOL.)	28 DK/Ref (VOL.)	16 DK/Ref (VOL.)	62 DK/Ref (VOL.)

*This graph shows the trend in what national statistic? [RANDOMIZE]*



Jan 18-24

2013

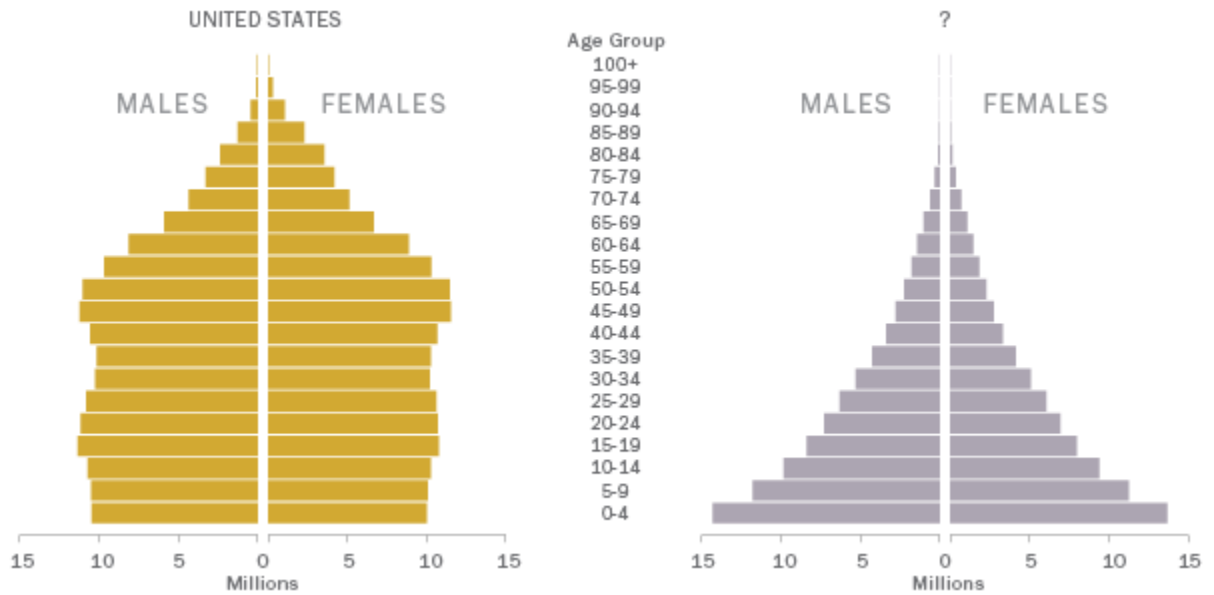
- 70 The unemployment rate (Correct)
- 10 The inflation rate
- 5 The corporate tax rate
- 3 The high school graduation rate
- 12 No answer

<sup>1</sup>

In 2011, the survey was conducted online by Knowledge Networks/GfK. The surveys from May, 2000 through January, 2010 were conducted by phone.

**RANDOMIZE QUESTIONS 1-14****ASK ALL:**

Q.11 Below are two charts of population pyramids that illustrate the relative size of age groups for a country's population. The chart on the left is the population pyramid for the U.S. What country's population pyramid is shown on the right? **[RANDOMIZE]**



Aug 7-14

2013

- 42 Nigeria (Correct)
- 21 Japan
- 10 Israel
- 10 The Netherlands
- 17 No answer

**RANDOMIZE QUESTIONS 1-14****ASK ALL:**

Q.12 Which best describes the relative numbers of men and women graduating from college with bachelor's degrees in recent years? **[RANDOMIZE]**

Aug 7-14

2013

- 55 More women than men are graduating (Correct)
- 29 About equal numbers of men and women are graduating
- 8 More men than women are graduating
- 8 No answer

**RANDOMIZE QUESTIONS 1-14****ASK ALL:**

Q.13 What is Google Glass? **[RANDOMIZE]**

Aug 7-14

2013

- 42 A computer that you can wear (Correct)
- 28 A social networking site
- 7 A 3-D home television
- 4 An automobile windshield that displays a car's speed
- 19 No answer

**QUESTION 14 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****ASK ALL:**

Q.16 In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?

**ASK IF INDEP (Q16=3) OR NO RESPONSE GIVEN TO Q16b:**

Q.16b As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

Aug 7-14

2013

25	Republican
36	Democrat
34	Independent
5	No answer
17	<i>Lean Rep</i>
16	<i>Lean Dem</i>