

TABLE S7-25

Correct answers to trend questions about basic scientific facts, by respondent characteristic: 1992–2018

(Percent)

Characteristic	1992 (n = 1,995)	1995 (n = 2,006)	1997 (n = 2,000)	1999 (n = 1,882)	2001 (n = 1,574)	2006 (n = 1,864)	2008 (n = 2,021)	2010 (n = 1,932)	2012 (n = 2,256)	2014 (n = 2,130)	2016 (n = 1,390)	2018 (n = 1,175)
All adults	59	60	60	61	64	64	64	63	65	65	63	62
Sex												
Male	64	65	66	66	69	69	68	67	70	69	67	65
Female	55	55	55	57	59	60	60	59	60	61	60	59
Formal education												
Less than high school diploma	44	44	43	44	45	44	43	42	45	47	43	41
High school diploma	59	59	60	62	62	62	63	60	62	62	61	60
Bachelor's degree	73	68	75	77	80	74	77	78	78	77	74	73
Graduate or professional degree	80	77	80	83	80	82	81	80	81	81	75	81
Science and mathematics education ^a												
Low	52	52	51	53	55	56	57	54	56	57	55	54
Middle	66	68	66	71	72	69	70	68	70	72	70	67
High	79	80	83	82	84	82	82	83	83	82	80	80
Family income (quartile)												
Bottom	na	na	na	na	na	56	56	54	55	54	57	55
Third	na	na	na	na	na	65	63	63	63	62	58	60
Second	na	na	na	na	na	69	69	69	69	67	64	61
Top	na	na	na	na	na	71	74	73	76	76	73	72
Age (years)												
18–24	59	63	64	65	66	68	67	64	67	61	61	61
25–34	64	64	63	65	68	64	67	67	67	66	67	64
35–44	65	64	66	66	66	67	63	63	67	65	64	64
45–54	61	62	61	64	68	68	67	65	64	67	65	63
55–64	53	51	57	58	61	64	65	63	64	68	62	63
65 or older	47	47	45	46	49	53	54	54	61	59	55	58
Verbal ability ^b												
0–4	na	na	na	na	na	48	47	46	46	50	46	46
5	na	na	na	na	na	60	58	55	59	61	57	56
6	na	na	na	na	na	66	63	63	66	65	62	62
7	na	na	na	na	na	70	73	67	73	70	68	69
8–10	na	na	na	na	na	77	80	80	81	80	79	78

na = not applicable; question was not asked.

^a For science and mathematics education, "low" equates to five or fewer high school and college science or mathematics courses, "middle" is six through eight courses, and "high" means nine or more courses.

^b Measure is based on correct responses to a 10-item, multiple-choice test of vocabulary knowledge. Categories represent the number of correct responses.

Note(s)

Percentages show the average of correct answers for nine questions:

- *The center of the Earth is very hot.* (True)
- *The continents have been moving their location for millions of years and will continue to move.* (True)
- *Does the Earth go around the Sun, or does the Sun go around the Earth?* (Earth around Sun)
- *How long does it take for the Earth to go around the Sun?* (One year) (Asked only if the respondent answered correctly that the Earth goes around the Sun)
- *All radioactivity is man-made.* (False)
- *Electrons are smaller than atoms.* (True)
- *Lasers work by focusing sound waves.* (False)
- *It is the father's gene that decides whether the baby is a boy or a girl.* (True)
- *Antibiotics kill viruses as well as bacteria.* (False)

Source(s)

National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, National Science Foundation, Survey of Public Attitudes Toward and Understanding of Science and Technology (1992–2001); NORC at the University of Chicago, General Social Survey (2006–18).

Science and Engineering Indicators