

Table PPS-3

Confidence in scientists to act in the best interests of the public, by perception of the scientific method: 2020

(Percent)

Perception of the scientific method		Level of confidence in scientists			
		A great deal	A fair amount	Not too much	None at all
All respondents (<i>n</i> = 6,283)		39	45	13	3
Perception that science is iterative	Believe the scientific method produces findings meant to be continually tested and updated over time (<i>n</i> = 4,669)	44	43	11	1
	Believe the scientific method identifies unchanging core principles and truths ^a (<i>n</i> = 1,614)	29	49	17	5
Perception that science yields accurate results	Believe the scientific method generally produces accurate conclusions (<i>n</i> = 4,658)	50	41	7	1
	Believe the scientific method can be used to produce any conclusion the researcher wants (<i>n</i> = 1,511)	15	53	25	6

n = number of survey responses.^a Includes "not sure" responses and refusals.**Note(s):**

Percentages may not add to 100% because the nonresponse category for level of confidence is not shown. See Table SPPS-17 for standard errors. Responses are to the following:

- How much confidence, if any, do you have in [scientists] to act in the best interests of the public?

- Based on what you have heard or read, which of the following statements best describes the scientific method?

The scientific method produces findings meant to be continually tested and updated over time.

The scientific method identifies unchanging core principles and truths.

Not sure

- Which of the following best describes what you think about the scientific method?

The scientific method generally produces accurate conclusions.

The scientific method can be used to produce any conclusion the research wants.

Source(s):

Pew Research Center, American Trends Panel (2020), Wave 79, conducted 18–29 November 2020. Data were provided to the authors by the center prior to public release.

Science and Engineering Indicators