

Appendix table 7-22

Perceived understanding of public issues by various groups, by respondent characteristic: 2006

(Mean understanding score)

Characteristic	Global warming			Stem cell research			Federal income taxes			Genetically modified foods		
	Environmental scientists (n = 891)	Business leaders (n = 890)	Elected officials (n = 887)	Medical researchers (n = 872)	Religious leaders (n = 870)	Elected officials (n = 867)	Economists (n = 876)	Business leaders (n = 890)	Elected officials (n = 889)	Medical researchers (n = 888)	Business leaders (n = 883)	Elected officials (n = 884)
All adults	4.02	2.36	2.39	4.21	2.37	2.39	3.68	3.37	2.89	3.81	2.08	2.52
Sex												
Male	3.91	2.37	2.36	4.19	2.27	2.42	3.61	3.39	2.83	3.86	2.10	2.58
Female	4.10	2.36	2.42	4.23	2.46	2.37	3.73	3.35	2.93	3.77	2.07	2.48
Formal education												
<High school	3.83	2.27	2.42	4.29	2.28	2.60	2.96	2.99	2.86	3.46	2.45	2.62
High school graduate	3.96	2.33	2.38	4.15	2.39	2.33	3.61	3.33	2.90	3.79	2.08	2.50
Baccalaureate	4.15	2.58	2.58	4.27	2.47	2.56	4.05	3.53	2.88	4.00	1.95	2.61
Graduate/professional	4.33	2.21	2.00	4.38	2.14	2.19	4.09	3.68	2.83	3.97	1.93	2.38
Science/mathematics education ^a												
Low	3.94	2.39	2.44	4.19	2.38	2.38	3.44	3.25	2.86	3.68	2.15	2.55
Middle	4.11	2.37	2.49	4.12	2.34	2.36	3.84	3.47	2.96	3.95	2.11	2.53
High	4.18	2.31	2.21	4.36	2.35	2.39	4.10	3.57	2.86	4.02	1.87	2.44
Family income (quartile)												
Top	4.16	2.45	2.40	4.28	2.32	2.42	4.12	3.60	2.91	4.03	2.09	2.60
Second	4.17	2.28	2.32	4.14	2.45	2.40	3.65	3.35	2.87	3.82	2.08	2.50
Third	4.02	2.35	2.35	4.32	2.43	2.38	3.61	3.37	3.10	3.74	2.06	2.54
Bottom	3.80	2.33	2.42	4.21	2.28	2.34	3.34	3.20	2.73	3.56	2.12	2.51
Age (years)												
18–24	4.12	2.16	2.48	4.32	2.20	2.51	4.00	3.55	3.28	4.27	1.90	2.85
25–34	4.19	2.46	2.53	4.20	2.27	2.45	3.56	3.30	2.95	3.75	2.07	2.75
35–44	4.09	2.41	2.42	4.19	2.41	2.49	3.65	3.39	2.91	3.82	2.08	2.52
45–54	4.10	2.43	2.45	4.15	2.44	2.35	3.75	3.38	2.89	3.88	2.02	2.32
55–64	3.76	2.21	2.15	4.24	2.21	2.16	3.70	3.40	2.47	3.73	2.10	2.33
65+	3.76	2.41	2.28	4.19	2.66	2.36	3.50	3.27	2.86	3.55	2.31	2.46
Minor children at home												
Yes	4.12	2.39	2.45	4.21	2.46	2.42	3.67	3.45	3.11	4.00	2.13	2.61
No	3.97	2.35	2.37	4.21	2.33	2.37	3.68	3.33	2.77	3.71	2.05	2.47
Factual knowledge of science ^b (quartile)												
Top	4.11	2.37	2.31	4.46	2.31	2.39	4.13	3.52	2.82	4.07	1.91	2.46
Second	4.03	2.27	2.36	4.18	2.27	2.40	3.85	3.49	2.93	3.82	2.10	2.68
Third	4.15	2.44	2.46	4.15	2.48	2.47	3.50	3.32	2.90	3.78	1.99	2.29
Bottom	3.74	2.38	2.47	4.02	2.44	2.28	3.05	3.07	2.89	3.52	2.39	2.67

^aLow = ≤5 high school and college science/math courses; middle = 6–8 courses; high = ≥9 courses.

^bSee notes to appendix table 7-4 for explanation of "factual knowledge of science scale 1."

NOTES: Responses to: *How well do the following groups understand: causes of global warming; importance of stem cell research; effects of reducing federal income taxes; risks posed by genetically modified foods?* See chapter endnote 24 for precise question wording. Mean understanding score based on 5-point scale, where 5 = understands very well and 1 = understands not at all. Questions on global warming and stem cell research asked of 928 survey respondents; questions on federal income taxes and genetically modified foods asked of 936 survey respondents. Number (n) of respondents varies by group within issue because mean understanding score excludes responses of "don't know."

SOURCE: University of Chicago, National Opinion Research Center, General Social Survey (2006).