

Appendix table 7-11

Correct answers to scientific terms and concept questions: Selected years, 1995–2004

(Percent)

Characteristic	1995	1997	1999	2001	2004
All adults	63	61	62	64	59
Male	69	67	67	70	65
Female	58	56	58	59	55
Formal education					
<High school	45	48	48	50	41
High school graduate	60	61	62	63	56
Baccalaureate	72	73	75	77	70
Graduate/professional	81	79	80	80	76
Science/mathematics education ^a					
Low	53	53	54	56	48
Middle	67	65	68	68	60
High	78	79	79	81	73
Family income (quartile)					
Top	NA	NA	NA	NA	71
Second	NA	NA	NA	NA	64
Third	NA	NA	NA	NA	57
Bottom	NA	NA	NA	NA	50
Age (years)					
18–24	NA	NA	NA	NA	65
25–34	NA	NA	NA	NA	63
35–44	NA	NA	NA	NA	63
45–54	NA	NA	NA	NA	61
55–64	NA	NA	NA	NA	58
65+	NA	NA	NA	NA	48
Minor children at home					
Yes	NA	NA	NA	NA	57
No	NA	NA	NA	NA	62

NA = not available

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

NOTES: Measure includes responses (true/false) to:

- *The center of the Earth is very hot.* (True)
- *All radioactivity is man-made.* (False)
- *It is the father's gene that decides whether the baby is a boy or a girl.* (True)
- *Lasers work by focusing sound waves.* (False)
- *Electrons are smaller than atoms.* (True)
- *Antibiotics kill viruses as well as bacteria.* (False)
- *The universe began with a huge explosion.* (True)
- *The continents on which we live have been moving their location for millions of years and will continue to move in the future.* (True)
- *Human beings, as we know them today, developed from earlier species of animals.* (True)

The following short-answer item was also included:

- *Does the Earth go around the Sun, or does the Sun go around the Earth?* (Earth around the Sun)

SOURCES: National Science Foundation, Division of Science Resources Statistics, Survey of Public Attitudes Toward and Understanding of Science and Technology (various years); and University of Michigan, Survey of Consumer Attitudes (2004).