TABLE S7-27

Correct answers to individual factual knowledge questions, by respondent characteristic: 2018

(Percent)

Characteristic	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)	All radioactivity is man-made. (False)	It is the father's gene that decides whether the baby is a boy or a girl. (True)	How long does it take for the Earth to go around the Sun: one day, one month, or one year? (One year)[a]	Antibiotics kill viruses as well as bacteria. (False)	Human beings, as we know them today, developed from earlier species of animals. (True)[b]	Electrons are smaller than atoms. (True)	Lasers work by focusing sound waves. (False)	The universe began with a huge explosion. (True)[c]
All adults (n = 1,175)	86	79	72	68	59	54	50	49	46	44	38
Sex											
Male (n = 485)	89	82	80	74	49	63	44	52	50	58	42
Female (n = 690)	84	77	66	63	67	48	54	47	42	34	34
Formal education											
Less than high school diploma (n = 137)	74	59	56	49	35	31	16	34	24	29	37
High school diploma (n = 362)	83	78	67	64	51	46	40	41	35	39	31
Some college (n = 330)	90	85	73	67	60	58	48	52	48	41	32
Bachelor's degree (n = 232)	89	84	81	79	74	68	71	61	62	54	48
Graduate or professional degree (n = 114)	93	85	88	86	85	69	88	53	67	67	51
Science and mathematics education[d,e]											
Low (n = 598)	82	74	64	61	51	44	39	44	34	37	32
Middle (n = 237)	90	83	74	72	65	59	56	51	52	47	38
High (n = 252)	94	92	91	84	75	76	77	61	69	61	49
Family income (quartile)[e]											
Bottom (n = 277)	82	76	63	59	47	43	41	55	42	44	35
Third (n = 223)	87	82	73	64	58	58	39	43	42	36	33

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Second (n = 290)	87	75	72	64	65	54	48	48	46	38	31
Top (n = 287)	91	88	79	82	66	64	70	56	53	56	49
Age (years)											
18–24 (n = 94)	90	86	76	59	45	67	34	70	48	41	46
25–34 (n = 225)	89	84	74	63	62	61	50	54	48	43	37
35–44 (n = 206)	90	82	76	68	68	55	49	48	45	39	42
45–54 (n = 190)	86	80	71	67	60	53	50	42	47	50	32
55–64 (n = 186)	84	73	71	71	63	51	56	47	45	48	38
65 or older (n = 269)	80	74	67	74	51	45	54	38	38	42	34
Verbal ability[f]											
0–4 (n = 256)	78	68	60	50	41	37	20	42	29	32	37
5 (n = 210)	81	77	65	60	57	45	46	45	38	37	30
6 (n = 254)	88	84	70	72	60	53	48	43	45	41	30
7 (n = 205)	90	84	81	73	65	68	60	48	51	51	40
8–10 (n = 250)	93	86	85	85	75	71	79	65	65	60	49
Correct answers to questions about basic scientific facts[g]											
Low (n = 227)	52	40	20	26	28	5	12	28	16	13	18
Middle (n = 512)	89	82	70	64	53	45	38	52	34	30	31
High (n = 436)	98	95	99	92	81	89	82	54	74	76	54

[a] Question was asked only of survey respondents who answered correctly that the Earth goes around the Sun. Individuals who responded incorrectly that the Sun goes around the Earth also counted as having responded incorrectly to the question on the length of the Earth's revolution around the Sun.

[b] Question was asked of 794 survey respondents.

[c] Question was asked of 404 survey respondents.

[d] 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.

[e] Categories do not add to total *n* because "don't know" responses and refusals to respond are not shown.

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

[g] See notes to Table S7-1 for an explanation of the questions asked about basic scientific facts.

Note(s)
Responses of "don't know" and refusals to respond are counted as incorrect and are not shown.

Source(s)
NORC at the University of Chicago, General Social Survey (2018).

Science and Engineering Indicators