

TABLE S7-33

## Public interest in selected issues: 1979–2018

(Percent)

Issue	1979 (n = 1,635)	1981 (n = 3,192)	1983 (n = 1,615)	1985 (n = 1,986)	1988 (n = 2,041)	1990 (n = 2,005)	1992 (n = 1,995)	1995 (n = 2,006)	1997 (n = 2,000)	1999 (n = 1,882)	2001 (n = 1,574)	2008 (n = 2,021)	2010 (n = 1,461)	2012 (n = 2,256)	2014 (n = 2,130)	2016 (n = 1,390)	2018 (n = 1,175)
New medical discoveries																	
Very interested	na	na	na	68	72	68	66	69	70	68	65	58	60	58	59	60	56
Moderately interested	na	na	na	29	25	29	31	27	26	28	32	36	35	36	36	35	39
Not at all interested	na	na	na	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	6	5	5	5	5	5
Don't know or refused to answer	na	na	na	0	*	0	*	*	*	*	0	1	1	1	*	*	*
Local school issues																	
Very interested	38	46	46	47	51	50	54	57	58	54	59	46	54	51	50	44	50
Moderately interested	37	36	36	39	33	34	35	31	30	34	31	40	36	37	38	43	38
Not at all interested	25	18	18	14	15	16	12	12	11	12	10	15	9	11	12	13	12
Don't know or refused to answer	*	*	*	*	*	0	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	1	*	*	*
Environmental pollution																	
Very interested	na	na	na	na	na	64	59	52	52	51	48	47	46	45	43	42	45
Moderately interested	na	na	na	na	na	31	36	41	40	41	43	42	46	45	47	48	44
Not at all interested	na	na	na	na	na	5	5	6	8	8	8	10	7	9	10	10	11
Don't know or refused to answer	na	na	na	na	na	*	*	*	*	*	0	1	1	1	*	*	*
Use of new inventions and technologies																	
Very interested	33	33	42	39	40	39	37	43	47	41	42	40	40	42	43	42	40
Moderately interested	51	51	45	49	49	49	53	46	43	48	47	46	48	46	45	46	47
Not at all interested	15	16	12	12	12	12	10	11	10	10	10	13	10	11	12	12	13
Don't know or refused to answer	1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	*	1	1	*	*	*
New scientific discoveries																	
Very interested	36	37	48	44	43	39	36	44	49	45	47	38	41	40	41	42	41

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Moderately interested	49	45	41	43	46	49	49	45	42	43	45	47	50	45	46	42	44
Not at all interested	15	17	11	12	12	12	15	11	9	11	8	15	8	14	13	15	15
Don't know or refused to answer	1	*	*	*	0	0	*	*	*	1	*	*	1	1	*	*	*
Economic issues and business conditions																	
Very interested	35	52	57	48	48	51	56	47	47	42	45	46	44	49	43	39	41
Moderately interested	48	37	33	41	42	40	36	42	42	45	45	43	45	40	44	46	44
Not at all interested	17	10	10	11	10	10	8	11	11	13	10	11	10	10	13	14	15
Don't know or refused to answer	1	*	1	*	*	*	*	0	*	*	*	*	1	1	*	*	*
Military and defense policy																	
Very interested	na	na	43	47	47	55	47	37	35	42	38	38	37	37	35	34	32
Moderately interested	na	na	42	42	42	35	43	46	48	44	44	47	47	47	50	49	50
Not at all interested	na	na	15	11	11	9	10	17	18	14	17	15	15	15	15	17	18
Don't know or refused to answer	na	na	1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	1	1	*	*	*
Space exploration																	
Very interested	na	25	27	29	34	26	22	25	32	28	26	21	23	23	23	24	25
Moderately interested	na	43	45	46	44	48	50	49	45	46	47	45	49	44	45	44	44
Not at all interested	na	31	28	25	22	26	28	26	22	25	27	34	27	32	31	31	30
Don't know or refused to answer	na	*	*	0	1	0	*	*	1	1	*	*	1	1	*	*	*
International and foreign policy issues																	
Very interested	22	35	30	33	33	48	38	21	23	30	28	23	22	21	23	21	22
Moderately interested	53	47	47	51	50	39	47	53	50	47	49	48	48	47	48	49	46

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Not at all interested	24	18	22	16	16	12	15	26	28	23	22	29	29	31	29	29	31
Don't know or refused to answer	1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	2	1	1	*	*
Agricultural and farm issues																	
Very interested	23	24	na	30	40	24	na	21	24	22	29	22	25	22	24	21	20
Moderately interested	49	47	na	48	45	48	na	53	50	50	46	52	55	49	50	48	50
Not at all interested	28	29	na	22	15	28	na	26	26	28	25	26	20	28	26	30	30
Don't know or refused to answer	*	*	na	*	0	0	na	1	*	*	*	*	1	1	*	1	0

\* = &lt; 0.5% responded. na = not applicable; question was not asked.

**Note(s)**

Data represent respondents giving a response of "very interested" to the following: *There are a lot of issues in the news, and it is hard to keep up with every area. I'm going to read you a short list of issues, and for each one, I would like you to tell me if you are very interested, moderately interested, or not at all interested.* Percentages may not add to 100% because of rounding.

**Source(s)**

National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, National Science Foundation, Survey of Public Attitudes Toward and Understanding of Science and Technology (1979–2001); NORC at the University of Chicago, General Social Survey (2008–18).

Science and Engineering Indicators