

Table SPSS-9

## Public perception of scientists: Selected years, 1983–2018

(Percent and mean)

Perception	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)	2012 (n = 1,152)	2016 (n = 1,390)	2018 (n = 1,175)	
Scientists work for the good of humanity													
Strongly agree	na	11	19	26	26								
Agree	na	74	69	63	63								
Disagree	na	9	6	8	7								
Strongly disagree	na	1	1	1	1								
Don't know	na	4	5	2	2								
Mean	na	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.2								
Scientists help to solve problems													
Strongly agree	na	17	21	28	27								
Agree	na	79	74	66	66								
Disagree	na	2	1	4	5								
Strongly disagree	na	*	1	1	*								
Don't know	na	1	3	2	1								
Mean	na	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.2								
Scientists want to make life better for the average person													
Strongly agree	na	4	5	6	10	7	11	8	11	14	24	22	
Agree	na	76	74	74	66	68	69	75	78	72	64	67	
Disagree	na	15	17	15	20	20	15	14	8	8	9	8	
Strongly disagree	na	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	*	1	
Don't know	na	4	3	4	2	4	4	2	3	5	2	2	
Mean	na	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.1	
Scientists are odd and peculiar													
Strongly agree	1	na	2	4	9	10							
Agree	31	na	22	32	42	40							
Disagree	59	na	63	51	37	39							
Strongly disagree	4	na	8	6	7	7							
Don't know	4	na	4	8	4	4							
Mean	2.3	na	2.2	2.4	2.6	2.5							

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

n = number of survey responses.

**Note(s):**

Mean score is based on a 4-point scale, where 4 equals "strongly agree" and 1 equals "strongly disagree." Percentages may not add to 100% because of rounding. See Table SPPS-10 for standard errors. Table displays data for years when questions were proffered. Responses are to the following: *Scientific researchers are dedicated people who work for the good of humanity*; *Scientists are helping to solve challenging problems*; *Most scientists want to work on things that will make life better for the average person*; and *Scientists are apt to be odd and peculiar people*.

**Source(s):**

Data are sourced from multiple surveys that used either identical or similar survey items. National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, Survey of Public Attitudes Toward and Understanding of Science and Technology (1983–2001); NORC at the University of Chicago, General Social Survey (2012–18).

*Science and Engineering Indicators*