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Shuttle Program Viewed as Good Investment

Majority Sees U.S. Leadership in Space as Essential

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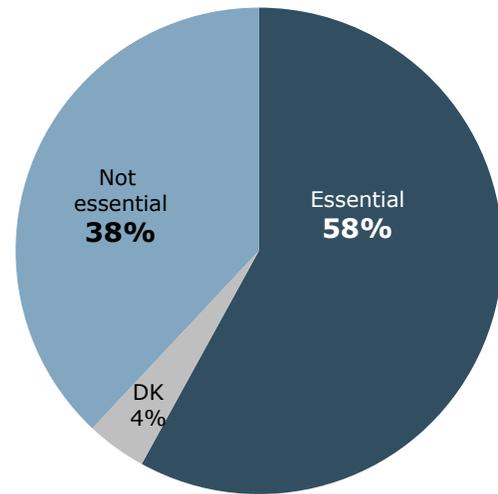
Majority Sees U.S. Leadership in Space as Essential

On the eve of the final mission of the U.S. space shuttle program, most Americans say the United States must be at the forefront of future space exploration. Fifty years after the first American manned space flight, nearly six-in-ten (58%) say it is essential that the United States continue to be a world leader in space exploration; about four-in-ten say this is not essential (38%).

Looking back on the shuttle program, a majority (55%) say it has been a good investment for the country. However, this is lower than it was in the 1980s; throughout the early years of the shuttle program, six-in-ten or more said the program was a good investment.

Majorities in nearly all demographic groups say it is essential that the U.S. continue to be at the vanguard of space exploration. And partisan groups largely agree that American leadership is vital, although this view is more prevalent among Republicans. Two-thirds of Republicans (67%) say the nation must continue to play an international leadership role in space exploration; smaller majorities of Democrats (54%) and independents (57%) say this.

U.S. Continuing to be World Leader in Space Exploration Is ...



PEW RESEARCH CENTER June 15-19, 2011.

Democrats Less Supportive of U.S. Leadership in Space

<i>Continued U.S. leadership is...</i>	Essential	Not essential	DK
	%	%	%
Total	58	38	4=100
College grad+	60	37	2=100
Some college	59	39	5=100
H.S. or less	57	37	2=100
<i>Family income</i>			
\$75,000+	63	35	2=100
\$30-\$75,000	55	42	4=100
Less than \$30k	57	37	6=100
Republican	67	30	3=100
Democrat	54	42	4=100
Independent	57	40	3=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER June 15-19, 2011. Q18. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Shuttle Has Been “Good Investment”

As the shuttle program comes to a close 30 years after its first mission, 55% of Americans think the program has been a good investment for the country; 36% do not think so. In August 1981, four months after the first shuttle flight, 66% said the program was a good investment.

About two-thirds of college graduates (66%) say the shuttle program has been a good investment, as does a smaller majority of those with some college education (57%). Among those with no college experience, assessments of the value of the shuttle program are more mixed: 47% say it has been a good investment, while 43% say it has not.

Americans with annual family incomes of \$75,000 or more give more positive evaluations to the shuttle program than those with lower incomes. By greater than two-to-one those with higher incomes say the program has been a good investment (67% good vs. 27% not good); those with annual incomes of less than \$30,000 are divided in their views (44% good, 47% not good). And while about six-in-ten Republicans (63%) and independents (60%) say the program has been a good investment, Democrats are more muted in their appraisals (48% good investment).

Mixed Opinions of Shuttle Program among Poor, Less Educated

<i>Has space shuttle been a good investment?</i>	Yes	No	DK
	%	%	%
Total	55	36	9=100
Men	59	34	7=100
Women	52	38	10=100
18-29	54	34	12=100
30-49	55	37	9=100
50-64	55	38	6=100
65+	56	34	9=100
College grad+	66	28	7=100
Some college	57	34	10=100
H.S. or less	47	43	10=100
<i>Family income</i>			
\$75,000+	67	27	6=100
\$30k-\$75,000	57	35	7=100
Less than \$30k	44	47	9=100
Republican	63	28	9=100
Democrat	48	44	8=100
Independent	60	34	6=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER June 15-19, 2011. Q16. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

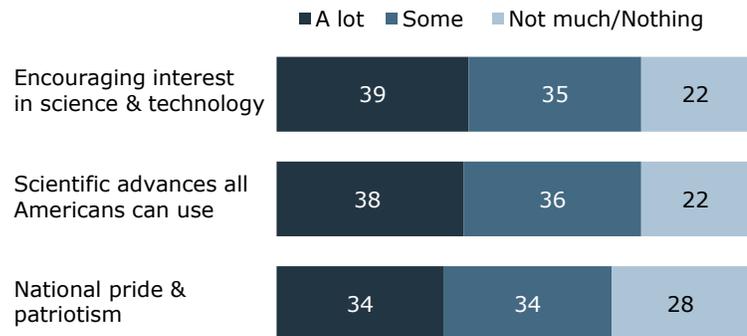
Benefits of Space Program

Large majorities say that the space program has helped encourage interest in science, led to scientific advances and contributed to feelings of patriotism. But no more than about four-in-ten say that the program has contributed “a lot” in any of these areas.

Overall, 39% say it has contributed a lot to encouraging interest in science, 35% say it has contributed some while 22% think it has contributed not much or nothing. Nearly as many (38%) say the space program has contributed a lot to scientific advances that all Americans can use, while 34% think it has done a lot for feelings or pride and patriotism.

There are only modest political and demographic differences in opinions about the space program’s contributions. More men than women say the program contributes a lot to scientific advances (by 45% to 31%) and encouraging interest in science and technology (44% to 35%).

How Much Does Space Program Contribute to ...



PEW RESEARCH CENTER June 15-19, 2011. Q17.

About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted June 15-19, 2011 among a national sample of 1,502 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (1,001 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 501 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 200 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://people-press.org/methodology/>

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin, region, and population density to parameters from the March 2010 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status and relative usage of landline and cell phones (for those with both), based on extrapolations from the 2010 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size within the landline sample. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Sample Size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1,502	3.5 percentage points
Republicans	408	6.0 percentage points
Democrats	495	5.5 percentage points
Independents	479	5.5 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
JUNE 2011 POLITICAL SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
June 15-19, 2011
N=1502

QUESTIONS 1-2 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**NO QUESTIONS 3-6, 9-15****QUESTIONS 7-8 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****ASK ALL:**

On another subject...

Q.16 Do you think the space shuttle program has been a good investment for this country, or don't you think so?

	<u>Good investment</u>	<u>Not a good investment</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
Jun 15-19, 2011	55	36	9
NBC/WSJ: June, 1986 ¹	70	25	5
NBC/WSJ: February, 1986	73	19	8
NBC/WSJ: October, 1985	70	21	9
NBC/AP: November, 1982	69	21	10
NBC/AP: November, 1981	59	32	9
NBC/AP: October, 1981	60	30	10
NBC/AP: August, 1981	66	26	8

ASK ALL:

Q.17 Thinking about the space program more generally, how much does the U.S. space program contribute to **[INSERT; RANDOMIZE]**? Does it contribute **[READ IN ORDER]**? How about **[NEXT ITEM]**? **[IF NECESSARY: How much does the U.S. space program contribute to [ITEM]]**

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not much</u>	<u>Nothing at all</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
a. Scientific advances that all Americans can use					
Jun 15-19, 2011	38	36	16	6	5
CBS: February, 2003 ²	35	45	13	1	6
b. This country's national pride and patriotism					
Jun 15-19, 2011	34	34	20	8	5
CBS: February, 2003	54	31	9	2	4
c. Encouraging people's interest in science and technology					
Jun 15-19, 2011	39	35	17	5	4

ASK ALL:

Q.18 In your view, is it essential or not essential that the United States continue to be a world leader in space exploration?

Jun 15-19

2011

58	Essential
38	Not essential
4	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

NO QUESTIONS 19-29, 36, 43-48, 52, 58-59, 62-71, 76

¹ From 1981 to 1986, question read "Do you think the space shuttle program is a good investment..."

² In February 2003, CBS trend questions began "In your opinion, how much does the U.S. space program contribute to..."

QUESTIONS 30-35, 37-42, 72-75, 77-83 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**QUESTIONS 49-51, 53-57, 60-61 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****ASK ALL:**

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?

ASK IF INDEP/NO PREF/OTHER/DK/REF (PARTY=3,4,5,9):

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)	Lean	Lean
	Republican	Democrat	Independent	No preference	Other party	DK/Ref	Rep	Dem
Jun 15-19, 2011	26	34	32	4	*	4	13	13
May 25-30, 2011	24	33	38	3	*	2	15	17
Mar 30-Apr 3, 2011	25	32	37	3	*	3	17	16
Mar 8-14, 2011	24	33	38	3	*	2	17	15
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	24	33	37	3	*	3	15	16
Feb 2-7, 2011	24	31	39	3	*	2	16	16
Jan 5-9, 2011	27	32	35	4	*	2	15	14
Dec 1-5, 2010	25	33	34	5	1	2	13	14
Nov 4-7, 2010	26	30	37	4	*	2	17	13
Oct 27-30, 2010	25	34	31	6	1	4	13	11
Oct 13-18, 2010	25	31	36	4	*	3	16	13
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	24	32	39	2	*	2	15	17
Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	26	33	34	4	*	3	14	14
Jun 16-20, 2010	27	34	34	3	1	2	15	15
Yearly Totals								
2010	25.2	32.7	35.2	3.6	.4	2.8	14.5	14.1
2009	23.9	34.4	35.1	3.4	.4	2.8	13.1	15.7
2008	25.7	36.0	31.5	3.6	.3	3.0	10.6	15.2
2007	25.3	32.9	34.1	4.3	.4	2.9	10.9	17.0
2006	27.8	33.1	30.9	4.4	.3	3.4	10.5	15.1
2005	29.3	32.8	30.2	4.5	.3	2.8	10.3	14.9
2004	30.0	33.5	29.5	3.8	.4	3.0	11.7	13.4
2003	30.3	31.5	30.5	4.8	.5	2.5	12.0	12.6
2002	30.4	31.4	29.8	5.0	.7	2.7	12.4	11.6
2001	29.0	33.2	29.5	5.2	.6	2.6	11.9	11.6
2001 Post-Sept 11	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6	11.7	9.4
2001 Pre-Sept 11	27.3	34.4	30.9	5.1	.6	1.7	12.1	13.5
2000	28.0	33.4	29.1	5.5	.5	3.6	11.6	11.7
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9	13.0	14.5
1998	27.9	33.7	31.1	4.6	.4	2.3	11.6	13.1
1997	28.0	33.4	32.0	4.0	.4	2.3	12.2	14.1
1996	28.9	33.9	31.8	3.0	.4	2.0	12.1	14.9
1995	31.6	30.0	33.7	2.4	.6	1.3	15.1	13.5
1994	30.1	31.5	33.5	1.3	--	3.6	13.7	12.2
1993	27.4	33.6	34.2	4.4	1.5	2.9	11.5	14.9
1992	27.6	33.7	34.7	1.5	0	2.5	12.6	16.5
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	0	1.4	3.0	14.7	10.8
1990	30.9	33.2	29.3	1.2	1.9	3.4	12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34	--	--	--	--	--
1987	26	35	39	--	--	--	--	--