TEENS AND THE NEWS

2020

The Influencers, Celebrities, and Platforms They Say Matter Most

common sense®

TEENS AND THE NEWS:
THE INFLUENCERS, CELEBRITIES, AND PLATFORMS THEY SAY MATTER MOST

2020

A LETTER FROM OUR FOUNDER

When we conducted this research, we never could have imagined the world we're in now with the coronavirus pandemic. We had turned our attention to how kids consume and use news because of worries about the future of our democracy and the need for news and media literacy skills among kids. But the issues around partisan politics and misinformation that prompted our study have taken on new levels of importance when we face decisions that are literally life and death.

As the nation struggles with the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic and continuing political and social strife fueled by misinformation and online divisions, it is even more important to understand where the next generation is getting its news.

The news is no longer delivered to the doorstep primarily by established sources or through the radio or TV. It now more often comes in a nonstop barrage on personal devices, and kids are setting their own standards for the platforms and people they consider sources.

But the habits we found among teens when we conducted this research early this year have changed with the pandemic.

This research is an update to our 2017 report *News and America's Kids: How Young People Perceive and Are Impacted by the News*, and the trends we saw emerging only a few years ago away from traditional news outlets have continued, with almost 80% of teens getting their news from social media. And while teens say they value news, they feel disconnected from established sources, with many turning to influencers and celebrities on YouTube and social media for headlines and news.

But as we faced the instability of life with the pandemic, we wondered how teens were getting their information, and we put together a poll with SurveyMonkey to look at how teen life has changed. The findings reveal a turn back to traditional news sources during uncertain times. Eight out of 10 teens say they're following news about the coronavirus pandemic closely and, compared to pre-pandemic times, are looking to news organizations—not influencers or celebrities—for information. Almost half (47%) of teens say their knowledge about the coronavirus pandemic is primarily informed by news organizations, while 37% say they primarily get information from friends, family, or teachers. Only 11% say they learn the most from personalities or influencers online.

This shift is heartening. We need America's next generation to be engaged citizens—and knowing how to discern reliable information is a big part of that. At Common Sense, we are committed to providing news- and media-literacy education and support to kids, parents, and educators.

Parents, educators, policymakers, and the media industry all have a responsibility to give teens the tools to be informed citizens and to determine which news outlets are trustworthy sources. And we should work to make sure the platforms that are delivering the news to them are thinking about kids and the value of accurate information just as much as clicks and ratings when they make decisions.

Listening to what teens have to say, and taking actions to improve the way they consume news and information, will shape the future of our nation. Common Sense is committed to understanding and helping our children in today's media landscape through our research and our daily work, and we hope this report will help guide others to do the same.

**James P. Steyer,
founder and CEO**

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INTRODUCTION

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE results of a survey of more than 800 U.S. 13- to 18-year-olds. The survey covers the kinds of news sources that teens use, how frequently they engage with those sources, and their feelings about the news. The data is presented for younger (13- to 15-year-old) and older (16- to 18-year-old) teens, in addition to being analyzed by gender, race/ethnicity, and political ideology.

The report also tracks changes in teens' news behaviors and attitudes between 2017 and 2020, comparing the current results to those found in the first wave of the study. The report used a separate sample of respondents, with the text and format of the current questionnaire staying as close as possible to the previous one (allowing for some modest changes to reflect the changing news environment).

Among the topics covered were:

- Types of news sources used

- Frequency of use of news sources used

- Perceived level of trust in news sources

- Headline vs. full-story readership

- Which social media platforms were used to source news

- Level of attention paid to news sources when seeking more information

- Trustworthiness of personalities, influencers, and celebrities for news

- Relative importance of news topics

- Skills learned in school to evaluate the news

- Perceptions about the news

- Feelings about the news

- Interest in news about the 2020 U.S. presidential elections

The purpose of this report is to present a current look at how teens are engaging with news media. While much has been made of the changing news landscape, including an ever-widening array of choices for news, and the emergence of social media and YouTube personalities, influencers, and celebrities as news purveyors, little is known about how the next generation of young people are encountering and reacting to news.

The goal is to provide reliable national data to help educators, policymakers, parents, researchers, and others understand the increasingly complex news landscape, and to help target efforts that result in more engaged citizens.

To complete this report, Common Sense Media engaged SSRS to conduct the online quantitative survey of teens age 13 to 18. The online survey was conducted from January 21 to February 3, 2020, among a sample of 804 teens age 13 to 18, from the SSRS Probability Panel and an opt-in web panel. Black and Hispanic/Latino teens were oversampled using the opt-in panel to secure a readable base among these subgroups. Further sampling details are included in the "Methods" section (pg.5).

Statistical Significance

The statistical tables and charts presented in this report reflect the survey results from 804 respondents. Where relevant, differences between 2017 and 2020 results, and differences among demographic groups, have been tested for statistical significance. Significant differences were tested at a level of $p<.05$.

- Significant differences between 2017 and 2020 that are presented in charts are shown with an asterisk. For example: 24%* indicates that that figure is significantly different than the corresponding figure for the other year.

- Significant differences presented in tables are shown as follows:

  - Differences between 2017 and 2020 are shown in bold and highlighted in green or red. For example: **24%** would indicate that this figure is significantly higher than the same data from 2017, and **10%** would indicate that this figure is significantly lower than the same data from 2017.

  - Demographic differences are shown with a superscript that indicates that the marked cell is significantly higher than another value in the same row. For example: **24%[ac]** would indicate that the value in the cell is significantly higher than the data in the corresponding cell under the columns marked (a) and (c).

- Group differences explored include:

  - Gender (male, female)

  - Age (13 to 15, 16 to 18)

  - Race/ethnicity (White non-Hispanic/Latino, Black non-Hispanic/Latino, Hispanic/Latino. Note that throughout this report we refer to these groups as "White," "Black," and "Hispanic/Latino.")

  - Political ideology (conservative, moderate, liberal, unsure).

In some instances, throughout the report, nets may not sum exactly due to rounding.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Many teens look to personalities, influencers, and celebrities for news.

Overall, 77% of teens today get news and headlines from social media. Thirty-nine percent of teens "often" get news from personalities, influencers, and celebrities on social media and YouTube. Twenty-eight percent of teens said personalities, influencers, and celebrities were their preferred news source. Teens get news from a huge variety of people and organizations online. Of the 731 personalities, influencers, and celebrities that were mentioned by respondents, most were mentioned fewer than 10 times and none more than 32 times. The most commonly mentioned personalities teens said they trust for news on social media or YouTube were PewDiePie, CNN, Trevor Noah, Donald Trump, and Beyoncé.

2. Black and Hispanic/Latino teens feel most affected by the news.

Black and Hispanic/Latino teens were more likely than White teens to agree that "following the news is important to me." And, while fewer teens overall in 2020 felt that "what happens in the news affects my daily life," this can be tracked to a decrease in White teen agreement with this statement. In 2020, both Black and Hispanic/Latino teens were more likely to agree that "what happens in the news affects my daily life" than White teens (33% and 34%, respectively, vs. 27%).

3. Many teens perceive gender or racial bias in news media.

Only about a third of teens agreed that the news treats women equally fairly (29%). Female teens were less likely than male teens to think so (22% vs. 35%). Similarly, only about a third of teens agreed that the news treats people of different racial backgrounds equally fairly (30%); sentiment on this was fairly similar across racial/ethnic groups. These views are in line with what teens reported in 2017.

4. The news is important to many teens, but fewer teens in 2020 say the news helps them feel prepared to make a difference in their communities.

Two in five teens (42%) said that following the news is important to them. Significantly fewer teens in 2020 felt the news helps them feel better prepared to make a difference in their communities (41% agreed, compared to 51% in 2017), especially among female teens (42% agreed, compared to 53% in 2017).

5. Teens don't feel connected to the news.

Compared to 2017, more teens today felt that the news media has no idea about what the lives of people their age are really like (75% agreed, vs. 67% in 2017). Also, fewer teens today felt the news covers issues that matter to them (35%, vs. 45% in 2017).

6. Few teens feel energized by the news, and almost half are frustrated by it.

The consumption of news can have an impact on the feelings of teens, both positively and negatively. Among those included in the survey, the No. 1 feeling teens said they experienced based on the news over the past six months was frustration (45% of teens felt this way). On the positive side, the second most common feeling was of being informed (37% of teens felt this way). The next most common feelings caused by news during the last six months were confusion (30%) and being worn out (25%). Only one in 10 or fewer felt "motivated" or "energized" by the news.

7. YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat are growing as top news sources for kids.

Compared to 2017, teens were more likely to get news from YouTube (44%, vs. 27% in 2017) and Instagram (32%, vs. 22% in 2017), while they were less likely to get it from Facebook (30% today, vs. 48% in 2017).

8. Even though teens often get news from personalities, influencers, and celebrities on YouTube and social media, these sources are not seen as particularly trustworthy.

Slightly more than one in four teens (28%) put a lot of trust in the information they received from local news organizations, and slightly fewer put a lot of trust in traditional print and online newspapers (22%) and traditional TV news networks (21%). Another one in five trusted news aggregators (18%). The least trusted sources were podcasts (6%) and comedy shows (7%). While there was not a tremendous amount of trust in any of these news sources, teens trusted traditional news sources (local newspapers and TV news shows, traditional print and online newspapers, and traditional TV news networks) more than their most preferred news source of personalities, influencers, and celebrities they follow on social media (15% put "a lot" of trust in news from that source).

9. Many teens report that they are learning the critical skills needed to navigate the news in school.

More than two-thirds of teens (69%) stated they have learned to tell the difference between opinion and news, followed by about half stating they have learned to understand a poll (55%), fact-check a news story (48%), or identify bias in the news (46%). Relatedly, more teens today said they can tell if a news story is fake (55%, vs. 47% in 2017). Teens who have learned how to identify misinformation or "fake news" in school were significantly more likely to agree that they can tell the difference between fake and real news, compared to those who had not learned this skill (75% vs. 48%).

THE ONLINE SURVEY WAS conducted from January 21 to February 3, 2020, among a sample of 804 teens age 13 to 18, including 603 recruited from the SSRS probability panel and 201 recruited from an opt-in web panel. Black and Hispanic/Latino teens were oversampled using the opt-in panel to secure a readable base among these subgroups. The average time to complete the survey was 12.5 minutes.

Parents of a child age 13 to 18 were invited by email to have their child participate in the online survey. Parents were screened for parental status, household composition, and permission to have their child complete the survey. They were then asked to allow the child to complete the main survey questions independently. Some teens were contacted directly and invited to take the main survey, if they were 18 years old and part of the SSRS probability panel or 13 to 18 years old and part of the opt-in panel. Table A represents the breakdown of completes by sample source and key demographics.

Sampling

The SSRS Opinion Panel[1] is a nationally representative, probability-based web panel. Given that this is a probability-based web panel, findings are statistically projectable to the population. SSRS Opinion Panel members are recruited randomly in one of two ways: 1) from a dual-frame random digit dial (RDD) sample, through the SSRS Omnibus survey platform; 2) through invitations mailed to respondents randomly sampled from an address-based sample (ABS). The SSRS Omnibus survey is a nationally representative bilingual telephone survey designed to

TABLE A. Breakdown of completes, by key demographics (unweighted)

	Total	White	Black	Hispanic/Latino	Other*
Total	**N=804**	**n=370**	**n=162**	**n=205**	**n=67**
Gender					
• Male	396	205	71	89	31
• Female	408	165	91	116	36
Age					
• 13 to 15	405	192	76	99	38
• 16 to 18	399	178	86	106	29
Region					
• Northeast	138	61	23	39	15
• Midwest	176	108	30	25	13
• South	318	133	99	64	22
• West	172	68	10	77	17
Panel					
• SSRS	603	365	69	105	64
• Opt-in	201	5	93	100	3

*Combined other racial/ethnic groups, non-Hispanic/Latino

1. To learn more about the SSRS Opinion Panel, please click here: https://ssrs.com/opinion-panel/.

meet standards of quality associated with custom research studies. Each weekly wave of the SSRS Omnibus consists of 1,000 interviews, of which 700 are obtained from respondents via their cellphones, and approximately 35 interviews are completed in Spanish.

Respondents of the SSRS Omnibus represent the full U.S. adult population (English- and Spanish-speaking). From this base, SSRS screens for internet access and then recruits those who have internet access to be part of the SSRS Probability Panel. The sample for the SSRS Omnibus is obtained through Marketing System Groups (MSG).

ABS respondents are randomly sampled by MSG through the U.S. Postal Service's Computerized Delivery Sequence (CDS), a regularly updated listing of all known addresses in the U.S. For the Opinion Panel, known business addresses are excluded from the sample frame.

Dynata,[2] an opt-in web panel, was utilized to efficiently reach a larger sample of teens, focusing on oversample completes of Black non-Hispanic/Latino and Hispanic/Latino teens age 13 to 18.

From both panels, panelists who had been identified as parents of teens age 13 to 18 were invited by email to participate in this online survey. From the SSRS Opinion Panel, 18-year-old panelists were invited directly. From the Dynata opt-in panel, 13- to 18-year-old panelists were invited directly. Within the survey, respondents were rescreened to ensure that they met qualification criteria.

Questionnaire Development

Researchers from Common Sense Media developed the survey in consultation with the SSRS project team. The parent of the child received the survey and had to qualify by having a child age 13 to 18 living in their household of whom they were the parent or legal guardian. The parent/guardian had to give permission for the child to participate, and then they were asked to bring the child over to the computer to complete their portion of the survey. Parents/guardians were able to review the questions being asked prior to allowing their child to participate. Teens age 13 to 18 who were themselves panelists were invited to take the survey directly.

Some items in the survey came from the questionnaire used in the prior survey, conducted in 2017 for *News and America's Kids: How Young People Perceive and Are Impacted by the News* (Common Sense, 2017).

Data Collection

The field period was January 21 through February 3, 2020. The survey was available to respondents to complete, self-administered, online. A soft launch took place on January 21, 2020. The full study launched on January 22, 2020.

To maximize survey response during a short field period, SSRS had multiple communication touchpoints with panelists from the SSRS Probability Panel, including the initial invitation email and four reminder emails.

Data Processing

The data was thoroughly cleaned with a computer validation program written by SSRS's data processing programmers. This program established editing parameters in order to locate any errors including data that did not follow skip patterns, out-of-range values, and errors in data field locations.

A total of 19 opt-in panel respondents were removed due to data quality issues (straight liners or speeders). These are not included in the total number of completed respondents provided above.

During data processing procedures, an error in the questionnaire and survey script was discovered, and the error affected 182 respondents and two survey questions (Q21 and Q22). The respondents who missed these questions and should have received them were recontacted, and 147 (81%) participated in the recontact survey. Data reported for Q21 and Q22 include the smaller base of N=108 and N=187, respectively.

Weighting Procedures

This study's weighting procedures are described below.

Base Weight

A base weight value of 1 was assigned to all non-probability, opt-in cases.

SSRS Probability Panel

For SSRS Omnibus-recruited cases, the panel weighting begins with the application of the original Omnibus base weight (OBW) computed at the time of panel recruitment.

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2. To learn more about the Dynata opt-in panel, please click here:
    http://info.dynata.com/dynata-panel-book.html?utm_source=website&utm_medium=footer&utm_campaign=panel-book.

This base weight follows standard procedures for computing base weights of overlapping dual-frame telephone surveys.

$$OBW = [PLL + PCP – (PLL \times PCP)]^{-1}$$

PLL is the probability that the respondent was sampled from the original landline frame, and *PCP* is the probability that the respondent was sampled from the original cell frame. The sampling probabilities are a function of sample size, frame size, household composition, and telephone use.

For the ABS-recruited sample, the base weight is simply the number of adults in the household.

The final base weight for the panel is the product of the OBW and the ABS number of adults in the household.

$$BW = OBW \times ABSbw$$

Post-Stratification Weighting

The second stage of the weighting balances the demographic profile of the sample to target population parameters.

To handle missing data among some of the demographic variables, we employ a technique called "hot decking." Hot deck imputation replaces the missing values of a respondent randomly with that of another similar respondent without missing data. These are further determined by variables predictive of non-response that are present in the entire file. We use an SPSS macro detailed in *Goodbye, Listwise Deletion: Presenting Hot Deck Imputation as an Easy and Effective Tool for Handling Missing Data.*[3]

Weighting is accomplished using SPSSINC RAKE, an SPSS extension module that simultaneously balances the distributions of all variables using the GENLOG procedure.

The probability and non-probability (opt-in) samples each were weighted to the following parameters: race (White non-Hispanic/Latino, Black non-Hispanic/Latino, Hispanic/Latino, and other non-Hispanic/Latino), age (13 to 15, 16 to 17, 18), census region (Northeast, Midwest, South, West), age (13 to 15, 16 to 17, 18) by gender (male, female), and education of a randomly selected parent in the household (less than high school, high school graduate, some college, college or higher education).

These parameters were derived from the 2018 American Community Survey (ACS 2018).[4]

At the last stage—when weighting the entire sample as a whole—a "calibration weight" was added to reduce possible bias from the web panel sample. This involved weighting the entire data to questionnaire-level "calibration benchmarks" extracted from the weighted probability-based data. The calibration variables used were QAB (frequency of getting news through traditional TV news networks) and Q8/Q9 ("Does not use social media," "Uses social media but not for news," "Uses social media for news").

Margin of Sampling Error[5]

Specialized sampling designs and post-data collection statistical adjustments require analysis procedures that reflect departures from simple random sampling. SSRS calculates the effects of these design features so an appropriate adjustment can be incorporated into tests of statistical significance when using this data. The so-called "design effect," or *deff*, represents the loss in statistical efficiency that results from complex sample designs and systematic non-response. SSRS calculates the composite design effect for a sample of size *n*, with each case having a weight, *w*, as:

$$deff = \frac{n \sum w^2}{\left(\sum w \right)^2}$$

The design effect for this survey was 1.87 overall.

The survey's margin of error is the largest 95% confidence interval for any estimated proportion based on the total sample—one around 50%. For example, the margin of error for the total sample is 44.7 percentage points. This means that in 95 out of every 100 samples using the same methodology, estimated proportions based on the entire sample will be no more than ±4.7 percentage points away from their true values in the population. It is important to remember that sampling fluctuations are only one possible source of error in a survey estimate. Other sources, such as measurement error, may contribute additional error of greater or lesser magnitude.

3. Myers, T. A. (2011). Goodbye, listwise deletion: Presenting hot deck imputation as an easy and effective tool for handling missing data. *Communication Methods and Measures*, 5(4), 297–310. https://doi.org/10.1080/19312458.2011.624490

4. Ruggles, S., Flood, S., Goeken, R., Grover, J., Meyer, E., Pacas, J., & Sobek, M. (2019). *IPUMS USA: Version 9.0* [Data set]. https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V9.0

5. Margins of error are typically calculated on probability-based samples and are not technically correct for non-probability online samples. We supply them here to provide a general assessment of error ranges that may be associated with the data

TEENS AND THE NEWS, 2020 / THE INFLUENCERS,

MANY TEENS LOOK TO SOCIAL MEDIA FOR NEWS.

77% get news and headlines from social media.
39% "often" get news from personalities, influencers, and celebrities on social media and YouTube.
28% say their "preferred" news source is personalities, influencers, and celebrities on social media and YouTube.

YouTube and Instagram are growing as top news sources for kids.

Percent of teens who get news from each site

- YOUTUBE
- INSTAGRAM
- SNAPCHAT
- FACEBOOK
- TWITTER

48%
44%
32%
30%
27%
23%
22%
22%
18%

2017   2020

Most commonly mentioned personalities teens say they trust for news on social media or YouTube:

PewDiePie   CNN   Trevor Noah

Donald Trump   Beyoncé

> 🔍 **55% of teens today say they can tell if a news story is fake**, compared to 47% in 2017.

Even though teens often get news from personalities, influencers, and celebrities on social media and YouTube, **they don't see these sources as particularly trustworthy.**

Percent who put "a lot" of trust in:

LOCAL NEWS	TRADITIONAL PRINT/ONLINE NEWSPAPERS	TV NEWS NETWORKS
📍 28%	📰 22%	📺 21%

Less trusted news sources:

PERSONALITIES/ INFLUENCERS/ CELEBRITIES	DIGITAL MEDIA OUTLETS/BLOGS	COMEDY SHOWS
⭐ 15%	✏️ 10%	🎤 7%

◀▌ ▌▌ ▌▶   02:32

CELEBRITIES, AND PLATFORMS THEY SAY MATTER MOST

THE NEWS IS IMPORTANT TO MANY TEENS ...

42%
of teens say that following the news is important to them.

But fewer teens in 2020 feel that the news helps them feel prepared to make a difference in their communities.

51% — 2017
41% — 2020
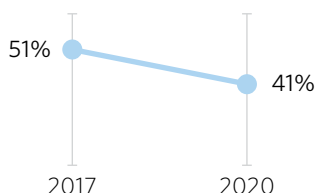
75%
of teens feel that the news media has no idea about the experiences of people their age, compared to 67% in 2017.

Fewer teens today feel the news covers issues that matter to them.

45% — 2017
35% — 2020
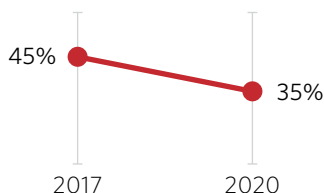
How do teens feel about the news?

Negative feelings

FRUSTRATED	CONFUSED	WORN OUT
45%	30%	25%
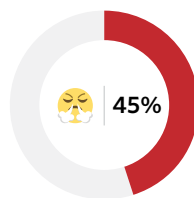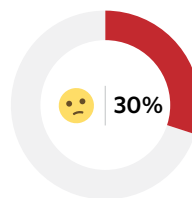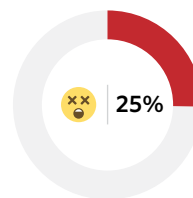
Positive feelings
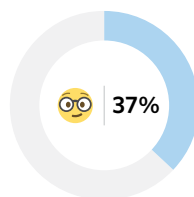
INFORMED	MOTIVATED	ENERGIZED
37%	12%	7%
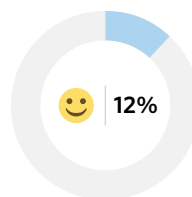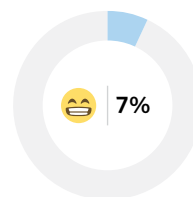
Many teens are aware of potential gender or racial bias in news media.

Only about 1/3 of teens agree that the news treats women and men equally fairly. Female teens are less likely than male teens to think so (22% vs. 35%).

Only **30%** of teens agree that the news treats people of different racial backgrounds equally fairly.

Black and Hispanic/Latino teens feel most affected by the news.

Percent of teens who agree that "what happens in the news affects my daily life."

HISPANIC/LATINO	34%
BLACK	33%
WHITE	27%
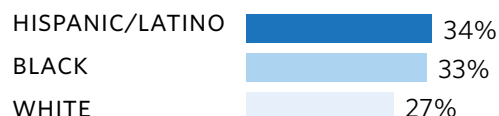
MANY TEENS HAVE LEARNED NEWS LITERACY SKILLS IN SCHOOL.

Top skills learned in school:

Telling the difference between opinion and news: **69%**

How to understand a poll: **55%**

How to fact-check a news story: **48%**

How to identify news bias: **45%**

Identifying fake news: **39%**

Telling the difference between editorial and sponsored content: **34%**

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Sample demographics summary

	Parameter	Unweighted	Weighted
Race, by age			
White*			
• 13–15	26.4%	23.9%	26.0%
• 16–17	17.6%	14.9%	17.2%
• 18	7.7%	7.2%	7.2%
Black*			
• 13–15	6.7%	9.5%	6.9%
• 16–17	4.5%	6.7%	4.6%
• 18	2.2%	4.0%	2.3%
Hispanic/Latino			
• 13–15	12.8%	12.3%	13.2%
• 16–17	8.0%	7.7%	8.2%
• 18	3.9%	5.5%	4.0%
Other*			
• 13–15	5.3%	4.7%	5.4%
• 16–17	3.4%	3.0%	3.5%
• 18	1.5%	0.6%	1.5%
Census region			
• Northeast	15.9%	17.2%	16.0%
• Midwest	21.1%	21.9%	21.5%
• South	38.9%	39.6%	38.7%
• West	24.1%	21.4%	23.8%
Age, by gender			
Male			
• 13–15	26.3%	25.1%	27.1%
• 16–17	17.0%	16.8%	17.5%
• 18	8.0%	7.3%	7.9%
Female			
• 13–15	24.9%	25.2%	24.4%
• 16–17	16.4%	15.5%	16.0%
• 18	7.3%	10.0%	7.1%

	Parameter	Unweighted	Weighted
Parent education			
• Less than high school	12.1%	10.8%	10.3%
• High school graduate	21.6%	16.0%	22.0%
• Some college	31.0%	29.6%	32.0%
• College graduate or more	35.3%	43.5%	35.7%
Frequency of news through traditional TV news networks			
• Often	16.1%	18.2%	16.2%
• Sometimes	30.7%	32.5%	29.2%
• Hardly ever	32.4%	30.1%	33.2%
• Never	20.8%	19.3%	21.4%
Social media use			
• Does not use	4.2%	3.5%	4.3%
• Uses, but not for news	18.3%	14.3%	18.7%
• Uses for news	77.6%	82.2%	77.0%

*Non-Hispanic/Latino

Where Teens Get News

Many teens are regular consumers of news. When asked about the general frequency of use of different sources of news, teens responded that "personalities/influencers/celebrities I follow on social media or YouTube" were their No. 1 source (39% "often" got news from this source). See Figure 1. This was followed by "news aggregators" (which can include news from many sources including traditional and nontraditional sources) and "digital media outlets and blogs" (27% and 21% of teens, respectively).

Teens' Preferred Sources of News

In addition to frequency of use, we asked teens to tell us their preferred sources of news. Overall, teens were most likely to prefer to get their news from "personalities/influencers/celebrities I follow on social media or YouTube" (28%). See Figure 2. Secondary mentions were "digital media outlets and blogs" (17%) and "news aggregators" (15%), followed by "traditional TV news networks" (14%).

"Traditional print and online newspapers" and "podcasts" were among teens' least preferred ways to consume news (3% each).

FIGURE 1. Teens who "often" get news from each source

Personalities/Influencers/Celebrities 39%
News aggregators 27%
Digital media outlets/blogs 21%
Traditional TV news networks 16%
Local newspapers/TV shows 13%
Comedy shows 9%
Podcasts 9%
Traditional print/online newspapers 6%

FIGURE 2. Teens who prefer to get news from each source

Personalities/Influencers/Celebrities 28%
Digital media outlets/blogs 17%
News aggregators 15%
Traditional TV news networks 14%
Local newspapers/TV shows 10%
Comedy shows 8%
Traditional print/online newspapers 3%
Podcasts 3%
Never get news from any sources 2%

FIGURES 1 AND 2:
Base: Total teens (*N*=804).

Teens' Social Media Usage

The landscape of social media platform usage among teens has changed in the past three years. Increased use has been exhibited primarily for YouTube (which jumped 16 percentage points), followed by Instagram and Snapchat (each increasing by 9 percentage points). See Figure 3. Reddit also experienced an 8 percentage point increase in use among teens since 2017. In 2020, TikTok was added to the list and showed a fair amount of use by almost half of teens (47%).

Decreases in use by teens were experienced by Facebook (down 20 percentage points) and Twitter (down 8 percentage points).

FIGURE 3. Teens' use of social media platforms, 2017 vs. 2020

YouTube
- 70%
- 86%*

Instagram
- 60%
- 69%*

Snapchat
- 59%
- 68%*

TikTok
- *Not asked*
- 47%

Facebook
- 63%
- 43%*

Twitter
- 36%
- 28%*

Reddit
- 6%
- 14%

Another social networking site
- 3%
- 2%

Do not use social networking sites
- 6%
- 4%

■ 2017 *N*=592
■ 2020 *N*=804
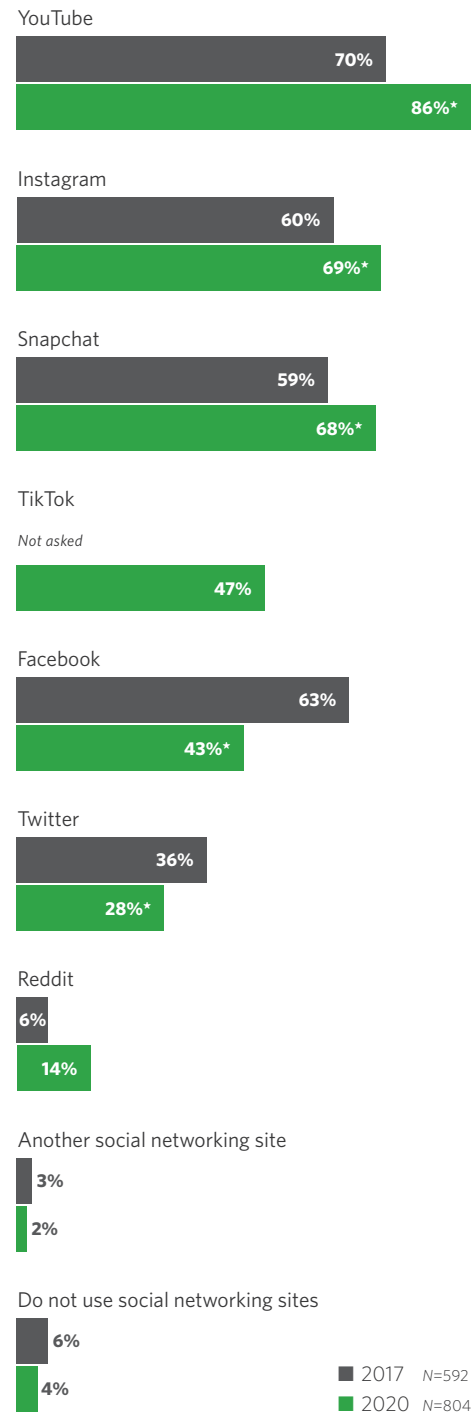
*Significantly higher/lower than 2017 data.

TEENS' USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS A NEWS SOURCE

TEENS ARE MORE AVID users of social networking now than they were three years ago. The vast majority of teens (96%) used at least one social networking platform. More than half of teens (56%) used four or more platforms in 2020, especially female teens (67%). See Figure 4.

While the volume of social media platform usage is up for both male and female teens, female teens in 2020 used more platforms compared to male teens. Sixty-seven percent of female teens used four or more social media platforms, compared to 46% of male teens. See Table 1.

FIGURE 4. Volume of teens' social media platform usage, 2017 vs. 2020

TABLE 1. Volume of teens' social media platform usage, by gender, 2017 vs. 2020

	Male[a]	Female[b]
2020	*n*=396	*n*=408
Use 1 platform	9%	**5%**
Use 2 platforms	20%[b]	10%
Use 3 platforms	21%[b]	**13%**
Use 4 platforms or more	**46%**	**67%[a]**
Do not use any social networking platforms	4%	5%
2017	*n*=317	*n*=275
Use 1 platform	14%	12%
Use 2 platforms	25%[b]	13%
Use 3 platforms	18%	24%
Use 4 platforms or more	36%	44%
Do not use any social networking platforms	6%	6%

Base: Total teens.

Notes: Bolded green or red figures indicate that 2020 data is significantly higher or lower than 2017 data. Superscripted a/b indicates that the data for the noted demographic group is significantly higher than the data for the demographic group represented by that letter in the header of the table.

*Significantly higher/lower than 2017 data.

Teens' Social Media Usage for News

Teens are frequently consuming news and news headlines from their social networking platforms. When asked about usage of specific social networking platforms for getting news, teens responded that YouTube is the platform they use most commonly (44%), followed by Instagram (32%) and Facebook (30%). See Figure 5. Snapchat and Twitter came in third, with roughly one in five teens using them to get news. About one in 10 teens (9%) got news from TikTok.

YouTube exhibited the greatest increase in use for news from 2017 among teens (a 17 percentage point increase), whereas a similar decrease was exhibited by teens in their use of Facebook (with an 18 percentage point decrease). Instagram also showed a significant increase in use for news among teens in 2020 (up 10 percentage points).

FIGURE 5. Teens who get news on the following social networking platforms, 2017 vs. 2020

YouTube
- 27%
- 44%*

Instagram
- 22%
- 32%*

Facebook
- 48%
- 30%*

Snapchat
- 23%
- 22%

Twitter
- 22%
- 18%

TikTok
- *Not asked*
- 9%

Reddit
- 4%
- 6%

Do not get news on social media sites
- 17%
- 19%

Do not use any social media sites
- 6%
- 4%

■ 2017 *N*=592
■ 2020 *N*=804
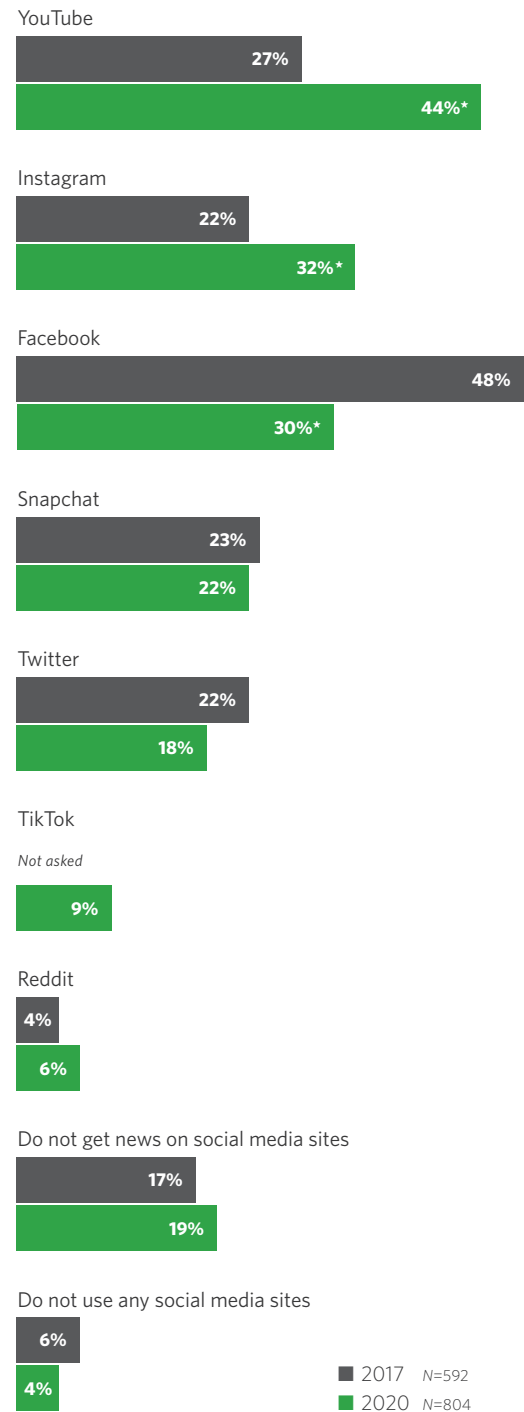
*Significantly higher/lower than 2017 data.

Table 2 presents the data slightly differently. This table shows the percent of all teens who used each social networking platform, followed by the percent of those teens who use that platform for news. This shows that though YouTube was the most popular social media platform, only about half of those users (51%) used it for news, compared to Facebook, with 69% using it for news.

TABLE 2. Teens who use each platform and who use that platform for news, 2017 vs. 2020

	2020 N=804	2017 N=592
Social networking platforms (Net)	**96%**	**93%**
• Get news/headlines here	80%	82%
YouTube	**86%**	70%
• Get news/headlines here	**51%**	39%
Instagram	**69%**	60%
• Get news/headlines here	47%	37%
Snapchat	**68%**	59%
• Get news/headlines here	33%	39%
TikTok	47%	N/A
• Get news/headlines here	19%	N/A
Facebook	**43%**	63%
• Get news/headlines here	69%	77%
Twitter	**28%**	36%
• Get news/headlines here	66%	61%
Reddit	**14%**	6%
• Get news/headlines here	45%	*

*Base is too small to report data.

Notes: Bolded green or red figures indicate that 2020 data is significantly higher or lower than 2017 data. *N/A*=Not asked in 2017.

TEENS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE NEWS

Trust in News Sources

Teens can be skeptical news consumers. At best, one in four teens (28%) put "a lot" of trust in the information they received from local newspapers and TV shows, and slightly fewer put "a lot" of trust in traditional print/online newspapers (22%) and traditional TV news networks (21%). See Figure 6. Another one in five trusted news aggregators (18%). The least trusted sources were comedy shows (7%) and podcasts (6%).

While traditional print and online newspapers were used least often by teens (they were used "often" by 6% of teens), they were the second most trusted source (22% trusted this source "a lot"). Conversely, while personalities, influencers, and celebrities they followed on social media or YouTube were the most common source for news (used "often" by 39%), only 15% of teens had "a lot" of trust in this source.

Teens' Reading Behavior of News Stories

Two-thirds of teens said they "read headlines" when reading the news in general, whereas the other one-third said they typically read "most or all of news stories." See Figure 7.

FIGURE 6. Teens who trust information from each source "a lot"

Local newspapers/TV shows — 28%

Traditional print/online newspapers — 22%

Traditional TV news networks — 21%

News aggregators — 18%

Personalities/Influencers/Celebrities — 15%

Digital media outlets/blogs — 10%

Comedy shows — 7%

Podcasts — 6%
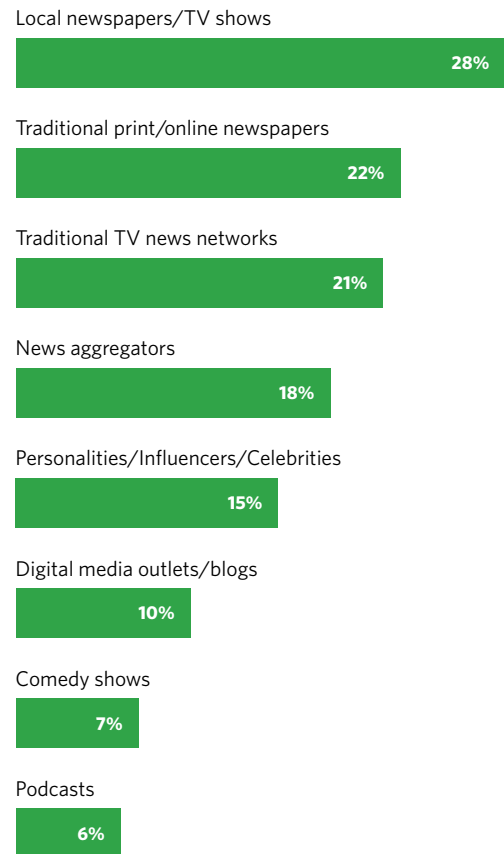
FIGURE 7. How teens generally read the news

Read most/all news stories 33%

Read headlines 67%
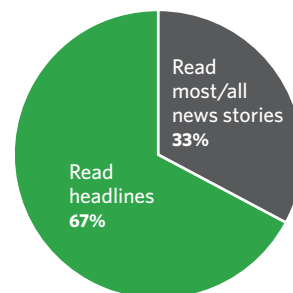
FIGURES 6 AND 7:
Base: Total teens (*N*=804).

While half of teens said they "sometimes" clicked through to "read or see the whole story," only 30% stated they did this "often." See Figure 8. Older teens (age 16 to 18) were significantly more likely than younger teens (age 13 to 15) to click through and "read or see the full story."

TABLE 3. How frequently teens click through to read full news stories of interest, by age

	Age 13 to 15[a] *n*=405	Age 16 to 18[b] *n*=399
Often/Sometimes (Net)	78%	87%[a]
Hardly ever/Never (Net)	22%[b]	13%

Base: Total teens (*N*=804)

Note: Superscripted a/b indicates that the data for the noted demographic group is significantly higher than the data for the demographic group represented by that letter in the header of the table.

Teens' Attention to News Sources of Stories Found on Social Media

As we saw in 2017, many teens who get news from social media platforms are trying to be careful readers of this content. Today, the majority (62%) of teens who use social media for news said they paid "a lot" (20%) or "some" attention (40%) to the "news source the link on social media" took them to. However, compared to 2017, significantly more teens today said they pay "very little" attention to the source of news presented on social media (30%, vs. 22% in 2017).

Teens age 16 to 18 are more likely to state that they pay "a lot"/"some" attention to the news source online, whereas teens age 13 to 15 are more likely to state that they pay "little"/"no" attention to online news sources. See Table 4.

TABLE 4. Attention paid to news sources seen on social media, by age

	Age 13 to 15[a] *n*=326	Age 16 to 18[b] *n*=335
A lot/Some (Net)	57%	68%[a]
Very little/None (Net)	43%[b]	32%

Base: Teens who get news headlines on social media platforms.

Note: Superscripted a/b indicates that the data for the noted demographic group is significantly higher than the data for the demographic group represented by that letter in the header of the table.

FIGURE 8. How frequently teens click through to read full news stories of interest

- 4% Never
- Hardly ever 14%
- Often 30%
- Sometimes 52%
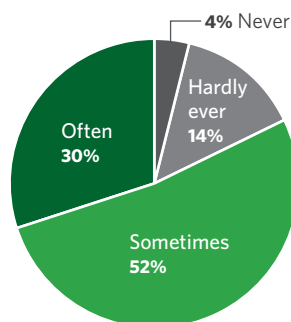
Base: Total teens (*N*=804).

FIGURE 9. Attention paid to news sources seen on social media platforms, 2017 vs. 2020

A lot of attention
- 23%
- 20%

A lot/Some (NET)
2017 **69%**
2020 **62%**

Some attention
- 46%
- 42%

Very little attention
- 22%
- 30%*

Very little/None (NET)
2017 **31%**
2020 **38%**

No attention at all
- 8%
- 7%

■ 2017 *N*=469
■ 2020 *N*=661

*Significantly higher/lower than 2017 data.

Base: Teens who get news on social media.

Note: Nets may not sum exactly due to rounding.

TABLE 5. Amount of attention paid to news source of stories on social media platforms, by race/ethnicity, 2017 vs. 2020

	White[a]	Black[b]	Hispanic/Latino[c]
2020	*n*=281	*n*=144	*n*=182
A lot of attention/Some attention (Net)	57%	72%[a]	69%[a]
Very little attention/No attention at all (Net)	43%[bc]	28%	31%
2017	*n*=250	*n*=81	*n*=105
A lot of attention/Some attention (Net)	66%	61%	80%[c]
Very little attention/No attention at all (Net)	34%[c]	39%	20%

Base: Teens who get news headlines on social media platforms.

Note: Superscripted a/b/c indicates that the data for the noted demographic group is significantly higher than the data for the demographic group represented by that letter in the header of the table.

Hispanic/Latino teens and Black teens were significantly more likely to pay "a lot"/"some" attention to the source of news than were White teens (69% and 72%, respectively, vs. 57%). See Table 5.

Teens' Reading Behavior of News Stories on Social Media

Similar to findings about their reading of general news stories, about two-thirds of teens said they "generally read headlines" when reading news on social media, whereas the other one-third said they "generally read most or all of news stories." See Figure 10.

While half of teens said they "sometimes" click through and read the whole story on social media, only 33% stated they did this "often." See Figure 11.

FIGURE 10. How teens read news stories on social media

- 1% Refused
- Read most/all news stories 32%
- Read headlines 67%
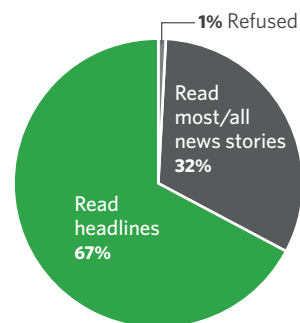
FIGURE 11. How frequently teens click through to read full social media news stories of interest

- 4% Never
- Hardly ever 10%
- Often 33%
- Sometimes 53%
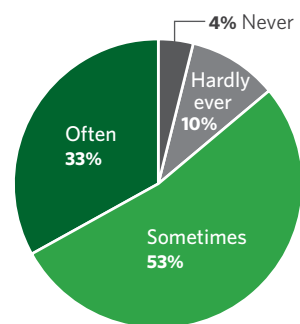
FIGURES 10 AND 11:
Base: Teens who get news on social media (*N*=661).

Top Personalities, Influencers, and Celebrities Teens Trust on Social Media and YouTube for News

When asked to name the top personalities, influencers, and celebrities on social media or YouTube they trust for news, respondents named a wide range. PewDiePie, Trevor Noah, CNN, Donald Trump, and Beyoncé emerged as the top five most trusted on social media. See Figure 12. Of the 731 personalities, influencers, and celebrities that were mentioned by respondents, most were mentioned fewer than 10 times and none more than 32 times.

FIGURE 12. Mentions of teens' top personalities, influencers, and celebrities on social media or YouTube*

PewDiePie — 32
CNN — 23
Trevor Noah — 20
Donald Trump — 20
Beyoncé — 19
TMZ — 17
BuzzFeed — 16
Jeffree Star — 16
Cardi B — 14
Stephen Colbert — 14
Shane Dawson — 14
Jimmy Fallon — 13
Kylie Jenner — 12
Markiplier — 12
Logan Paul — 11
Ben Shapiro — 11
FOX News — 10
LeBron James — 10
Kim Kardashian — 10
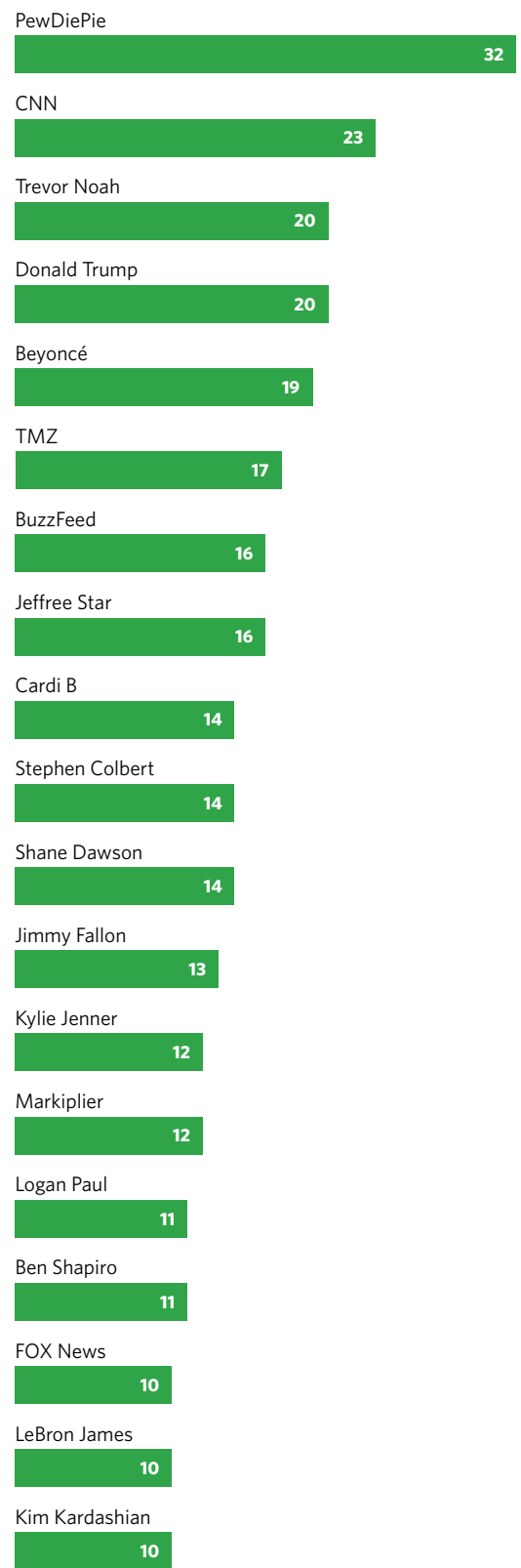
*Only those with 10 or more mentions are represented in the chart above. There were 731 different personalities, influencers, and celebrities mentioned. "Don't know/None" and "N/A" were removed before creation of this chart.

Ability to Tell Fake News from Real News

Compared to teens in 2017, significantly more teens agreed they "know how to tell fake news stories from real news stories" (55% in 2020, vs. 47% in 2017). See Figure 13.

Female teens were more likely today to say they can tell the difference between fake and real news than they were in 2017, closing the gap that existed between male and female teens on this item. See Table 6.

Both Hispanic/Latino and Black teens agreed they can discern the difference between fake and real news, more than Whites agreed they can (63% and 61%, respectively, vs. 48%). See Table 7. Both Hispanic/Latino and Black teens showed increases in agreement with this statement in 2020 compared to 2017, whereas Whites remained static at 48%.

TABLE 6. Teens who agree that "I know how to tell fake news stories from real news stories," by gender, 2017 vs. 2020

	Male[a]	Female[b]
2020	n=396	n=408
Strongly agree/Agree (Net)	55%	**54%**
Neither agree nor disagree	27%	29%
Disagree/Strongly disagree (Net)	18%	**16%**
2017	n=317	n=275
Strongly agree/Agree (Net)	53%[b]	41%
Neither agree nor disagree	30%	34%
Disagree/Strongly disagree (Net)	16%	25%

FIGURE 13. Teens who agree or disagree that they can tell fake news stories from real news stories, 2017 vs. 2020

Strongly Agree/Agree (NET)
2017 **47%**
2020 **55%***

■ 2017 N=592
■ 2020 N=804
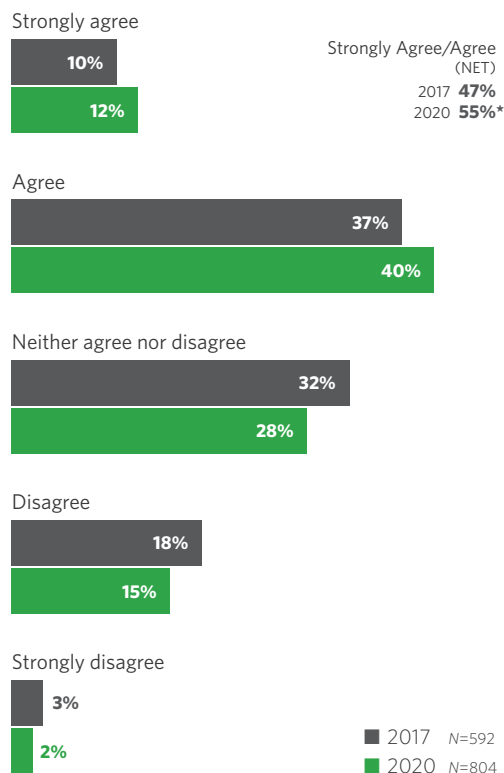
*Significantly higher than 2017 data.

Base: Total teens.

Note: Nets may not sum exactly due to rounding.

TABLE 7. Teens who agree that "I know how to tell fake news stories from real ones," by race/ethnicity, 2017 vs. 2020

	White[a]	Black[b]	Hispanic/Latino[c]
2020	n=370	n=162	n=205
Strongly agree/Agree (Net)	48%	**61%**[a]	**63%**[a]
Neither agree nor disagree	32%[c]	24%	22%
Disagree/Strongly disagree (Net)	20%	15%	**15%**
2017	n=326	n=106	n=122
Strongly agree/Agree (Net)	48%	45%	45%
Neither agree nor disagree	33%	35%	27%
Disagree/Strongly disagree (Net)	19%	20%	28%

TABLES 6 AND 7:

Base: Total teens.

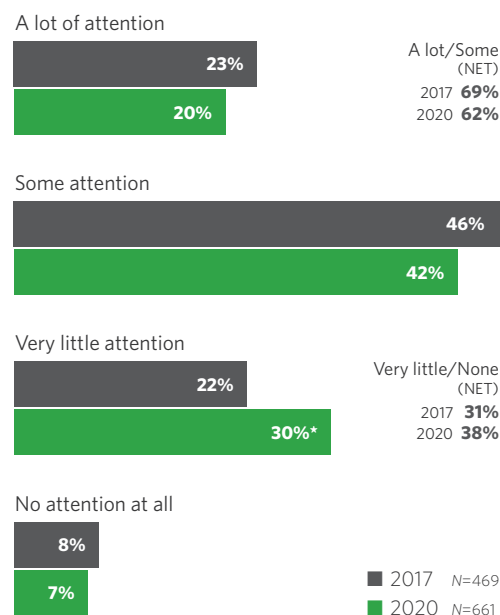Notes: Bolded green or red figures indicate that 2020 data is significantly higher or lower than 2017 data. Superscripted a/b/c indicates that the data for the noted demographic group is significantly higher than the data for the demographic group represented by that letter in the header of the table.

Personal Views and Feelings About the News

Two in five teens said that "following the news is important" to them (42%). See Figure 14. It helped them "have a good understanding of what's going on in the world" (60%). However, fewer teens this year agreed they "feel better prepared to make a difference in the community when following the news" (41%, vs. 51% in 2017) or that the "news affects my daily life" (29%, vs. 39% in 2017). Further, as shown in Table 8, significantly fewer teens in 2020 said they "strongly agree" that "following the news is important" to them (9%, compared to 16% in 2017).

Fewer male teens felt that "the news affects my daily life" (26%, vs. 42% in 2017). And fewer female teens felt they were "better prepared to make a difference in the community when following the news" (42%, vs. 53% in 2017).

Agreement with "following the news is important to me" was highest among Hispanic/Latino teens, and significantly higher than White teens. See Table 9, page 21.

Fewer teens overall in 2020 felt that "what happens in the news affects my daily life," compared to teens in 2017. See Table 10, page 21. This is driven mostly by a decrease in White teen agreement with this statement, compared to their views in 2017. In 2020, both Black and Hispanic/Latino teens were more likely to agree with this than White teens, though their rates compared to 2017 went down somewhat as well.

FIGURE 14. Teens who "agree"/"strongly agree" with different views of the news/world, 2017 vs. 2020

I have a good understanding of what's going on in the world
- 2017: 58%
- 2020: 60%

Following the news is important to me
- 2017: 48%
- 2020: 42%

I feel better prepared to make a difference in the community when following the news
- 2017: 51%
- 2020: 41%*

What happens in the news affects my daily life
- 2017: 39%
- 2020: 29%*

■ 2017 *N*=592
■ 2020 *N*=804

*Significantly higher/lower than 2017 data.

Base: Total teens.

TABLE 8. Teens who "agree"/"strongly agree" with different views of the news/world, by gender, 2017 vs. 2020

	Male[a]	Female[b]
2020	*n*=396	*n*=408
I have a good understanding of what's going on in the world.	64%	55%
Following the news is important to me.	43%	40%
I feel better prepared to make a difference in the community when following the news.	41%	**42%**
What happens in the news affects my daily life.	**26%**	33%
2017	*n*=317	*n*=275
I have a good understanding of what's going on in the world.	62%	54%
Following the news is important to me.	48%	47%
I feel better prepared to make a difference in the community when following the news.	49%	53%
What happens in the news affects my daily life.	42%	35%

Base: Total teens.

Notes: Bolded green or red figures indicate that 2020 data is significantly higher or lower than 2017 data. Superscripted a/b/c indicates that the data for the noted demographic group is significantly higher than the data for the demographic group represented by that letter in the header of the table.
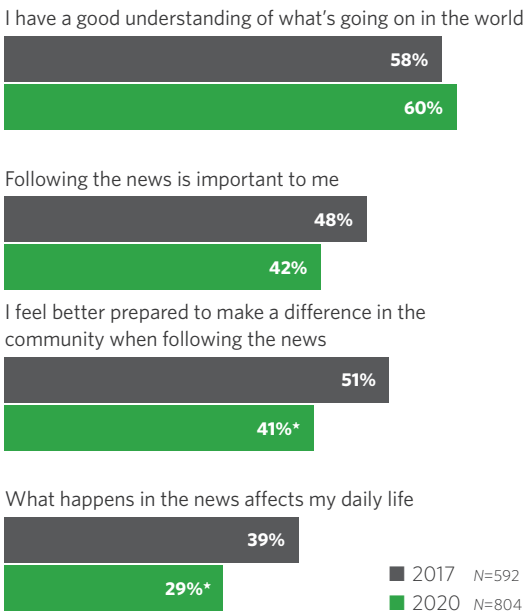
TABLE 9. Teens who agree "following the news is important to me," by race/ethnicity, 2017 vs. 2020

	Total	White[a]	Black[b]	Hispanic/Latino[c]
2020	N=804	n=370	n=162	n=205
Strongly agree/Agree (Net)	**42%**	**37%**	**46%**	**53%[a]**
• Strongly agree	**9%**	**6%**	13%[a]	12%
• Agree	**33%**	31%	33%	41%
Neither agree nor disagree	**38%**	40%	40%	33%
Disagree/Strongly disagree (Net)	**20%**	**23%**	**14%**	**14%**
• Disagree	**14%**	16%	11%	11%
• Strongly disagree	**5%**	8%	3%	3%
2017	N=592	n=326	n=106	n=122
Strongly agree/Agree (Net)	**48%**	**44%**	**52%**	**52%**
• Strongly agree	**16%**	17%	21%	15%
• Agree	**32%**	27%	31%	38%
Neither agree nor disagree	**34%**	36%	34%	30%
Disagree/Strongly disagree (Net)	**19%**	**21%**	**14%**	**18%**
• Disagree	**16%**	17%	13%	17%
• Strongly disagree	**3%**	4%	1%	1%

TABLE 10. Teens who agree that "what happens in the news affects my daily life," by race/ethnicity, 2017 vs. 2020

	Total	White[a]	Black[b]	Hispanic/Latino[c]
2020	N=804	n=370	n=162	n=205
Strongly agree/Agree (Net)	**29%**	**27%**	**33%[a]**	**34%**
• Strongly agree	**6%**	5%	9%	10%
• Agree	**23%**	22%	24%	24%
Neither agree nor disagree	**40%**	42%[c]	44%	35%
Disagree/Strongly disagree (Net)	**31%**	**31%**	**23%**	**31%**
• Disagree	**26%**	27%	17%	27%
• Strongly disagree	**5%**	4%	6%	4%
2017	N=592	n=326	n=106	n=122
Strongly agree/Agree (Net)	**39%**	**37%**	**39%**	**44%**
• Strongly agree	**10%**	8%	17%	12%
• Agree	**29%**	28%	22%	32%
Neither agree nor disagree	**35%**	33%	41%	30%
Disagree/Strongly disagree (Net)	**27%**	**31%**	**20%**	**26%**
• Disagree	**22%**	26%	14%	24%
• Strongly disagree	**4%**	5%	6%	2%

TABLES 9 AND 10:

Base: Total teens.

Notes: Bolded green or red figures indicate that 2020 data is significantly higher or lower than 2017 data. Superscripted a/b/c indicates that the data for the noted demographic group is significantly higher than the data for the demographic group represented by that letter in the header of the table.

When asked about how news in the past six months had made them feel, the primary feeling teens reported of those listed was "frustrated" (45%), followed by "informed" (37%).[6] See Figure 15. One-quarter or more also mentioned feeling "confused" and "worn out." Fewer reported feeling "motivated" (12%) or "energized" (7%). About one in six stated they did not feel any of the emotions surveyed in that time frame based on their experiences with the news.

FIGURE 15. Teens' feelings about how the news had made them feel in the past six months

Informed
37%

Motivated
12%

Energized
7%

Frustrated
45%

Confused
30%

Worn out
25%

None of these
17%
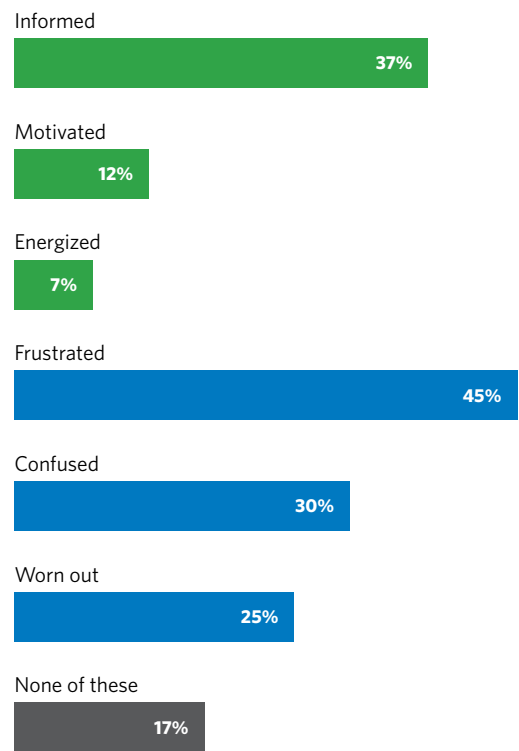
Base: Total teens (*N*=804).

6. Question adapted from Rideout, V. J., & Watkins, C. (2019). *Millennials, social media, and politics*. Austin, TX: The University of Texas at Austin, Institute for Media Innovation.

Views About Judgment and Harassment Online

Three new psychographic statements regarding teens' views of social media and the news were added in 2020. About one in three teens (31%) said they "agree" or "strongly agree" that they "avoid sharing my opinions online about news because I am afraid of being attacked or harassed." See Table 11. Slightly more than one in three teens (35%) said they "agree" or "strongly agree" that they "make judgments about other people's character based on the news they share online." More than one in four teens (28%) said they "agree" or "strongly agree" that they "have become more involved in a social or political issue because of something I saw in the news."

Male teens were more likely than female teens to "disagree" that they "avoid sharing my opinions online about news because I am afraid of being attacked or harassed" (41% disagreed, compared to 29% of female teens).

White teens were more likely than Black teens to "agree" that they "avoid sharing my opinions online about news because I am afraid of being attacked or harassed," whereas Black teens were more likely to "disagree" with this statement. See Table 12, page 24.

TABLE 11. Teen agreement with news impact statements, by gender

	Total N=804	Male[a] n=396	Female[b] n=408
I avoid sharing my opinions online about news because I am afraid of being attacked or harassed.			
• Strongly agree/Agree (Net)	**31%**	28%	35%
• Neither agree nor disagree	**33%**	31%	36%
• Disagree/Strongly disagree (Net)	**35%**	41%[b]	29%
I make judgments about other people's character based on the news they share online.			
• Strongly agree/Agree (Net)	**35%**	32%	37%
• Neither agree nor disagree	**33%**	34%	32%
• Disagree/Strongly disagree (Net)	**32%**	34%	30%
I have become more involved in a social or political issue because of something I saw in the news.			
• Strongly agree/Agree (Net)	**28%**	30%	26%
• Neither agree nor disagree	**36%**	32%	40%
• Disagree/Strongly disagree (Net)	**36%**	38%	35%

Note: Superscripted a/b indicates that the data for the noted demographic group is significantly higher than the data for the demographic group represented by that letter in the header of the table.

TABLE 12. Teen agreement with statements about judgment and harassment online, by race/ethnicity

	Total *N*=804	White[a] *n*=370	Black[b] *n*=162	Hispanic/Latino[c] *n*=205
I avoid sharing my opinions online about news because I am afraid of being attacked or harassed.				
• Strongly agree/Agree (Net)	**31%**	36%[b]	21%	30%
• Neither agree nor disagree	**33%**	32%	35%	31%
• Disagree/Strongly disagree (Net)	**35%**	32%	45%[a]	39%
I make judgments about other people's character based on the news they share online.				
• Strongly agree/Agree (Net)	**35%**	35%	37%	33%
• Neither agree nor disagree	**33%**	33%	27%	33%
• Disagree/Strongly disagree (Net)	**32%**	32%	36%	34%
I have become more involved in a social or political issue because of something I saw in the news.				
• Strongly agree/Agree (Net)	**28%**	26%	31%	26%
• Neither agree nor disagree	**36%**	40%	29%	33%
• Disagree/Strongly disagree (Net)	**36%**	34%	40%	40%

Note: Superscripted a/b/c indicates that the data for the noted demographic group is significantly higher than the data for the demographic group represented by that letter in the header of the table.

Relevance of News to Teens

Three-quarters of teens overall said they "agree" that "most news media have no idea what the lives of people my age are really like." See Figure 16. And only one-third said they "agree" that "the news covers issues that matter to me" (down 10 percentage points from 2017). Male and female teens were united in these views.

More White teens (28%) said they "disagree" that "the news covers issues that matter to me" than other teens, whereas both Black and Hispanic/Latino teens were more likely than White teens to "strongly agree" with this statement. See Table 13, page 25.

Compared to 2017, Hispanic/Latino teens today were much more likely to say they "agree" with the statement that "most news media have no idea what the lives of people my age are really like," with a 20 percentage point increase in agreement. See Table 14, page 25. Agreement with this statement was fairly static among Black teens and slightly (not significantly) up among White teens.

FIGURE 16. Teens who "agree"/"strongly agree" with the following statements

The news covers issues that matter to me: 2017 45%, 2020 35%*
Most news media have no idea what the lives of people my age are really like: 2017 67%, 2020 75%*

■ 2017 (*N*=592) ■ 2020 (*N*=804)
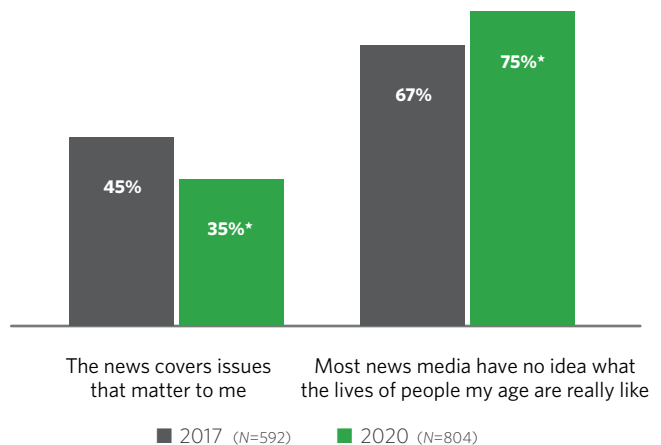
*Significantly higher/lower than 2017 data.

Base: Total teens.

TABLE 13. Teen agreement that "the news covers issues that matter to me," by race/ethnicity, 2017 vs. 2020

	Total	White[a]	Black[b]	Hispanic/Latino[c]
2020	*N*=804	*n*=370	*n*=162	*n*=205
Strongly agree/Agree (Net)	**35%**	**32%**	**38%**	**42%**
• Strongly agree	**6%**	**2%**	14%[a]	9%[a]
• Agree	29%	29%	24%	33%
Neither agree nor disagree	42%	41%	50%	40%
Disagree/Strongly disagree (Net)	**23%**	**28%[bc]**	**11%**	**18%**
• Disagree	17%	19%[b]	9%	14%
• Strongly disagree	**7%**	**8%**	3%	4%
2017	*N*=592	*n*=326	*n*=106	*n*=122
Strongly agree/Agree (Net)	**45%**	**43%**	**46%**	**51%**
• Strongly agree	10%	9%	11%	14%
• Agree	34%	34%	35%	38%
Neither agree nor disagree	35%	35%	42%	32%
Disagree/Strongly disagree (Net)	**20%**	**22%**	**12%**	**17%**
• Disagree	17%	18%	8%	17%
• Strongly disagree	3%	3%	4%	*

TABLE 14. Teen agreement that "most news media have no idea what the lives of people my age are really like," by race/ethnicity, 2017 vs. 2020

	Total	White[a]	Black[b]	Hispanic/Latino[c]
2020	*N*=804	*n*=370	*n*=162	*n*=205
Strongly agree/Agree (Net)	**75%**	**77%**	**67%**	**75%**
• Strongly agree	27%	26%	25%	27%
• Agree	48%	51%	43%	48%
Neither agree nor disagree	22%	19%	29%	21%
Disagree/Strongly disagree (Net)	**3%**	**3%**	**4%**	**4%**
• Disagree	**3%**	**3%**	3%	**3%**
• Strongly disagree	*	*	1%	1%
2017	*N*=592	*n*=326	*n*=106	*n*=122
Strongly agree/Agree (Net)	**67%**	**70%[c]**	**69%**	**55%**
• Strongly agree	24%	22%	29%	19%
• Agree	43%	49%[b]	39%	37%
Neither agree nor disagree	24%	21%	26%	31%
Disagree/Strongly disagree (Net)	**9%**	**8%**	**6%**	**14%**
• Disagree	8%	8%	3%	12%
• Strongly disagree	1%	1%	2%	2%

TABLES 13 AND 14:

*Base is too small to report data.

Notes: Base is total teens. Bolded green or red figures indicate that 2020 data is significantly higher or lower than 2017 data. Superscripted a/b/c indicates that the data for the noted demographic group is significantly higher than the data for the demographic group represented by that letter in the header of the table.

Bias in the News

Potential bias in the news media is visible to teens. Similar to 2017, only about a third of teens said they "agree" that "news treats women and men equally fair." See Figure 17. Only 30% of teens agreed that "news treats people of different racial or ethnic backgrounds equally fair."

Since 2017, there has been an increase in teens, in particular male teens, who say they "disagree" that "news treats women and men equally fair," as shown in Table 15. Female teens continued to be more likely than male teens to say they "disagree" with this statement (46%, vs. 34% of male teens).

As shown in Table 16, there has not been much change since 2017 among those who said they "agree" with the statement that "news treats people of different racial or ethnic backgrounds equally fair," including among racial/ethnic groups. See page 27.

FIGURE 17. Teens who "agree"/"strongly agree" with the following statements

- ■ 2017 (*N*=592) ■ 2020 (*N*=804)

Base: Total teens.

TABLE 15. Teen agreement that news treats women and men equally fairly, by gender, 2017 vs. 2020

	Total	Male[a]	Female[b]
2020	*N*=804	*n*=396	*n*=408
Strongly agree/Agree (Net)	**29%**	**35%[b]**	**22%**
• Strongly agree	5%	**7%**	3%
• Agree	24%	28%[b]	18%
Neither agree nor disagree	32%	31%	33%
Disagree/Strongly disagree (Net)	**40%**	**34%**	**46%[a]**
• Disagree	**32%**	28%	36%
• Strongly disagree	8%	7%	10%
2017	*N*=592	*n*=317	*n*=275
Strongly agree/Agree (Net)	**32%**	**38%[b]**	**26%**
• Strongly agree	9%	13%[b]	4%
• Agree	23%	25%	21%
Neither agree nor disagree	36%	38%	34%
Disagree/Strongly disagree (Net)	**32%**	**24%**	**40%[a]**
• Disagree	25%	19%	31%[a]
• Strongly disagree	7%	5%	9%

Notes: Bolded green or red figures indicate that 2020 data is significantly higher or lower than 2017 data. Superscripted a/b/c indicates that the data for the noted demographic group is significantly higher than the data for the demographic group represented by that letter in the header of the table.
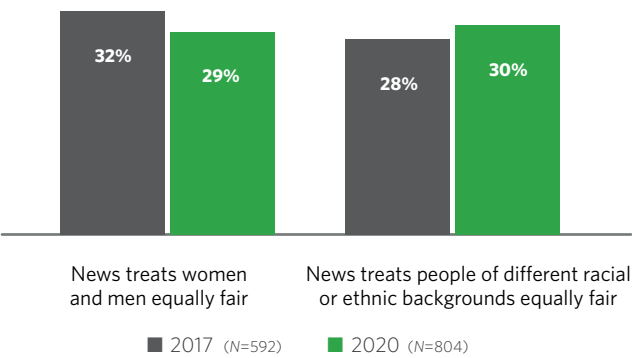
TABLE 16. Teen agreement that "news treats people of different racial or ethnic backgrounds equally fair," by race/ethnicity, 2017 vs. 2020

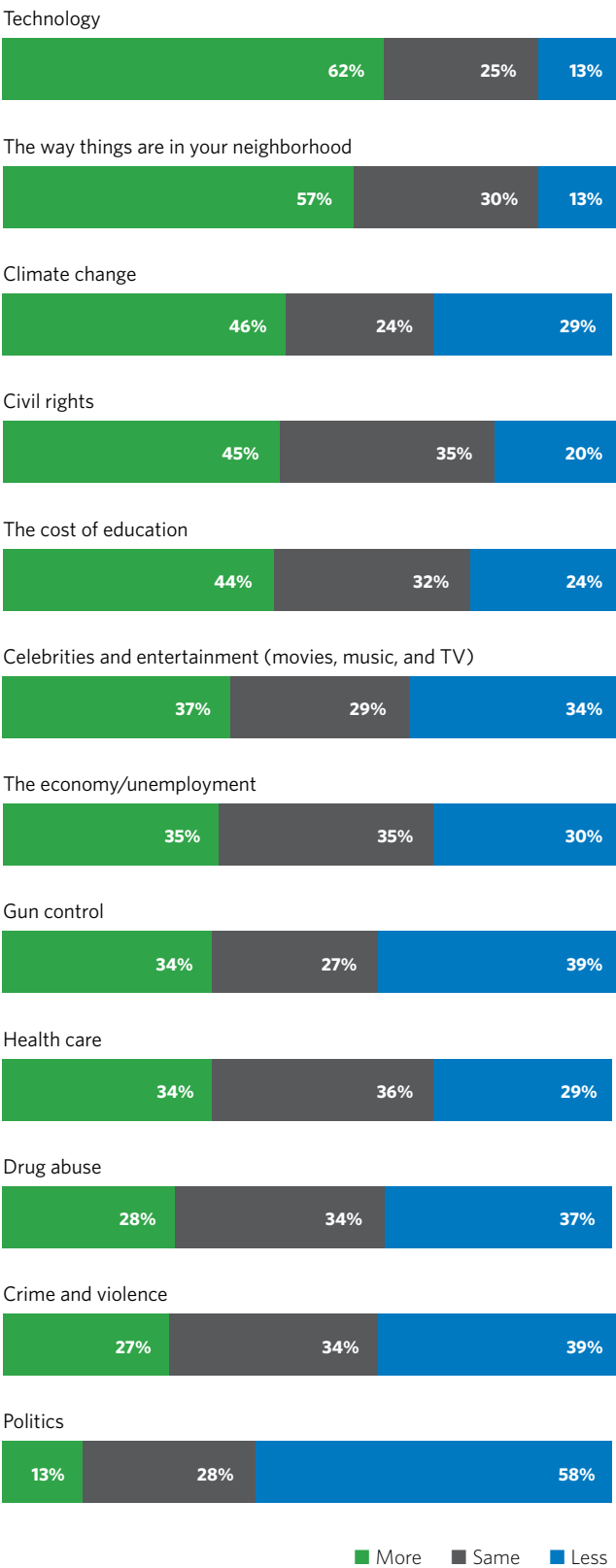|	Total	White[a]	Black[b]	Hispanic/Latino[c]
2020	*N*=804	*n*=370	*n*=162	*n*=205
Strongly agree/Agree (Net)	**30%**	**28%**	**29%**	**37%**
• Strongly agree	7%	6%	10%	7%
• Agree	23%	22%	19%	29%
Neither agree nor disagree	28%	33%	21%	25%
Disagree/Strongly disagree (Net)	**42%**	**39%**	**49%**	**39%**
• Disagree	30%	28%	32%	32%
• Strongly disagree	12%	11%	17%c	7%
2017	*N*=592	*n*=326	*n*=106	*n*=122
Strongly agree/Agree (Net)	**28%**	**29%**	**39%**	**24%**
• Strongly agree	9%	9%	19%ac	6%
• Agree	19%	21%	19%	19%
Neither agree nor disagree	32%	33%	27%	32%
Disagree/Strongly disagree (Net)	**40%**	**37%**	**35%**	**43%**
• Disagree	28%	29%	19%	29%
• Strongly disagree	12%	9%	16%	14%

Note: Superscripted a/b/c indicates that the data for the noted demographic group is significantly higher than the data for the demographic group represented by that letter in the header of the table.

Issues Teens Would Like to See More or Less of in the News

Subjects teens would like to see more of in the news are "technology" (62% said they want to see more in the news), "the way things are in your neighborhood" (57%), "climate change" (46%), "civil rights" (45%), and "the cost of education" (44%). See Figure 18. The subject they wanted to see less of in the news was overwhelmingly "politics" (58% wanted to see less in the news) and, to a lesser extent, "crime and violence" and "gun control" (39% wanted to see less of both of these topics in the news).

Male teens stood out for their interest in "technology," female teens and Hispanic/Latino teens for "climate change" and "health care," and Black teens for "civil rights" and "gun control." See Table 17 on page 29. Hispanic/Latino teens also stated a desire to see more on "crime," "unemployment," and "celebrities." Female teens also desired more news on "gun control."

FIGURE 18. Teens would like to see "more," "about the same," or "less" of these topics

Technology

More	Same	Less
62%	25%	13%

The way things are in your neighborhood

More	Same	Less
57%	30%	13%

Climate change

More	Same	Less
46%	24%	29%

Civil rights

More	Same	Less
45%	35%	20%

The cost of education

More	Same	Less
44%	32%	24%

Celebrities and entertainment (movies, music, and TV)

More	Same	Less
37%	29%	34%

The economy/unemployment

More	Same	Less
35%	35%	30%

Gun control

More	Same	Less
34%	27%	39%

Health care

More	Same	Less
34%	36%	29%

Drug abuse

More	Same	Less
28%	34%	37%

Crime and violence

More	Same	Less
27%	34%	39%

Politics

More	Same	Less
13%	28%	58%

■ More ■ Same ■ Less

Base: Total teens (*N*=804).

Note: Segments may not total 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 17. Teens who would like to see more of each topic in the news, by gender and race/ethnicity

	Male[a] *n*=396	Female[b] *n*=408	White[c] *n*=370	Black[d] *n*=162	Hispanic/Latino[e] *n*=205
Technology	69%[b]	54%	64%	52%	58%
The way things are in your neighborhood	54%	60%	58%	58%	58%
Climate change	40%	53%[a]	45%[d]	32%	54%[d]
Civil rights	42%	48%	41%	62%[ce]	45%
The cost of education	40%	48%	41%	51%	49%
The economy/ unemployment	36%	33%	29%	45%[c]	43%[c]
Celebrities and entertainment	34%	41%	32%	37%	45%[c]
Health care	28%	42%[a]	28%	47%[c]	40%[c]
Gun control	27%	41%[a]	29%	53%[ce]	38%
Drug abuse	24%	33%[a]	26%	28%	34%
Crime and violence	24%	29%	23%	29%	39%[c]
Politics	16%[b]	10%	13%	11%	17%

Base: Total teens (*N*=804).

Notes: Bolded green or red figures indicate that 2020 data is significantly **higher** or **lower** than 2017 data. Superscripted a/b/c/d/e indicates that the data for the noted demographic group is significantly higher than the data for the demographic group represented by that letter in the header of the table.

SKILLS LEARNED IN SCHOOL TO EVALUATE THE NEWS

MANY TEENS LEARNED a variety of skills in school to help them better understand and navigate the news. Top skills were "learning the difference between opinion and news" (69%) and "understanding a poll" (55%). See Figure 19. About half also learned about "fact-checking a news story" (48%) and "identifying news bias" (46%). More than one in three (34%) learned about "telling the difference between sponsored and editorial content."

Teens who learned how to "identify misinformation or 'fake news'" in school were indeed more likely than others to be confident in their ability to spot fake news. See Figure 20. Among teens who learned this skill in school, 75% agreed that they can "tell a fake news story from a real one." For those who did not learn this in school, that number dropped to 48%.

FIGURE 19. Skills learned in school

Differentiating between opinion and news
69%

Understanding a poll
55%

Fact-checking a news story
48%

Identifying news bias
46%

Identifying fake news
39%

Differentiating between sponsored and editorial content
34%

Base: Total teens (*N*=804).

FIGURE 20. Teens who "agree"/"strongly agree" that they know how to tell fake news stories from real news stories

Of teens who learned to identify misinformation or 'fake news' in school
75%*

Of teens who had not learned to identify misinformation or 'fake news' in school
48%
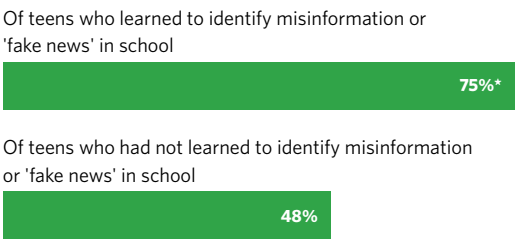
*Significantly higher.

Following Election News

About half of teens reported that they were "closely" following news about the 2020 U.S. elections. See Figure 21.

Male teens were more likely than female teens to indicate they were "closely following" the upcoming elections. See Table 18.
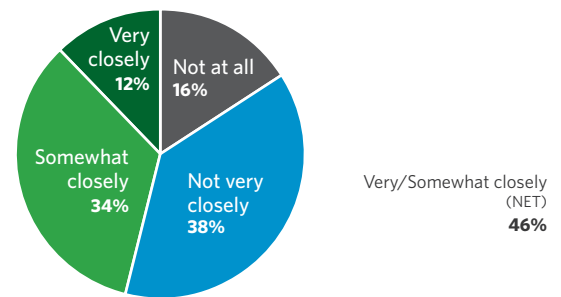
More than three-quarters of teens who were eligible to vote said they were "likely to vote in the 2020 presidential election" (78%). See Figure 22.

Compared to teens in general, teens who planned to vote exhibited some interesting views on the news:

- Similar to all teens, teen voters often sourced their news from "personalities/influencers/celebrities I follow on social media or YouTube" (34%), "news aggregators" (26%), and "digital media outlets and blogs" (25%).

- Teen voters were more likely than all teens to "ever get news or news headlines" on Facebook (38%, vs. 30% of all teens) and Twitter (29%, vs. 18% of all teens).

- More teen voters agreed with the statement "following the news is important to me" (51%) compared to all teens (42%).

- Interestingly, teen voters were more likely than teens in general to say they would like to see "less" about "politics" in the news (67%, vs. 58% of all teens).

- A large majority of teen voters agreed that "most news media have no idea what the lives of people my age are really like" (81%), which is slightly more than teens in general (75%).

- Two-thirds of teen voters said they feel they "have a good understanding of what's going on in the world" (67%), which is slightly higher than all teens (60%).

- More teen voters than all teens said they had learned skills in school to help them "tell the difference between opinion and news" (78% vs. 69%) and "how to identify bias in the news" (58% vs. 46%).

FIGURE 21. How closely teens follow news about 2020 U.S. elections

Very closely 12%, Not at all 16%, Somewhat closely 34%, Not very closely 38%, Very/Somewhat closely (NET) 46%

Base: Total teens (*N*=804).

TABLE 18. How closely teens are following the 2020 U.S. election, by gender

	Male[a] *n*=396	Female[b] *n*=408
Closely (Net)	51%[b]	40%
Not closely (Net)	49%	60%[a]

Base: Total teens (*N*=804).
Note: Superscripted a/b indicates that the data for the noted demographic group is significantly higher than the data for the demographic group represented by that letter in the header of the table.

FIGURE 22. Teens' likelihood to vote in the 2020 U.S. presidential election

4% Not sure, 4% Very unlikely, 14% Somewhat unlikely, Very likely 44%, Somewhat likely 33%, Very/Somewhat likely (NET) 78%
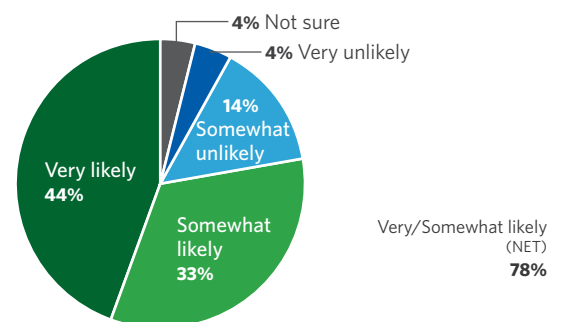
Base: Teens eligible to vote in 2020 (*N*=187).

- Similar to all teens (46%), about half (50%) of likely voters were "closely" following news about the 2020 U.S. elections.

- Teen voters (a subgroup of all teens) more frequently said they were politically conservative (31%, vs. 21% of teens in general) and less frequently said they were not sure about their political views (21%, vs. 33% of all teens).

Views on Issues by Political Ideology

Political views among teens were fairly evenly split among liberal (22%), conservative (21%), and moderate (23%). Another one-third were not sure how to characterize their political views. See Figure 23.

The analysis below. focuses on key differences among teens based on how they identify themselves politically.

Teens' Preferred Sources of News

While teens overall preferred to get their news from the person-alities, influencers, and celebrities they follow on social media, this was driven by liberal teens and those who were unsure of their political ideology. Among liberal and unsure teens, 38% and 35%, respectively, preferred this source, compared to 14% of conservative teens and 22% of moderate teens. See Table 19. Conservative teens were more likely than liberal teens to prefer

FIGURE 23. Teens' political views

Base: Total teens (*N*=804).
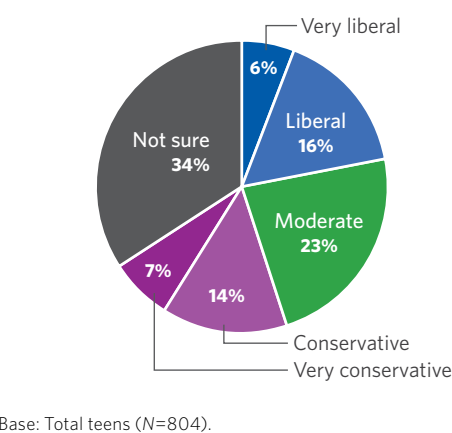
TABLE 19. Preferred news source, by political ideology

	Conservative[a] *n*=165	Moderate[b] *n*=212	Liberal[c] *n*=186	Unsure[d] *n*=241
Traditional TV news networks	20%	15%	10%	11%
News aggregators	20%	14%	13%	15%
Digital media outlets/blogs	19%	22%	16%	13%
Personalities/Influencers/Celebrities	14%	22%	38%[ab]	35%[ab]
Local newspapers/TV shows	14%[c]	11%	5%	10%
Traditional print/online newspapers	6%	4%	2%	2%
Podcasts	5%	4%	2%	1%
Comedy shows	2%	7%	12%[a]	11%[a]

Base: Total teens (*N*=804).

Note: Superscripted a/b/c/d indicates that the data for the noted demographic group is significantly higher than the data for the demographic group represented by that letter in the header of the table.

to get their news from local newspapers and TV shows (14% vs. 5%). Liberal and unsure teens were more likely than conservative teens to prefer comedy shows as a news source (12% and 11%, respectively, vs. 2%).

Trust in News Sources

Although overall, local newspapers and TV shows topped the list of trusted sources among teens, this was driven in part by conservative teens who trusted this source the most, especially as compared to teens who were unsure of their political ideology (36% vs. 21%). See Table 20. While traditional print and online newspapers overall ranked second in teens' trust of news sources, this was driven in part by liberal and moderate teens

compared to unsure teens (31% and 24%, respectively, vs. 14%). Liberal teens also were the most likely to trust news from comedy shows compared to all other cohorts (18%), as well as news from personalities, influencers, and celebrities, compared to conservative teens (20% vs. 10%).

Teens' Reading Behavior Around News Stories

While the majority of teens read only headlines on general news stories, this was most likely among teens who were unsure of their political ideology (75%) compared to moderate and conservative teens (60% and 59%, respectively). See Table 21. On the other hand, conservative and moderate teens were more likely to

TABLE 20. Teens who trust news sources "a lot," by political ideology

	Conservative[a] *n*=165	Moderate[b] *n*=212	Liberal[c] *n*=186	Unsure[d] *n*=241
Local newspapers/TV shows	36%[d]	29%	29%	21%
Traditional print/online newspapers	25%	24%[d]	31%[d]	14%
Traditional TV news networks	15%	23%	26%	22%
Digital media outlets/blogs	14%	9%	12%	7%
News aggregators	13%	19%	23%	17%
Personalities/Influencers/Celebrities	10%	16%	20%[a]	15%
Podcasts	6%	8%	8%	3%
Comedy shows	5%	2%	18%[abd]	4%

TABLE 21. How teens read general news stories, by political ideology

	Conservative[a] *n*=165	Moderate[b] *n*=212	Liberal[c] *n*=186	Unsure[d] *n*=241
Headlines only	59%	60%	71%	75%[ab]
Read most or all	41%[d]	40%[d]	29%	25%

TABLES 20 AND 21:

Base: Total teens (*N*=804).

Note: Superscripted a/b/c/d indicates that the data for the noted demographic group is significantly higher than the data for the demographic group represented by that letter in the header of the table.

read "most" or "all" of general news stories compared to unsure teens (41% and 40%, respectively, vs. 25%).

As found with reading general news stories, most teens read only headlines on social media. See Table 22. This was driven by teens who were unsure of their political ideology (76%) compared to moderate and conservative teens (63% and 59%, respectively). On the other hand, again, as noted for reading general news stories, conservative and moderate teens were more likely to read most or all of social media news stories compared to unsure teens (41% and 37%, respectively, vs. 23%).

Teens overall exhibited similar behavior in terms of reading full stories of interest generally, as well as on social media. Similar findings were noted among teens based on political ideology for

general news and social media news. Teens who were unsure of their political ideology were the least likely to read full news stories when the headline interested them (76% general news and 79% social media news). See Table 23. All other teen political ideology cohorts were more likely to "often" or "sometimes" do so.

Skills Learned in School to Evaluate the News

Conservative teens were more likely than liberal teens and those unsure of their political ideology to state they had learned to understand a poll and identify news bias (67% vs. 52% and 44%, respectively, for understanding a poll; 60% vs. 44% and 36%, respectively, for identifying news bias). See Table 24. Moderate teens were also more likely than those unsure of their political ideology to state they had learned these same two skills in school

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TABLE 22. How teens read news on social media, by political ideology

	Conservative[a] n=132	Moderate[b] n=177	Liberal[c] n=163	Unsure[d] n=189
Headlines only	59%	63%	68%	76%[ab]
Read most or all	41%[d]	37%[d]	32%	23%

Base: Teens who get news on social media (N=661).

TABLE 23. How often teens click on or read full news stories when headline is of interest

	Conservative[a]	Moderate[b]	Liberal[c]	Unsure[d]
Total teens	n=165	n=212	n=186	n=241
General news stories	87%[d]	86%[d]	85%[d]	76%
Teens who get news on social media	n=132	n=177	n=163	n=189
Social media news	88%	93%[d]	86%	79%

TABLE 24. Skills learned in school, by political ideology

	Conservative[a] n=165	Moderate[b] n=212	Liberal[c] n=186	Unsure[d] n=241
Telling the difference between opinion and news	67%	75%	71%	64%
Understanding a poll	67%[cd]	62%[d]	52%	44%
Identifying news bias	60%[cd]	51%[d]	44%	36%
Fact-checking a news story	49%	53%[d]	51%	40%
Telling the difference between sponsored and editorial content	44%[d]	42%[d]	31%	25%
Identifying fake news	42%	44%	37%	35%

Base: Total teens (N=804).

TABLES 22–24:
Note: Superscripted a/b/c/d indicates that the data for the noted demographic group is significantly higher than the data for the demographic group represented by that letter in the header of the table.

(62% for understanding a poll and 51% for identifying news bias among moderate teens).

In addition, both conservative and moderate teens were more likely than those unsure to state that they had learned how to tell the difference between sponsored and editorial content (44% and 42%, respectively, vs. 25% of unsure teens). Moderate teens were also more likely than those unsure of their political ideology to state that they had learned how to fact-check a news story (53% of moderate teens vs. 40% of unsure teens).

Teens' Perception of Bias in the News

Gender and racial/ethnic bias in the news was visible to about one-third of teens overall, but this was more the view of liberal teens. Those who identified as conservative or moderate were more likely than liberal teens and those unsure of their political

ideology to agree that those of different racial or ethnic backgrounds were treated equally fairly (46% and 35% vs. 20% and 23%, respectively). See Table 25. Conservative teens agreed "strongly" with this statement compared to all other political ideology cohorts (17%, vs. 5% of moderate teens, 7% of liberal teens, and 2% of unsure teens). Liberal teens were more likely than conservative and moderate teens to disagree that those of different racial or ethnic backgrounds were treated equally fairly in the news (54%, vs. 30% and 39%, respectively).

Similarly, with regard to treating women and men equally fairly, those who identified as conservative or moderate were more likely than liberal teens to agree that women and men were treated equally fairly in the news (36% and 35%, vs. 21%). Conservative teens agreed "strongly" with this statement compared to those who were unsure of their political ideology (10%, vs. 3% of unsure teens). Liberal teens were more likely than all

TABLE 25. Teens' perceptions of bias in the news, by political ideology

	Conservative[a] n=165	Moderate[b] n=212	Liberal[c] n=186	Unsure[d] n=241
News treats people of different racial or ethnic backgrounds equally fair.				
Strongly agree/Agree (Net)	**46%[cd]**	**35%[cd]**	**20%**	**23%**
• Strongly agree	17%[bcd]	5%	7%	2%
• Agree	29%[c]	30%[c]	14%	21%
Neither agree nor disagree	24%	26%	26%	33%
Disagree/Strongly disagree (Net)	**30%**	**39%**	**54%[ab]**	**44%**
• Disagree	19%	27%	35%[a]	35%[a]
• Strongly disagree	12%	12%	18%[d]	9%
News treats women and men equally fair.				
Strongly agree/Agree (Net)	**36%[c]**	**35%[c]**	**21%**	**25%**
• Strongly agree	10%[d]	5%	5%	3%
• Agree	27%	30%[c]	16%	22%
Neither agree nor disagree	34%	28%	21%	40%[bc]
Disagree/Strongly disagree (Net)	**30%**	**38%**	**58%[abd]**	**35%**
• Disagree	21%	33%[a]	43%[ad]	30%
• Strongly disagree	10%	5%	15%[bd]	5%

Base: Total teens (N=804).

Note: Superscripted a/b/c/d indicates that the data for the noted demographic group is significantly higher than the data for the demographic group represented by that letter in the header of the table.

other political ideology cohorts to disagree that women and men were treated equally fairly in the news (58%, vs. 30% of conservative teens, 38% of moderate teens, and 35% of unsure teens).

Issues Teens Would Like to See More of in the News

Conservative teens were more likely than others to be interested in more news stories about "the way things are in my neighborhood" (66%), "the economy/unemployment" (49%), and "politics" (23%). See Table 26. Each of these topics got the highest mentions among conservative teens.

Liberal teens were more likely than all other political ideology cohorts to wish to see more news about the "cost of education" (58%), "climate change" (68%), and "gun control" (51%). Each of these topics got the highest mentions among liberal teens for these topics. Liberal teens also desired more news on "civil rights" (61%, along with moderate teens at 51%) and "drug abuse"

(37%). Again, these are the highest mentions for these two topics. Liberal teens also said they would like to see more news about "health care" (44%, the highest mention for this topic).

The topics that moderate teens were most likely to desire more of in the news, compared to conservative and unsure teens, were "climate change" (54%), "civil rights" (51%), and "gun control" (33%).

Those who were unsure of their political ideology were more likely than conservative teens to want more news about "climate change" (40%, vs. 25% of conservative teens) and "gun control" (33%, vs. 19% of conservative teens). They also were more likely to desire more news about "celebrities and entertainment" (46%) compared to moderate teens.

TABLE 26. Teens who would like to see more of each topic in the news, by political ideology

	Conservative[a] n=165	Moderate[b] n=212	Liberal[c] n=186	Unsure[d] n=241
The way things are in your neighborhood	66%[d]	56%	58%	50%
Technology	64%	66%	62%	58%
The economy/unemployment	49%[cd]	36%	32%	26%
The cost of education	40%	45%	58%[abd]	35%
Civil rights	36%	51%[ad]	61%[ad]	35%
Celebrities and entertainment	33%	30%	35%	46%[b]
Crime and violence	30%	28%	27%	24%
Health care	27%	35%	44%[a]	32%
Climate change	25%	54%[ad]	68%[abd]	40%[a]
Politics	23%[bd]	12%	17%[d]	5%
Drug abuse	21%	32%	37%[ad]	25%
Gun control	19%	33%[a]	51%[abd]	33%[a]

Base: Total teens (*N*=804).

Note: Superscripted a/b/c/d indicates that the data for the noted demographic group is significantly higher than the data for the demographic group represented by that letter in the header of the table.

Following Election News

Teens who identified with a political ideology were more likely than those who did not to be closely following 2020 U.S. election news (69% of conservative teens, 61% of moderate teens, and 50% of liberal teens, vs. 17% of unsure teens). See Table 27.

Conservative teens were more likely than liberal teens to be following 2020 U.S. election news (69% vs. 50%), whereas liberal teens were more likely than conservative teens not to be closely following 2020 U.S. election news (50% vs. 31%).

Key Demographics

- Conservative teens were the most likely to be White (66%), compared to Hispanic/Latino (19%) and Black (7%). They were also more likely to be male (58%). See Table 28.

- Moderate teens also tended to be male (59%) or Hispanic/Latino (33%).

- Liberal teens were the most likely to be female (58%) and were more likely to be Black (16%) compared to conservative teens.

- Those who were unsure of their political ideology were not demographically distinct.

TABLE 27. How closely teens are following the 2020 U.S. election, by political ideology

	Conservative[a] n=165	Moderate[b] n=212	Liberal[c] n=186	Unsure[d] n=241
Closely (Net)	69%[cd]	61%[d]	50%[d]	17%
Not closely (Net)	31%	39%	50%[a]	83%[abc]

TABLE 28. Key demographics, by political ideology

	Total N=804	Conservative[a] n=165	Moderate[b] n=212	Liberal[c] n=186	Unsure[d] n=241
Gender					
• Male	**53%**	58%[c]	59%[c]	42%	51%
• Female	**47%**	42%	41%	58%[ab]	49%
Age					
• 13 to 15	**51%**	42%	50%	55%	56%
• 16 to 18	**49%**	58%	50%	45%	44%
Race/Ethnicity					
• White	**50%**	66%[bcd]	42%	47%	49%
• Black	**14%**	7%	17%[a]	16%[a]	15%
• Hispanic/Latino	**25%**	19%	33%[a]	26%	24%
• Other	**10%**	8%	9%	11%	13%

TABLES 27 AND 28:

Base: Total teens (N=804).

Note: Superscripted a/b/c/d indicates that the data for the noted demographic group is significantly higher than the data for the demographic group represented by that letter in the header of the table.
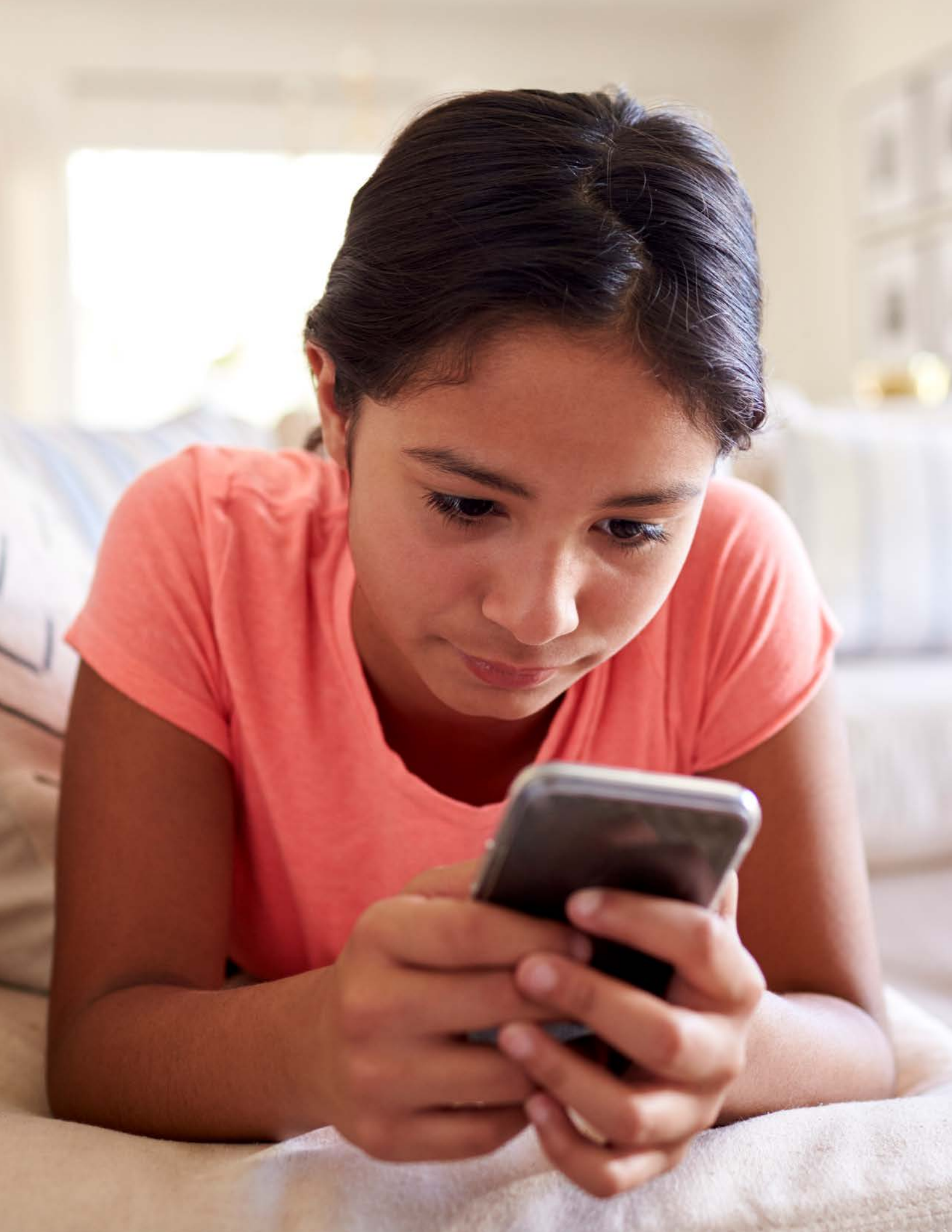
The study was conducted for Common Sense Media by telephone and online by SSRS, an independent research company. Interviews were conducted from January 21 to February 3, 2020, among a sample of 804 respondents age 13 to 18. The margin of error for total respondents is +/-4.7 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. More information about SSRS can be obtained by visiting www.ssrs.com.

NOTE: Individual entries may not sum "(NET)" figures due to rounding. Question numbering and lettering reflects additions or deletions since the 2017 survey. Not all questions in 2017 survey were re-asked in 2020.

QA. How often do you get news from the following:

a. Traditional print and online newspapers (New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, etc.)

Often/Sometimes (NET)	22%
• Often	6%
• Sometimes	16%
Hardly ever/Never (NET)	78%
• Hardly ever	23%
• Never	55%

b. Traditional TV news networks (CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, CBS, etc.)

Often/Sometimes (NET)	45%
• Often	16%
• Sometimes	29%
Hardly ever/Never (NET)	55%
• Hardly ever	33%
• Never	21%

c. Local newspapers or local TV news shows

Often/Sometimes (NET)	45%
• Often	13%
• Sometimes	32%
Hardly ever/Never (NET)	55%
• Hardly ever	27%
• Never	28%

d. Digital media outlets and blogs (Huffington Post, Drudge Report, Slate, Buzzfeed, Breitbart News, Vox, Vice, etc.)

Often/Sometimes (NET)	52%
• Often	21%
• Sometimes	31%
Hardly ever/Never (NET)	48%
• Hardly ever	22%
• Never	26%

e. Comedy shows (The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, Daily Show with Trevor Noah, Last Week Tonight with John Oliver, etc.)

Often/Sometimes (NET)	34%
• Often	9%
• Sometimes	25%
Hardly ever/Never (NET)	66%
• Hardly ever	26%
• Never	40%

f. News aggregators (Google News, Apple News, Yahoo News, etc.)

Often/Sometimes (NET)	60%
• Often	27%
• Sometimes	33%
Hardly ever/Never (NET)	40%
• Hardly ever	18%
• Never	22%

g. Personalities/influencers/celebrities I follow on social media or YouTube

Often/Sometimes (NET)	74%
• Often	39%
• Sometimes	35%
Hardly ever/Never (NET)	26%
• Hardly ever	11%
• Never	15%

h. Podcasts

Often/Sometimes (NET)	30%
• Often	9%
• Sometimes	20%
Hardly ever/Never (NET)	70%
• Hardly ever	24%
• Never	46%

Q3. (P) Which of the following would you say you prefer for getting news?

Personalities/influencers/celebrities I follow on social media or YouTube	28%
Digital media outlets and blogs (Huffington Post, Drudge Report, Slate, Buzzfeed, Breitbart News, Vox, Vice, etc.)	17%
News aggregators (Google News, Apple News, Yahoo News, etc.)	15%
Traditional TV news networks (CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, CBS, etc.)	14%
Local newspapers or local TV news shows	10%
Comedy shows (The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, Daily Show with Trevor Noah, Last Week Tonight with John Oliver, etc.)	8%
Traditional print and online newspapers (New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, etc.)	3%
Podcasts	3%

Q4. How much, if at all, do you trust the information you get from…?

The number of respondents who "Refused" to answer each of these questions was too small to report data.

a. Traditional print and online newspapers (New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, etc.)

A lot/Some (NET)	58%
• A lot	22%
• Some	36%
Not too much/Not at all (NET)	42%
• Not too much	18%
• Not at all	23%

b. Traditional TV news networks (CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, CBS, etc.)

A lot/Some (NET)	64%
• A lot	21%
• Some	43%
Not too much/Not at all (NET)	36%
• Not too much	23%
• Not at all	13%

c. Local newspapers or local TV news shows

A lot/Some (NET)	70%
• A lot	28%
• Some	43%
Not too much/Not at all (NET)	30%
• Not too much	18%
• Not at all	12%

d. Digital media outlets and blogs (Huffington Post, Drudge Report, Slate, Buzzfeed, Breitbart News, Vox, Vice, etc.)

A lot/Some (NET)	51%
• A lot	10%
• Some	40%
Not too much/Not at all (NET)	49%
• Not too much	30%
• Not at all	20%

e. Comedy shows (The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, Daily Show with Trevor Noah, Last Week Tonight with John Oliver, etc.)

A lot/Some (NET)	38%
• A lot	7%
• Some	31%
Not too much/Not at all (NET)	62%
• Not too much	32%
• Not at all	30%

f. News aggregators (Google News, Apple News, Yahoo News, etc.)

A lot/Some (NET)	66%
• A lot	18%
• Some	48%
Not too much/Not at all (NET)	34%
• Not too much	18%
• Not at all	15%

g. Personalities/influencers/celebrities I follow on social media or YouTube

A lot/Some (NET)	60%
• A lot	15%
• Some	45%
Not too much/Not at all (NET)	40%
• Not too much	26%
• Not at all	14%

h. Podcasts

A lot/Some (NET)	45%
• A lot	6%
• Some	39%
Not too much/Not at all (NET)	55%
• Not too much	29%
• Not at all	25%

Q4a. Which comes closer to your point of view?

I generally read headlines to understand what's going on in the news.	67%
I generally read most or all of news stories to understand what's going on in the news.	33%

Q4b. When you see a news headline that interests you, how often do you generally click on it to read or see the full story?

Often/Sometimes (NET)	83%
• Often	30%
• Sometimes	52%
Hardly ever/Never (NET)	17%
• Hardly ever	14%
• Never	4%

Q8. Do you use any of the following social networking sites?

YouTube	86%
Instagram	69%
Snapchat	68%
TikTok	47%
Facebook	43%
Twitter	28%
Reddit	14%
Another social networking site (specify)	2%
I do not use any social networking sites	4%

Social Media Summary

Uses Social Media Sites (NET)	96%
• Uses 1 site	7%
• Uses 2 sites	15%
• Uses 3 sites	18%
• Uses 4 sites	56%
Do not use social media sites	4%

Q9. **Do you ever get news or news headlines on any of the following sites?**

BASE: Total Teens 13–18 Who Follow Social Media; N=776

YouTube	46%
Instagram	34%
Facebook	31%
Snapchat	23%
Twitter	19%
TikTok	9%
Reddit	7%
Another social networking site (specify)	*
I do not get news or news headlines on any social networking sites	20%

Q9a. **When getting news on social media, which comes closer to your point of view?**

Base: Total Teens 13–18 Who Get New Headlines on Social Media Sites; N=661

I generally read headlines to understand what's going on in the news.	67%
I generally read most or all of news stories to understand what's going on in the news.	32%
Refused	*

Q9b. **When you see a news headline that interests you on social media, how often do you generally click on it to read or see the full story?**

Base: Total Teens 13–18 Who Get New Headlines on Social Media Sites; N=661

Often/Sometimes (NET)	86%
• Often	33%
• Sometimes	53%
Hardly ever/Never (NET)	14%
• Hardly ever	10%
• Never	4%

*The number of respondents was too small to report data.

Q11. When you follow a link to a news story on a social networking site, how much attention, if any, do you pay to the news source the link takes you to?

BASE: Total Teens 13–18 Who Get New Headlines on Social Media Sites; N=661

A lot/Some attention (NET)	62%
• A lot of attention	20%
• Some attention	42%
Very little/No attention (NET)	38%
• Very little attention	30%
• No attention at all	7%

Q13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

a. I feel better prepared to make a difference in the community when following the news.

Agree (NET)	41%
• Strongly agree	8%
• Agree	33%
Neither agree nor disagree	40%
Disagree (NET)	18%
• Disagree	14%
• Strongly disagree	3%
Refused	*

b. The news covers issues that matter to me.

Agree (NET)	35%
• Strongly agree	6%
• Agree	29%
Neither agree nor disagree	42%
Disagree (NET)	23%
• Disagree	17%
• Strongly disagree	7%

*The number of respondents was too small to report data.

d. Following the news is important to me.

Agree (NET)	42%
• Strongly agree	9%
• Agree	33%
Neither agree nor disagree	38%
Disagree (NET)	20%
• Disagree	14%
• Strongly disagree	5%

e. News treats people of different racial or ethnic backgrounds equally fair.

Agree (NET)	30%
• Strongly agree	7%
• Agree	23%
Neither agree nor disagree	28%
Disagree (NET)	42%
• Disagree	30%
• Strongly disagree	12%

f. News treats women and men equally fair.

Agree (NET)	29%
• Strongly agree	5%
• Agree	24%
Neither agree nor disagree	32%
Disagree (NET)	40%
• Disagree	32%
• Strongly disagree	8%

g. I know how to tell fake news stories from real news stories.

Agree (NET)	55%
• Strongly agree	13%
• Agree	42%
Neither agree nor disagree	28%
Disagree (NET)	17%
• Disagree	15%
• Strongly disagree	2%

Q13a. Please indicate whether you'd like to see more, less, or about the same amount of news on the following topics:

a. Crime and violence

More	27%
Less	39%
About the Same	34%

b. Health care

More	34%
Less	29%
About the Same	36%

c. The economy/unemployment

More	35%
Less	30%
About the Same	35%

d. Drug abuse

More	28%
Less	37%
About the Same	34%

e. The cost of education

More	44%
Less	24%
About the Same	32%

f. The way things are in your neighborhood

More	57%
Less	13%
About the Same	30%

g. Celebrities and entertainment (movies, music, and TV)

More	37%
Less	34%
About the Same	29%

h. Technology

More	62%
Less	13%
About the Same	25%

i. Politics

More	13%
Less	58%
About the Same	28%

j. Civil rights

More	45%
Less	20%
About the Same	35%

k. Gun control

More	34%
Less	39%
About the Same	27%

l. Climate change

More	46%
Less	29%
About the Same	24%

Q14. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

b. I have a good understanding of what's going on in the world.

Agree (NET)	60%
• Strongly agree	14%
• Agree	46%
Neither agree nor disagree	31%
Disagree (NET)	10%
• Disagree	9%
• Strongly disagree	1%

c. What happens in the news affects my daily life.

Agree (NET)	29%
• Strongly agree	6%
• Agree	23%
Neither agree nor disagree	40%
Disagree (NET)	31%
• Disagree	26%
• Strongly disagree	5%

h. (C) Most news media have no idea what the lives of people my age are really like.

Agree (NET)	75%
• Strongly agree	27%
• Agree	48%
Neither agree nor disagree	22%
Disagree (NET)	3%
• Disagree	3%
• Strongly disagree	*

*The number of respondents was too small to report data.

Q17. **Have you ever learned any of the following skills in school?**

a. How to understand a poll

Yes	55%
No	30%
Not Sure	15%

b. How to identify misinformation or "fake news"

Yes	39%
No	43%
Not Sure	18%

c. How to identify bias in the news

Yes	46%
No	36%
Not Sure	18%

d. How to tell the difference between opinion and news

Yes	69%
No	18%
Not Sure	13%

e. How to tell the difference between sponsored content and editorial content

Yes	34%
No	43%
Not Sure	23%

f. How to fact-check a news story

Yes	48%
No	37%
Not Sure	16%

Q18. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

c. I avoid sharing my opinions online about news because I am afraid of being attacked or harassed.

Agree (NET)	31%
• Strongly agree	9%
• Agree	23%
Neither agree nor disagree	33%
Disagree (NET)	35%
• Disagree	21%
• Strongly disagree	14%

d. I make judgements about other people's character based on the news they share online.

Agree (NET)	35%
• Strongly agree	4%
• Agree	30%
Neither agree nor disagree	33%
Disagree (NET)	32%
• Disagree	21%
• Strongly disagree	11%

e. I have become more involved in a social or political issue because of something I saw in the news.

Agree (NET)	28%
• Strongly agree	5%
• Agree	23%
Neither agree nor disagree	36%
Disagree (NET)	36%
• Disagree	27%
• Strongly disagree	10%

Q19. When it comes to your experiences with news in the last 6 months, which of the following describes how you feel?

Any (NET)	83%
• Frustrated	45%
• Informed	37%
• Confused	30%
• Worn out	25%
• Motivated	12%
• Energized	7%
None of these	17%
Refused	*

*The number of respondents was too small to report data.

Q20. How closely are you following news about the 2020 U.S. elections?

Closely (NET)	46%
• Very closely	12%
• Somewhat closely	34%
Not closely/Not at all (NET)	54%
• Not very closely	38%
• Not at all	16%

Q21. Will you be eligible to vote in the 2020 presidential election?

BASE: Total Teens Age 17 Asked; N=108

Yes	64%
No	32%
Not Sure	4%

Q22. How likely are you to vote in the 2020 presidential election?

BASE: Total teens who are eligible to vote and asked; N=187

Likely (NET)	78%
• Very likely	44%
• Somewhat likely	33%
Not Likely (NET)	18%
• Somewhat unlikely	14%
• Very unlikely	4%
Not Sure	4%

Q23. In general, how would you describe your views on the most political issues? Are you:

Conservative (NET)	21%
• Very conservative	7%
• Conservative	14%
Moderate	23%
Liberal (NET)	22%
• Liberal	16%
• Very liberal	6%
Not Sure	33%

COMMON SENSE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OUR OFFICES

San Francisco Headquarters
699 8th Street, Suite C150
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 863-0600

Washington, D.C. Office
2200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
4th Floor East
Washington, D.C. 20037
(202) 350-9992

New York Office
575 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022
(212) 315-2138

Los Angeles Office
1100 Glendon Avenue, 17th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90024
(310) 689-7535

London Office
Exmouth House
3/11 Pine Street
Farringdon, London EC1R 0JH
United Kingdom

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