

APPENDIX TABLE 7-30

Public perception of scientists: 1983, 1985, 2001, 2012, 2016

(Percent and mean score)

Perception	1983 (n = 1,615)	1985 (n = 1,986)	2001 (n = 1,574)	2012 (n = 1,152)	2016 (n = 1,390)
Scientists work for the good of humanity					
Strongly agree	NA	4	11	19	26
Agree	NA	76	74	69	63
Disagree	NA	15	9	6	8
Strongly disagree	NA	1	1	1	1
Don't know	NA	4	4	5	2
Mean score	NA	2.87	3.00	3.11	3.16
Scientists help to solve problems					
Strongly agree	NA	NA	17	21	28
Agree	NA	NA	79	74	66
Disagree	NA	NA	2	1	4
Strongly disagree	NA	NA	*	1	1
Don't know	NA	NA	1	3	2
Mean score	NA	NA	3.15	3.19	3.23
Scientists want to make life better for the average person					
Strongly agree	NA	4	11	14	24
Agree	NA	76	78	72	64
Disagree	NA	15	8	8	9
Strongly disagree	NA	1	1	1	*
Don't know	NA	4	3	5	2
Mean score	NA	2.87	3.02	3.04	3.14
Scientists are odd and peculiar					
Strongly agree	1	NA	2	4	9
Agree	31	NA	22	32	43
Disagree	59	NA	63	51	37



Perception	1983 (n = 1,615)	1985 (n = 1,986)	2001 (n = 1,574)	2012 (n = 1,152)	2016 (n = 1,390)
Strongly disagree	4	NA	8	6	7
Don't know	4	NA	4	8	4
Mean score	2.31	NA	2.20	2.36	2.57

* = < 0.5% responded. NA = not available; question was not asked.

Note(s)

Respondents who "strongly agree" with the statements *Scientific researchers are dedicated people who work for the good of humanity*, *Scientists are helping to solve challenging problems*; *Most scientists want to work on things that will make life better for the average person*; and *Scientists are apt to be odd and peculiar people*. Mean understanding score is based on a 5-point scale, where 5 equals strongly agree and 1 equals strongly disagree. Percentages may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Source(s)

National Science Foundation, National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, Survey of Public Attitudes Toward and Understanding of Science and Technology (1983, 1985, 2001); NORC at the University of Chicago, General Social Survey (2012, 2016).
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