

News Literacy in America: A survey of teen information attitudes, habits & skills (2024)

Final Topline Results

This study was conducted for the News Literacy Project by SSRS, an independent research company. More information about SSRS can be obtained by visiting www.ssrs.com.

Interviews were conducted online from May 17, 2024 to May 28, 2024, among a nationally representative sample of 1,110 adolescent respondents ages 13 to 18. Respondents ages 13 to 17 were recruited via their parents using the [SSRS Opinion Panel](#); meanwhile, respondents age 18 were recruited directly via the SSRS Opinion Panel. The margin of error for total respondents is +/-4.1 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The survey's margin of error is the largest 95% confidence interval for any estimated proportion based on the total sample – the one around 50%. This means that in 95 out of every 100 samples drawn using the same methodology, estimated proportions based on the entire sample will be no more than 4.1 percentage points away from their true values in the population. For estimates smaller or larger than 50%, the margin of sampling error will be smaller. Margins of error for subgroups will be larger.

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100%, or to subtotals indicated, due to rounding.

(ASK ALL)

1. Which of the following statements best describe your news habits?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/2024
I actively seek out news to stay informed.	15
I keep up with news without really trying – news tends to find me.	50
I don't really keep up with news.	36
No answer	0

(ASK ALL)

2. How often, if ever, do you actively avoid news?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
Often	10
Sometimes	42
Rarely	32
Never	17
No answer	0

(ASK ALL)

3. Thinking specifically about news produced by professional journalists and the organizations they work for, how often, if ever, do you read, watch or listen to news?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
NET At least once a week	41
Daily	12
Weekly	29
Less than once a week	44
Never	15
No answer	0

(ASKED OF THOSE WHO EVER GET NEWS)

4. Where do you typically get news produced by professional journalists and the organizations they work for? *Please select all that apply.*

Note: Results may not sum to 100% because multiple responses were allowed.

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24 (n = 947)
Social media, such as YouTube, TikTok or Instagram	83
TV	45
News websites/apps	31
Radio	21
Podcasts	18
Print newspapers	6
Other (please specify) ¹	4
No answer	0

(ASK ALL)

5. How much, if at all, do you trust that professional journalists and the organizations they work for take accuracy and fairness seriously in their work?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
NET Some trust	56
A great deal	7
A fair amount	50
NET Not much trust	44
Not very much	39
None at all	5
No answer	0

¹ Those who gave this response were asked to specify where they typically get news produced by professional journalists and the organizations they work for.

(ASK ALL)

6. Which of these statements comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
News organizations try to minimize bias and present all relevant facts in as straightforward, clear and impartial a manner as possible.	31
News organizations intentionally add bias to their coverage and only present the facts that support their own perspective.	69
No answer	0

(ASK ALL)

7. Compared to other people who create content about current events, would you say that journalists tend to be (more biased), (less biased) or about the same?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
More biased	35
Less biased	20
About the same	45
No answer	0

Q5/Q6/Q7: Trust in Media COMBO TABLE

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
High Trust	8
Medium Trust	56
Low Trust	35

(ASK ALL)

8. Please name the sources of news you trust the most to provide accurate and fair information.

Data not shown.

(ASK ALL)

9. Would you say that professional journalists and the organizations they work for in the United States are doing more to:

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
Harm democracy	45
Protect democracy	55
No answer	0

(ASK ALL)

10. Over the last 20 years, there has been a sharp decline in the number of news organizations in the United States. How concerned, if at all, are you about this trend?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
NET Concerned	33
Very concerned	8
Somewhat concerned	25
NET Not concerned	67
A little concerned	33
Not concerned at all	34
No answer	0

(ASK ALL)

11. How many social media platforms, such as YouTube, TikTok or Instagram, do you regularly access or use?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
3 or more	57
2	26
1	14
0	3
No answer	0

(ASKED OF THOSE WHO USE ANY SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM)

12. How many professional journalists and the organizations they work for, if any, do you follow on social media?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24 (n = 1,082)
NET A lot/Some	22
A lot	4
Some	18
NET Few/None	78
Very few	33
None	45
No answer	0

(ASKED OF THOSE WHO USE ANY SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM)

13. How often, if ever, do you like or share social media posts about issues or events in the news?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24 (n = 1,082)
NET At least once a week	23
Daily	5
Weekly	18
Less than once a week	35
Never	41
No answer	<1

(ASKED OF THOSE WHO EVER LIKE OR SHARE NEWS ON SOCIAL MEDIA)

14. When you are considering whether to like or share a social media post about an issue or event in the news, how often do you check to see if it's true first?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24 (n = 674)
NET Always/Often	44
Always	17
Often	26
NET Sometimes/Rarely	52
Sometimes	33
Rarely	18
Never	5
No answer	0

(ASKED OF THOSE WHO EVER FACT CHECK NEWS ON SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS)

15. When you check to see if a social media post is true, which of the following do you do? *Please select all that apply.*

Note: Results may not sum to 100% because multiple responses were allowed.

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24 (n = 632)
Do a quick internet search to investigate the post's source or claims.	74
Scan the post's comments to see if anyone raised credibility concerns.	50
Check to see if the account is authentic, such as looking for a blue check mark or other verification badge next to the username.	45
Check out other posts from the same user to investigate their reputation.	40
Other (please specify) ²	3
No answer	0

² Those who gave this response were asked to specify how they check to see if a social media post is true.

(ASKED OF THOSE WHO USE ANY SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM)

16. How often, if ever, do you post your own social media content about issues or events in the news?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24 (n = 1,082)
NET At least once a week	11
Daily	3
Weekly	8
Less than once a week	26
Never	63
No answer	<1

(ASKED OF THOSE WHO EVER POST ABOUT NEWS ON SOCIAL MEDIA)

17. When posting your own content about issues or events in the news, how often do you take steps to make sure you are getting the facts right?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24 (n = 431)
NET Always/Often	56
Always	25
Often	31
NET Sometimes/Rarely	42
Sometimes	32
Rarely	11
Never	1
No answer	0

(ASK ALL)

18. In the past year, which of the following have you done? *Please select all that apply.*

Note: Results may not sum to subtotal (NET Done anything) because multiple responses were allowed.

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
NET Done anything	60
Referenced credible sources when sharing your opinion.	33
Pushed back on misinformation when you saw or heard it.	30
Worked on the school newspaper or yearbook.	20
Reached out to a journalist or news outlet to offer feedback on a story.	4
Wrote a letter to an editor or an op-ed.	2
None of the above	40
No answer	0

(ASKED OF THOSE WHO USE ANY SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM)

19. How often, if ever, do you see posts that spread or promote conspiracy theories on social media?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24 (n = 1,082)
NET At least once a week	51
Daily	20
Weekly	31
Less than once a week	29
Never	20
No answer	0

(ASKED OF THOSE WHO HAVE EVER SEEN CONSPIRACY POSTS, n = 862)

20. Can you provide an example of a conspiracy theory you have recently seen being spread or promoted on social media?

Data not shown.

(ASKED OF THOSE WHO HAVE EVER SEEN CONSPIRACY POSTS)

21. How many, if any, of the conspiracy theories you see being spread or promoted online do you think are likely to be true?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24 (n = 862)
NET A lot/Some	30
A lot	5
Some	25
NET Few/None	70
Very few	51
None	19
No answer	0

(ASK ALL)

22. How confident are you, if at all, that you could search the internet to find the original source of a photo or image, also known as doing a “reverse image search”?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
NET Confident	65
Very confident	17
Somewhat confident	48
NET Not confident	35
Not too confident	26
Not at all confident	9
No answer	0

(ASK ALL)

23. How often do you use generative artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots, such as ChatGPT, Gemini or Copilot?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
NET At least once a week	23
Daily	5
Weekly	18
Less than once a week	32
Never	45
No answer	0

(ASK ALL)

24. How much, if at all, do you trust generative AI chatbots to produce information that is accurate and fair?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
NET A lot/Some	36
A great deal	7
A fair amount	29
NET Not much	50
Not very much	30
Not at all	20
I never thought about it	14
No answer	0

(ASK ALL)

25. How often do you use artificial intelligence (AI) image generators, such as DALL-E, Midjourney, DreamStudio or Gemini?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
NET At least once a week	9
Daily	2
Weekly	7
Less than once a week	23
Never	68
No answer	0

(ASK ALL)

26. Have any of your classes at school this year included any media literacy instruction, such as how to tell the difference between credible information and misinformation?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
Yes	39
No	35
Unsure	26
No answer	<1

(ASK ALL)

27. Do you think schools should be required to teach media literacy, including the skills to tell the difference between credible information and misinformation?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
NET Yes	93
Yes, definitely	57
Yes, in some cases	36
No, never	6
No answer	<1

(SHOW IMAGE WITH Q28)

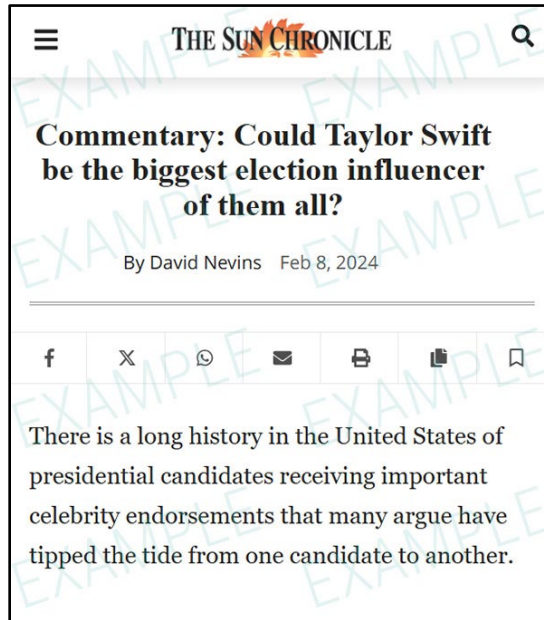


(ASK ALL)

28. This article is best categorized as which type of information?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
Advertisement	50
Opinion	30
News	14
Entertainment	6
No answer	0

(SHOW IMAGE WITH Q29)



(ASK ALL)

29. This article is best categorized as which type of information?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
Opinion	52
Entertainment	34
News	12
Advertisement	3
No answer	0

(SHOW IMAGE WITH Q30)



(ASK ALL)

30. Does this social media post provide strong evidence that hot temperatures in Texas melted traffic lights in July 2023?

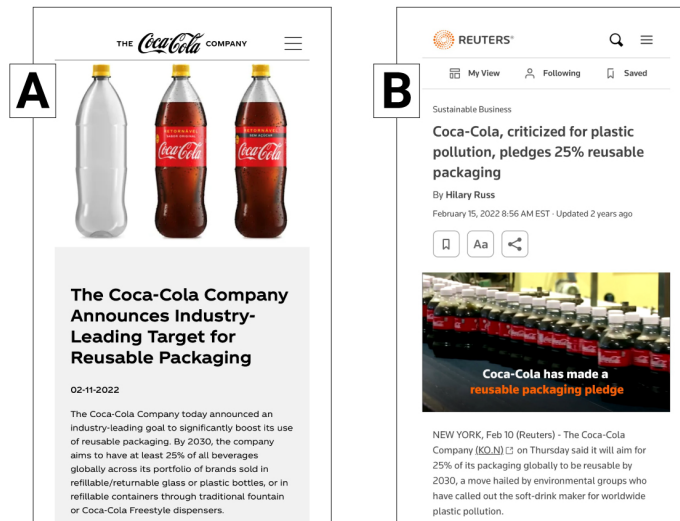
U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
Yes, this post provides strong evidence	34
No, this post does not provide strong evidence	66
No answer	0

(ASK ALL)

31. From what you have seen or heard, do you think the theory that the Super Bowl and other National Football League (NFL) playoff games are rigged is:

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
NET True	48
Definitely true	5
Probably true	42
NET Not true	52
Probably NOT true	40
Definitely NOT true	13
No answer	0

(SHOW IMAGE WITH Q32)

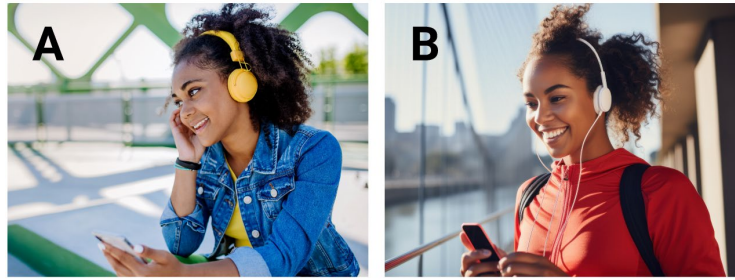


(ASK ALL)

32. Which of these two articles is more credible (reliable or trustworthy) than the other?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
Article A is more credible (“The Coca-c Company Announces...”)	44
Article B is more credible (“Coca Cola, criticized for...”)	56
No answer	<1

(SHOW IMAGE WITH Q33)



(ASK ALL)

33. One of these images is a real photo of a person and the other is completely fake, made by artificial intelligence (AI). Which one is the **REAL** person?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
The image on the left (A) is of a real person.	69
The image on the right (B) is of a real person.	31
No answer	0

(ASK ALL)

34. What are the five freedoms protected by the First Amendment? (Select 5)

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
Freedom of speech	98
Freedom of religion	88
Freedom of the press	78
Freedom to assemble	67
Freedom to petition	48
Freedom to vote	42
Freedom of choice	35
Freedom of information	20
Freedom of education	18
Freedom from fear	5
No answer	<1

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
Selected only the 5 correct freedoms	31
Selected 4/5 correct freedoms	32
Selected 3/5 correct freedoms	24
Selected 2/5 correct freedoms	12
Selected 1/5 correct freedoms	1
No answer	<1

(ASK ALL)

35. Which of the following scenarios violate the First Amendment? *Please select all that apply.*

Note: Results may not sum to 100% because multiple responses were allowed.

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
Protesters are arrested when gathering peacefully and without disruption in a public place.	72
A journalist is arrested as punishment for reporting evidence of corruption in the government.	66
Students are suspended for refusing to say the Pledge of Allegiance at a public high school.	57
A social media user's post is taken down by the social media company for spreading misinformation.	24
No answer	<1

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
Selected 3/3 correct scenarios (no incorrect scenarios)	30
Selected other combinations of scenarios	70
No answer	<1

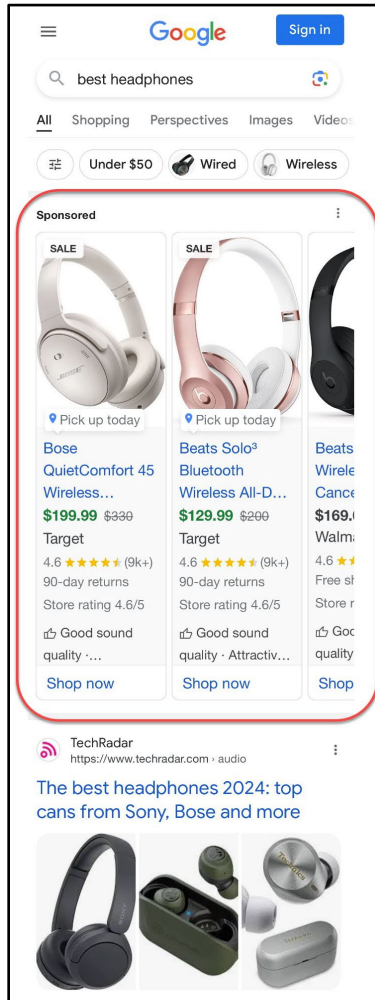
(ASK ALL)

36. Each year a nonprofit organization ranks 180 countries from strongest to weakest in terms of their degree of press freedoms – the ability of journalists to report and share news without fear of punishment. Where on the scale do you think the United States ranks this year?

Q36 Summary Table

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
Believed the U.S. ranked in the top 10 (1-10)	17
Believed the U.S. ranked #1 (1)	7
Believed the U.S. ranked somewhat stronger (11-44)	18
Were close to the actual U.S. ranking (45-65, but not 55) [+/- 10 countries]	13
Correctly identified the U.S. ranking (55)	<1
Believed the U.S. ranked somewhat weaker (66-100)	27
Believed the U.S. ranked much weaker (101-180)	23
No answer	1

(SHOW IMAGE WITH Q37)



(ASK ALL)

37. You type "best headphones" into Google and see these top results. Why did these results appear first?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
They are the best or highest quality results.	8
They have paid Google to appear in your results.	59
They are the most popular results.	31
None of the above	2
No answer	<1

Q28/Q29/Q37: Media Literacy Knowledge COMBO TABLE

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/28/24
0 Correct	12
1 Correct	32
2 Correct	38
3 Correct	18