

Forty Years After Woodstock, A Gentler Generation Gap

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A Social & Demographic Trends Report

Forty Years After Woodstock, A Gentler Generation Gap

By Paul Taylor and Richard Morin, Pew Research Center

I. Overview

Forty years after the Woodstock music festival glorified and exacerbated the generational fractures in American life, the public today says there are big differences between younger and older adults in their values, use of technology, work ethic, and respect and tolerance for others.

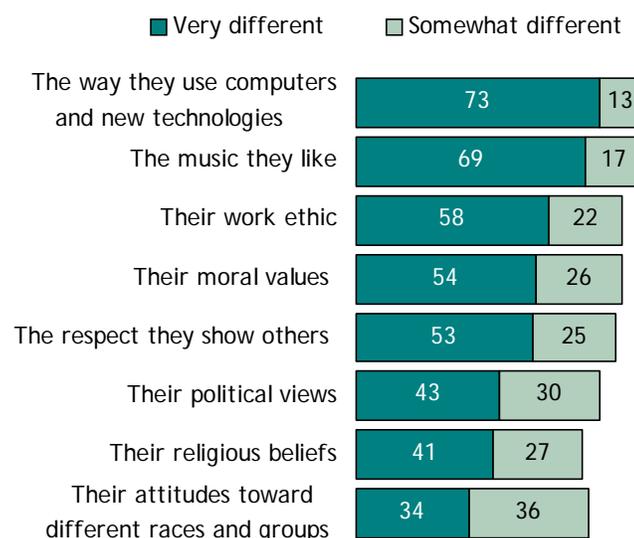
But this modern generation gap is a much more subdued affair than the one that raged in the 1960s, for relatively few Americans of any age see it as a source of conflict—either in society at large or in their own families.

Moreover, there's now broad agreement across the generations about one realm of American culture that had been an intense battlefield in the 1960s: the music.

In the four decades since Woodstock, rock and roll has made the journey from the defiant soundtrack of the counterculture to the most popular music in the land, according to a nationwide telephone survey by the Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends project conducted from July 20 through Aug. 2 among a nationally representative sample of 1,815 people ages 16 and older.

The Generation Gap, Circa 2009

% saying that young and older people are different in ...



Note: N = 1,815. "Very similar," "somewhat similar" and "don't know" responses not shown.

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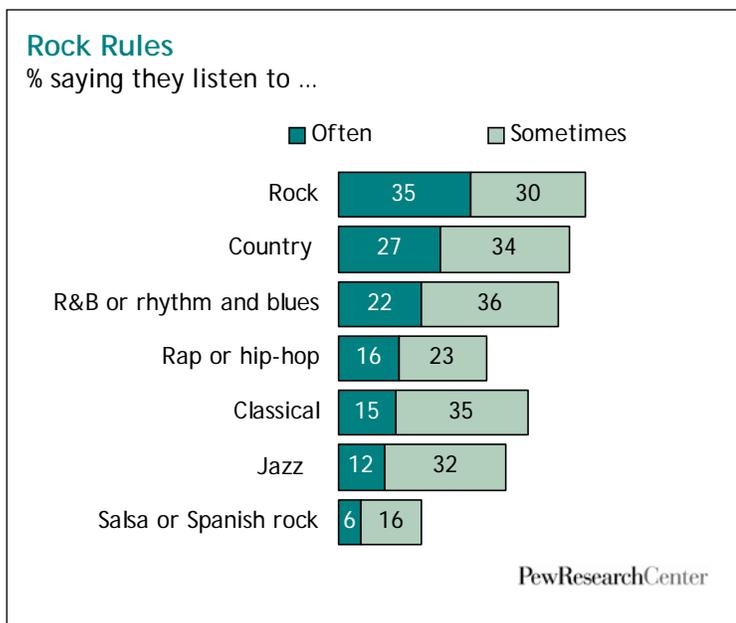
Two-thirds of respondents say they listen to rock often (35%) or sometimes (30%), placing it ahead of the six other musical genres tested in the survey: country, rhythm and blues, hip-hop, classical, jazz and salsa.

Back in 1966, a national survey¹ found that rock and roll was by far the most unpopular music in the country. Nearly half of adults (44%) said they disliked it, and only 4% said it was their favorite kind of music.

¹ Louis Harris and Associates survey of 1,179 registered voters ages 21 and older, August 1966.

Today, the lone holdouts from rock's broad fan base are older adults. But for every age group below age 65, rock is at the top of the charts.

One goal of this latest Pew Research survey was to probe more deeply into a finding from a [Pew Research survey](#) conducted earlier this year that showed that 79% of Americans say there are major differences now in the point of view of younger and older adults. Forty years ago, in an era of far more overt conflict between the generations than there is now, a slightly smaller share (74%) of the public said yes to the same question.²



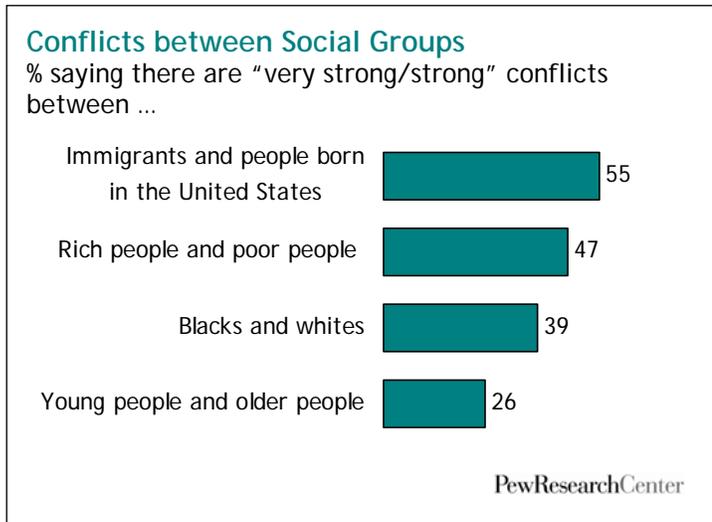
What could explain the similarities in the two numbers in the face of such differences in the two eras?

This latest survey appears to solve the mystery. Yes, there are big differences between young and old today in their values, attitudes and behaviors, but no, these differences haven't created conflicts between the generations. To borrow a phrase, the generations appear to have found a way to disagree without being disagreeable.

Moreover, where perceived generational differences exist today about moral values, work ethic and respect for others, today's young adults—by heavy margins—believe that these differences have arisen because their generation hasn't lived up to standards set by older adults.

Some key findings from the survey:

- Only about a quarter of the public (26%) says there are strong conflicts these days between young people and older people. By contrast, much higher shares of the public see strong conflicts today between immigrants and the native born (55%); between rich and poor (47%); and between blacks and whites (39%).
- Despite this spirit of generational rapprochement, overwhelming shares of the public say the young and old are



² Gallup Poll, 1969.

different in many aspects of their lives, including in the way they use new technology (87% say very or somewhat different); their taste in music (86%); their work ethic (80%); their moral values (80%); the respect they show others (78%); their political views (74%); their attitudes toward different races and groups (70%); and their religious beliefs (68%).

- By lopsided margins, the public says that older adults are superior to younger adults when it comes to their moral values, work ethic and respect for others. Even younger adults share in these assessments. The only exception to this pattern has to do with attitudes toward people of difference races. Here, a plurality of the public says that younger adults have the upper hand.

- Just as people don't see much generational conflict today in society at large, they don't see much generational conflict in their own families—at least not as much as there had been a generation ago. Only 10% of parents of older children say they often have major disagreements with a teenage or young adult child. By contrast, nearly twice as many adult respondents (19%) say that when they themselves were in their late teens and early 20s, they often had major disagreements with their parents.

- Seven-in-ten respondents in our survey were able to correctly identify what Woodstock was, but among respondents ages 16 to 24, only about half could.

- Descriptions of Woodstock offered by survey respondents serve as a reminder of the passions and polarization of the times. For some, it was “a hippie drug-fest”; “a total moral mess”; “wild kids having sex.” For others, it was “a love-in”; “a celebration of freedom and new ideas”; “a peace festival that was supposed to bring unity and togetherness.”

About the Surveys

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted with a nationally representative sample of 1,815 people ages 16 and older living in the continental United States. A combination of landline and cellular random digit dial (RDD) samples was used to represent all adults in the continental United States who have access to either a landline or cellular telephone. A total of 1,164 interviews were completed with respondents contacted by landline telephone and 651 from those contacted on their cellular phone. The data are weighted to produce a final sample that is representative of the general population of adults in the continental United States.

- Interviews conducted July 20-Aug. 2, 2009
- 1,815 interviews
- Margin of sampling error is plus or minus 2.7 percentage points for results based on the total sample at the 95% confidence level.
- The 16-24 age group was oversampled, and the margin of sampling error for this group is plus or minus 5.3 percentage points.
- Note on terminology: Whites include only non-Hispanic whites. Blacks include only non-Hispanic blacks. Hispanics are of any race.

Survey interviews were conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. Interviews were conducted in English or Spanish.

In a separate survey, 1,011 adults 18 and older were interviewed by telephone Aug. 5-9 to test the popularity of five of the 20 musical performers cited in this report. Margin of sampling error for the overall results is plus or minus 3 percentage points. Interviews were conducted by International Communications Research.

II. Generations Apart—and Together

A Pew Research Center survey released earlier this summer found that 79% of the public says there is a generation gap, defined in the question as “a major difference in the point of view of younger people and older people today.” That’s nearly 20 percentage points higher than in 1979 when the same question was asked in a national survey by CBS and The New York Times, and it’s marginally greater than the 74% of adults who reported a generation gap in a 1969 Gallup survey.

The recent Pew Research finding raised some intriguing questions. How could the generation gap today be as large as or even larger than it was in the tumultuous 1960s when the mantra of the young was, “Don’t trust anyone over 30”? Might the term “generation gap” mean something different now than it did then—if the phrase retains any meaning at all?

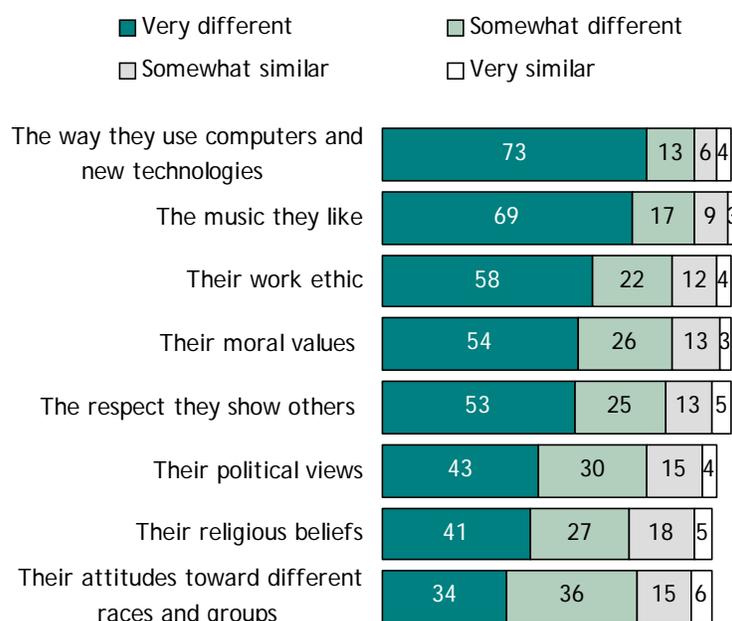
To answer these questions, the Pew Research Center conducted a new survey to probe more deeply into today’s generation gap. Specifically, the survey asked whether or not young people and older people differ on eight core values or traits: their work ethic, moral values, religious beliefs, racial and social tolerance, musical preferences, use of new technology, political beliefs and the respect they show others.³ In addition, the new survey attempted to find out whether these differences translated into conflicts between the generations—either in society at large, or at home between parents and children.

The answers to these questions are unambiguous. By lopsided majorities, the public agrees that a generation gap exists on each of the eight values tested. Moreover, when asked which generation had the “better” values, young and old alike generally give the nod to the older generation, and once again do so by wide margins.

But the survey is equally clear that these differences have not translated into serious conflicts. Only about a quarter of the public (26%) says there is strong conflict in society today between the young and old. By contrast, far higher shares see strong social conflict today between blacks and

The Generation Gap

% seeing similarities and differences between young and old in terms of ...



Note: “Don’t know/Refused” responses are not shown.

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³ These characteristics were chosen on the basis of responses to an open-ended question about generational differences in the earlier Pew Research survey.

whites (39%), rich and poor (47%), and immigrants and the native born (55%).

Meantime, inside the home, something approximating peace seems to have broken out between parents and teenagers. According to the survey, parents today are having fewer serious arguments with their children and are spending more time with them than their own parents did with them a generation ago.

The following three sections explore each of these findings in depth.

Generational Differences

Americans see differences between young and older adults in each of eight values and characteristics tested, and for the most part they say these generation gaps are large.

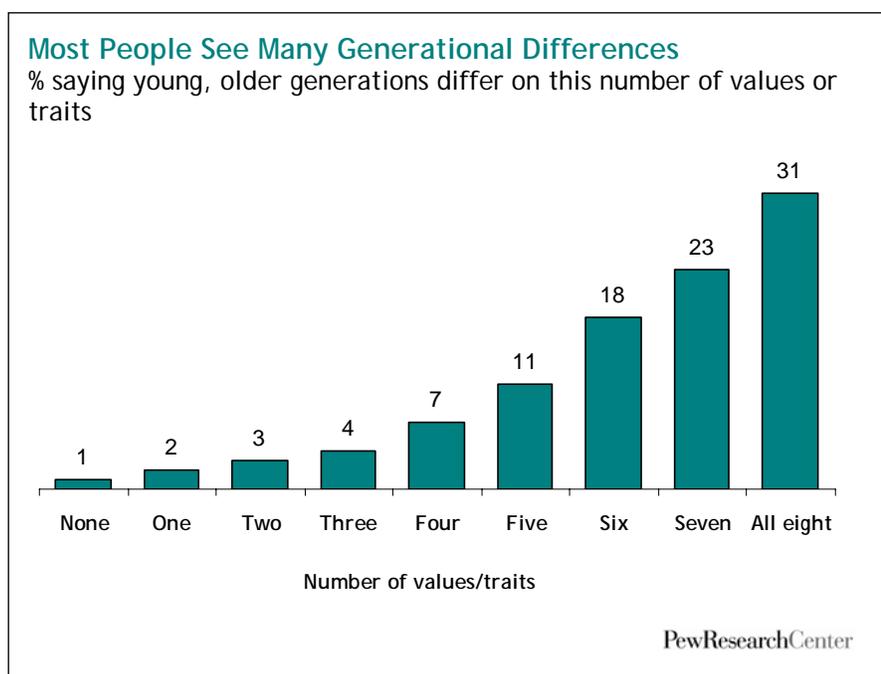
The biggest perceived differences emerged in two predictable areas: use of new technology and preferences in music. Nearly nine-in-ten respondents say the generations differ in the way they use the Internet, computers and other kinds of new technology (87%). Moreover, nearly three-quarters of those interviewed (73%) say young and older people are “very different” in the way they handle these new tools of the information age—the single largest difference recorded in the poll.

Nearly nine-in-ten also agree that the generations differ in the kinds of music they like (86%), a view shared by virtually identical proportions of adults regardless of age (89% among those 29 or younger and 86% among those 65 or older). Here again, the public believes the gaps are the size of canyons. More than two-thirds (69%) say the younger and older generations are “very different” in terms of the music they like—a finding that no doubt resonates in every household where a parent has ever admonished a teenager to “turn down that awful racket!”

The Values Gap

The cultural conflicts of the 1960s were largely fought over values and along generational lines. Forty years later, the public still believes the generations embrace many fundamentally different values and beliefs.

About eight-in-ten say young people and older adults hold different moral values (80%), have a different work ethic (80%) and differ in the respect they show other people (78%).



Moreover, majorities say the generations are “very different” on each of these three core values.

Somewhat smaller majorities see generational differences in other areas. About seven-in-ten say that young and older people are different in terms of their political beliefs (74%), their tolerance for races and groups different from themselves (70%) and in the generations’ religious beliefs (68%).

The Demographics of Generational Difference

Perceptions of a generation gap on values vary surprisingly little along social or demographic lines, but some differences do emerge. Three-quarters of respondents younger than 30 say the generations differ in terms of their racial and social tolerance, a view shared by only about half of those 65 and older. Also, young people are more likely than older adults to say the generations have different political and religious beliefs (although majorities of both groups share this view).

One demographic group does stand out.

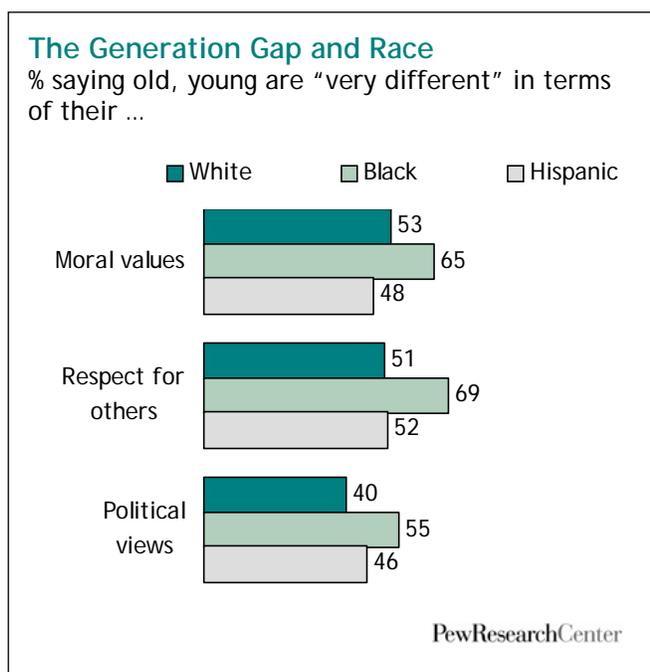
According to the survey, blacks are far more likely to see big differences between young and older adults in terms of moral values, political views and respect for others. For example, nearly two-thirds of all African Americans (65%) say the moral values of the generations are “very different,” compared with 53% of whites and 48% of Hispanics.

Similarly, about seven-in-ten blacks (69%) say the generations are “very different” in terms of the respect they show others, compared with about half of all whites (51%) and Hispanics (52%). Also, middle-aged adults—regardless of race—are somewhat more likely that younger or older people to see big differences between the generations in terms of the respect they show others.

Taken together, the findings suggest that Americans believe the generation gap has multiple dimensions. In fact, a 54% majority of the public says the generations differ on at least seven of the eight values tested, and three-in-ten say older and younger adults are different in all eight. In contrast, fewer than one-in-five (17%) perceive a generation gap in four or fewer areas.

Which Generation Has Better Values?

The generations agree that big differences exist between the values of the older and younger generations. But whose values are better? The survey asked that question of those who said the generations differed on any of four core values: work ethic, moral values, respect for others and tolerance of different races and other groups.



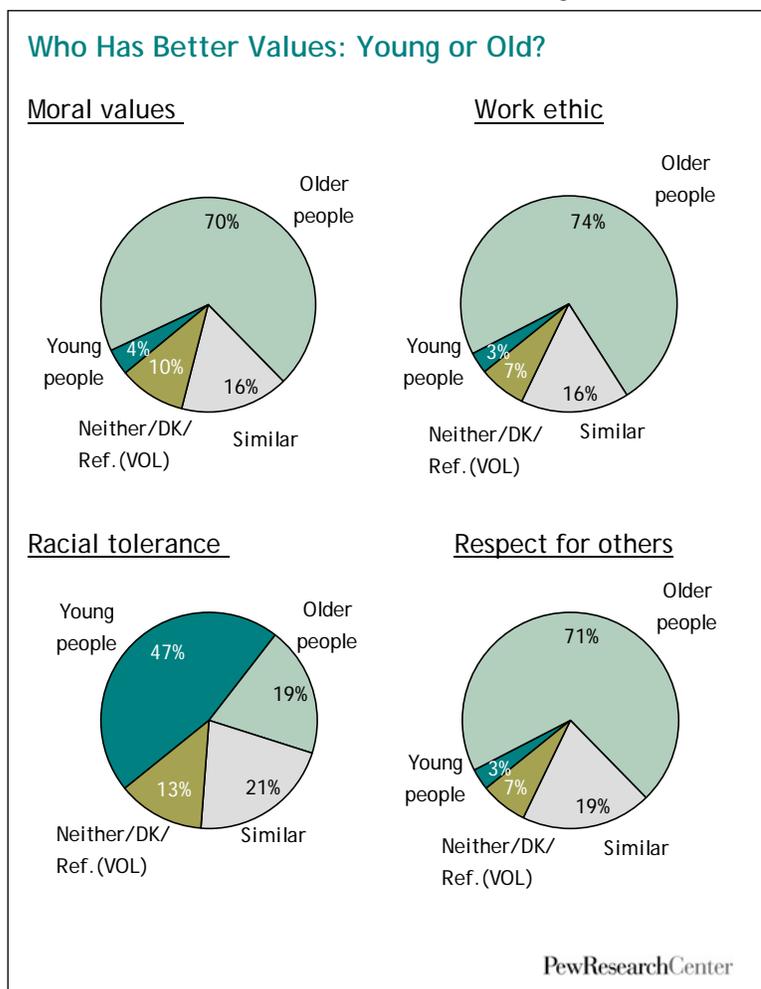
The public's judgment is unmistakable on three of the four values tested. Regardless of age, about two-thirds or more of the public believes that older Americans are superior in terms of their moral values, respect for others and work ethic. The younger generation is viewed as being more socially tolerant, though the verdict is less one-sided.

Overall, nearly three-quarters (74%) believe that older adults have the superior work ethic.⁴ Moreover, this belief bridges the generational divide: Young people agree with their parents' and grandparents' generations that older adults have a better work ethic (68% for those under 30 vs. 73% for those 50 and older). It's the 30-somethings and those in early middle age who appear to offer the harshest assessment of young people: About eight-in-ten of those ages 30 to 49 judge the older generation to have better attitudes toward work and a job.

Similarly, seven-in-ten adults say older people have better moral values than the younger generation, a judgment shared by 66% of all young adults and 69% of adults ages 50 and older.

About seven-in-ten adults also believe the older generation is more respectful of others (71%), an assessment that is made by 67% of respondents younger than 30 and 69% of those 50 and older. Again, early middle-aged adults and those slightly younger appear to offer the harshest assessment of young people: About three-quarters of those 30 to 49 say the older generation is more respectful.

The story is different on one value tested—social tolerance. By a ratio of more than two-to-one, young people are viewed as being more tolerant of races and groups different from their own than the older generation (47% vs. 19%). Again, the generations are in general agreement: a 55% majority of young adults say their generation is more tolerant, while somewhat more than a third (37%) of all adults 50 and older share that view.



⁴ To determine what percentage of the public believes that older and younger adults have the better values, the percentage of the total sample who see differences between older and younger people on each value tested was multiplied by the percentage of the public that say older people or younger were better on that value. In this case, 80% of those interviewed say young and older people differ with respect to their work ethic, and of this group, 91% say that older people have the better work ethic. Multiplying those two percentages produces the estimate that about 74% of all people 16 and older believe older people have the superior work ethic.

Generational Differences but Not Conflicts

Americans agree: There is a generation gap in the way young and old think and behave. But gone (at least for the most part) is the rancor between the older generation and the younger generation that characterized the late 1960s and early 1970s. Today, barely a quarter of adults, regardless of age, report there are major conflicts between young people and older adults. If anything, tensions between the generations may be in decline. And when measured against other divides in American society, generational conflict pales as source of social divisiveness.

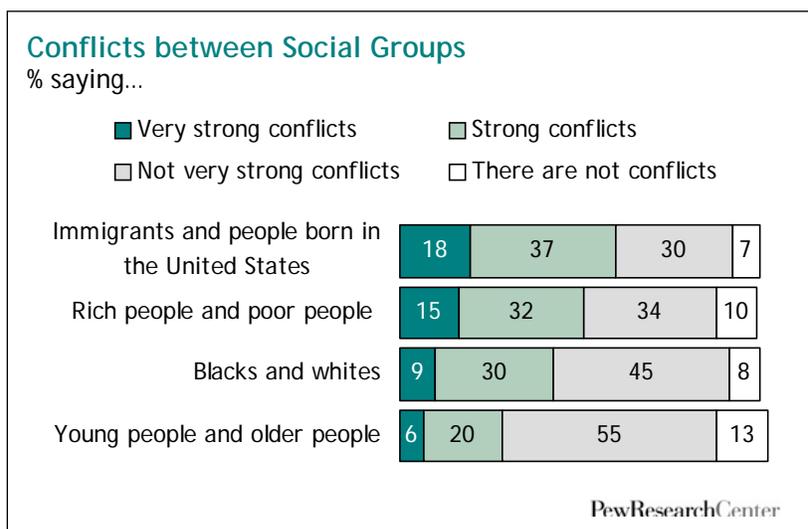
The Pew Research Center survey finds that 26% of all respondents say there are “very strong” or “strong” conflicts between young and older Americans, down from 42% in 1992 when the question was first asked in a national survey by the University of Chicago’s National Opinion Research Center. At the same time, fully two-thirds (68%) of the public say these generational conflicts are either weak or nonexistent; only slightly more than half of all adults expressed a similar view 17 years ago.

These views are shared by all age groups. Substantial majorities of those younger than 30 (69%) as well as adults 65 or older (62%) agree that conflicts between the younger and older generations are minor, at most.

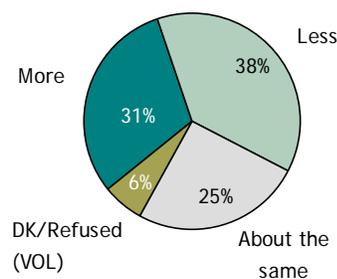
In fact, when compared with other major social divisions, the generation gap ranks at the bottom of the list. A substantially larger proportion of the public says there are serious conflicts between immigrants and native-born Americans (55% vs. 37%).

And comparatively larger proportions also perceive more conflict between the rich and the poor (47%) as well as between blacks and whites (39%).

Results of another question tell a more mixed story. When people are asked if there is more generational conflict now than in the 1960s and 1970s, opinions are divided. A 38% plurality says there is less disagreement



More or Less Generational Conflict Now Compared with the '60s and '70s?



Question: Compared to the late 1960s and early 1970s, how much conflict is there today between the younger and older generations: Would you say there is more conflict now, about the same amount of conflict, or less conflict now than there was back then?

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now between the generations than there was three or four decades ago. But an additional 31% report there is more conflict, while 25% say there is about the same amount.

While this finding might suggest that generational tensions are at least as high now as they were at the height of the '60s culture and political wars, the results should be interpreted with caution.

Fully 40% of all survey participants were born after 1969 and thus had no direct exposure to the generational battles of that turbulent era over women's liberation, civil rights, the counterculture and the Vietnam War. More reliable firsthand reports may come from adults ages 50 to 64 who – as teenagers or young adults - were on the front lines of many of these generational conflicts. Among these baby boomers, significantly more report there is less conflict between young and old now than there was back then (43% less vs. 29% more).

One factor boosting the proportions that see no decline in tensions between the older and younger generations is the disproportionately large share of minorities who believe generational conflict has increased. Fully half of all blacks and about four-in-ten Hispanics say tensions between the generations have increased from the 1960s, a view shared by only about a quarter of all whites.

All (Relatively) Quiet on the Home Front

Today's parents say they are having fewer serious arguments with their children in their late teens and early 20s than they recall having with their mothers and fathers when they were that age. Moreover, parents of younger children also report they are spending more time with their kids than their mothers and fathers spent with them.

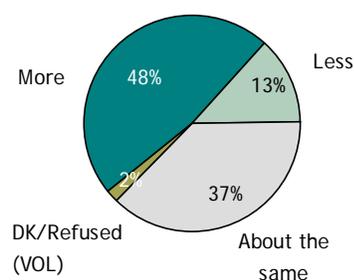
According to the survey, only one-in-ten parents with children ages 16 to 24 report they "often" had (or have) major disagreements with their children. In contrast, nearly twice as many adults (19%) say that when they themselves were teenagers

Minorities, Less Educated and Older Adults See More Generational Conflict Now

	<u>More Conflict</u>	<u>Less conflict</u>	<u>Same</u>
Age	%	%	%
16-29	30	36	24
30-49	30	40	22
50-64	29	43	26
65+	36	29	28
Gender			
Men	27	41	25
Women	34	35	24
Race			
White	26	41	27
Black	50	30	15
Hispanic	39	31	23
Education			
HS or less	40	28	25
Some college	27	43	24
College grad+	17	53	24

Today's Parents Spend More Time with Children

Time parents say they spend with children compared with the time they say their parents spent with them



Note: Asked of those with children 16 or younger, n= 385.

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or in their early 20s, they often had serious arguments with their parents.

Of course, it's possible that parents are downplaying the seriousness of disagreements with their children or are offering a somewhat more dramatic version of their own childhood conflicts with their mothers and fathers. But an analysis of the survey findings among the different age groups of respondents shows that, broadly speaking, parents' and children's accounts of intrafamily quarreling were consistent.

Among parents with children ages 16 to 24, slightly fewer than half (45%) say they have major disagreements "often" or "sometimes." When respondents ages 16 to 24 were asked a complementary question about disagreements with their parents, a virtually identical proportion (42%) report they often or sometimes have serious arguments with their parents.

Fewer Big Arguments, More Time with the Kids

In addition to arguing less, parents report they are spending more time with their younger children than their parents spent with them—and the proportion who express this view appears to have increased in recent years.

Nearly half (48%) of all parents with children 16 or younger say they are spending more time with their children than their parents spent with them, up from 42% in a survey conducted for Newsweek magazine in 1993.

One other sign that today's moms and dads are spending more time with younger children: Among parents in the Pew Research Center survey whose children are older than 16, barely four-in-ten (41%) say they spent more time with their children when they were growing up than their parents spent with them.

Whether accurate reflections of family life or self-serving versions of history, these findings together with other survey results suggest that tensions between the generations appear to have eased considerably in recent decades—both in the home and in society at large.



III. Woodstock

“By the time we got to Woodstock, we were half a million strong, and everywhere there was song and celebration.”

—Lyrics by Joni Mitchell; performed by Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young (and others)

Woodstock was a 1969 music festival in upstate New York that—more than any other single event—has come to symbolize the youth-driven social, cultural and political upheavals of the late 1960s. Through the years, it’s retained a foothold in the nation’s psyche and marketplace through a seemingly endless stream of movies, songs, albums, books, documentaries, reunions, memorabilia and merchandise.

But even with all that: 40 years later, how many people still know what Woodstock was?

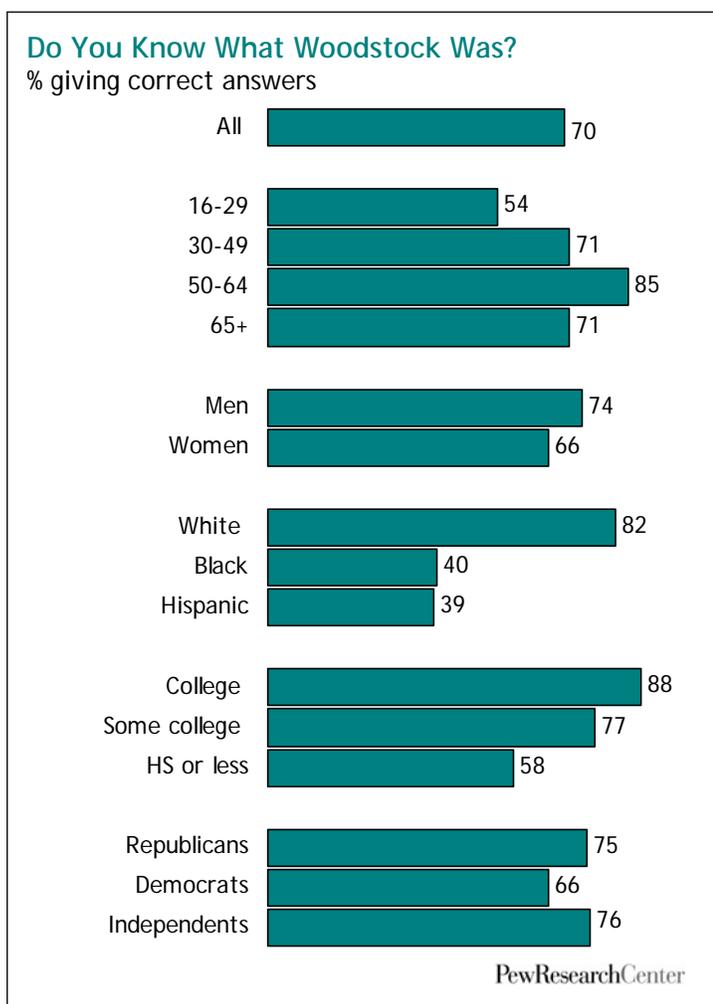
Seven-in-ten do, according to the Pew Research survey of our nationally representative sample of 1,815 people ages 16 and above.

Not surprisingly, levels of public knowledge of Woodstock differ among different demographic groups. Moreover, the descriptions of Woodstock by today’s public show that, 40 years after the fact, it still packs a pretty good punch as a cultural Rorschach test.

Knowledge

The age group most familiar with Woodstock is adults ages 50 to 64. That’s not surprising; they are the baby boomers who came of age during the height of the youth rebellion of the 1960s. Today, 85% of them gave a correct answer to the following open-ended question in our survey: “This year marks the 40th anniversary of Woodstock. Can you tell me what Woodstock was, or don’t you know?”

Familiarity with Woodstock falls to 71% among two adjacent age groups: adults 30 to 49, and those 65 and older. Among the youngest age group in the survey (ages 16 to 24), just half know what Woodstock was.



The differences by race are even bigger. Some 82% of whites know what Woodstock was, more than double the share of blacks (40%) and Latinos (39%) in our survey who provided a correct answer. Likewise, those with college degrees (irrespective of race) are far more likely than those with a high school diploma or less to be able to identify Woodstock—88% versus 58%.

Finally, a higher share of Republicans (75%) than Democrats (66%) know what Woodstock was, a disparity largely explained by the far higher share of blacks and Hispanics who are Democrats than Republicans.

Descriptions

Our open-ended question did not ask respondents for their opinion about Woodstock. It simply asked if they knew what it was. Nonetheless, respondents went ahead anyway and served up opinions aplenty. See the box to the right for a sampler.

Woodstock: The Rorschach Test

A sample of responses to the question: “Do you know what Woodstock was?”

Thumbs Down

- “A bunch of hippies met in a park and did whatever they wanted”
- “A total moral mess”
- “Bunch of crazies running around smoking dope”
- “Hippie drug-fest”
- “Wild kids having sex”
- “Filth”
- “Pathetic”

Thumbs Up

- “It was about love and peace and the war”
- “A celebration of freedom and new ideas”
- “People being out in the open and being free”
- “Era of rebellion and being yourself”
- “A celebration of life, love and music”
- “A love-in”
- “One hell of a party”

Maybe Up, Maybe Down

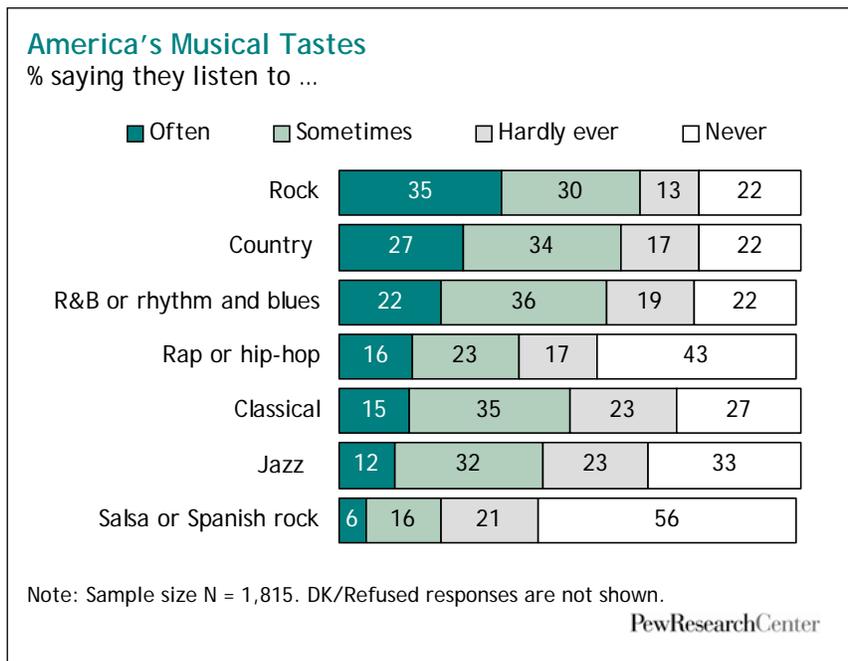
- “A mass gathering to hear music and run around in the mud”
- “Everyone went to a field and got naked”
- “An amorous party at a farm and Jimi Hendrix played ‘The Star-Spangled Banner’ on his guitar with his teeth”

IV. Rock's Rise

Around the time of Woodstock, rock and roll wasn't very popular. In a 1966 Harris Survey, it was near the very back of the pack among 11 musical styles tested.⁵ Not only that, but nearly half the public (44%) said in that survey that they actively disliked rock; the next highest genre on this "dislike" scale was opera at just 17%.

How times have changed.

Rock and roll today is the most popular music in the country, with nearly two-thirds of the public in the Pew Research survey saying they often (35%) or sometimes (30%) listen to it. Country comes in a close second—27% often listen to it; 34% sometimes do. Rounding out the list are rhythm and blues (22% often); rap or hip-hop (16% often); classical (15% often); jazz (12% often) and salsa or Spanish rock (6% often).



The ascendancy of rock over the decades is partly a story of changing tastes. It's also, in part, a story of generational replacement. To put it bluntly, one reason rock has been able to march up the charts over the years is that many of the older adults who found it so distasteful in the 1960s are no longer around.

But that's only half of the generational dynamic behind rock's rise. The other half has to do with the extent to which today's young adults have inherited their boomer parents' fondness for rock. (The irony is that while the music has largely stayed the same, its generational and cultural context has flipped. For boomers, rock was a rebellion. For their children, it's mainstream.)

The age patterns in the accompanying table tell both halves of this generational story. Rock is the favorite musical style of those ages 16 to 29, 30 to 49 and 50 to 64. The only age group that doesn't like rock the best is adults ages 65 and older. Among this group, just 8% say they listen to rock often—placing the genre fifth out of seven styles tested.

Rock is hardly the only genre for which tastes are different across different generations. Hip-hop is the second favorite genre of those ages 16 to 29, the fourth favorite of those ages 30 to 49 and the least favorite of everyone over 50. Indeed, the age breakdown of hip-hop's fan base is probably not much different from what rock's was a

⁵ The styles tested in that survey were described as follows: show tunes; symphony and classical; folk; country; mood music; spirituals; rock and roll; rhythm and blues; Latin-American music; opera; and folk rock.

Musical Genres, by Age

% saying they "often" listen to ...

	<u>16-29</u>		<u>30-49</u>		<u>50-64</u>		<u>65+</u>
	%		%		%		%
Rock	45	Rock	42	Rock	33	Country	37
Rap or hip-hop	41	R&B or rhythm and blues	25	Country	31	Classical	23
R&B or rhythm and blues	30	Country	21	R&B or rhythm and blues	17	R&B or rhythm and blues	13
Country	25	Rap or hip-hop	15	Classical	15	Jazz	12
Classical	14	Classical	12	Jazz	14	Rock	8
Jazz	11	Jazz	12	Salsa or Spanish rock	5	Salsa or Spanish rock	1
Salsa or Spanish rock	9	Salsa or Spanish rock	8	Rap or hip-hop	3	Rap or hip-hop	*

Note: Differences less than eight percentage points may not be statistically significant.

generation or two ago, though it remains to be seen if this newer style will be able to match rock's long march to the top.

For country music, the approval ratings by age pattern run in the opposite direction. It is the favorite style of adults ages 65 and older, the second favorite of those ages 50 to 64, the third favorite of those ages 30 to 49 and the fourth favorite of those ages 16 to 29. Does that mean country is on a downward path in popularity? Once again, only time will tell.

When it comes to tastes in music, age is far from the only dividing line. Tastes also line up according to race, ethnicity, region and even party identification.

For whites, the top two genres (in order) are rock and country. For blacks, it's R&B and hip-hop. For Hispanics, it's salsa and rock.

Rock claims the top spot in all four regions of the country, although in the South it's statistically tied with country.

As for political differences, Republicans favor country (slightly) over rock. Democrats put R&B and rock in a statistical dead heat. And independents go for rock, followed by country and R&B.

The Long Reign of '60s Rock

Another way to look at the changing demography of musical tastes is through the popularity of various performers. The Pew Research surveys asked respondents to rate 20 performers⁶ representing different eras and musical styles, from the 1940s to the present. The list was designed to help settle (or, better yet, fuel) a musical debate that's been kicking around since the days of Woodstock: Is the music of the '60s really better than anything else in living memory, or is that just a conceit of the preening baby boomers who grew up on it?

⁶ Twenty was the practical limit we could test in a pair of national telephone surveys; this meant that many great performers could not be included in the list.

We didn't ask respondents to rank order the performers on our list. We simply asked if they like, dislike or don't know each of them. If they said they liked a performer, we asked if they liked that performer a little or a lot. We conducted two separate nationally representative surveys in this fashion; then we combined the findings into the various ranking charts presented in this section.

So then: Is '60s music the fairest of them all?

No survey can provide a definitive answer, for reasons we'll explain in a moment. But boomers can lay claim to bragging rights on at least one front: the Beatles. They won the popularity contest with an impressive showing of strength across all generations of listeners. As for the other '60s rock bands on this list, they are scattered up and down the rankings among other legendary performers representing other eras and genres.

Now to the caveats. It needs to be acknowledged that, at least to some extent, a popularity contest like this is stacked against groups that have emerged in recent decades; they haven't had as much time to build a following. True, the older groups had to overcome the opposite problem—tastes change and it's easy to get swept away by the next big thing. Clearly, that's happened to two of the iconic '60s bands that performed at Woodstock (Jefferson Airplane and the Grateful Dead). But when it comes to the very biggest stars of the '60s, we already know (from music sales and other cultural markers) that they've stood the test of time. We won't know for many years if that'll also be true of the newer groups. In short, the '60s have done well in this survey, but our playing field isn't entirely level.

That said, one of the most compelling findings in the survey is the extent to which the Millennial Generation (ages 16 to 29) embraces the music of the '60s—including the work of groups that stopped performing long before anyone in that generation was born.

To put this in perspective: Try imagining young adults back in the 1960s putting the big jazz bands of the Roaring '20s at the top of their list of favorites. Not very likely. But that's the generational equivalent of what's happening now. Among young people ages 16 to 29 in our survey, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and Jimi Hendrix do quite well.

The Performers, by Decade (years active in parentheses)

1940s

Frank Sinatra (1940s-'90s)

1950s

Johnny Cash (1950s-'00s)

Elvis Presley (1950s-'70s)

1960s

The Beatles (1960s-'70s)

The Rolling Stones (1960s-present)

Aretha Franklin (1960s-present)

Jimi Hendrix (1960s-'70s)

Bob Dylan (1960s-present)

The Jefferson Airplane (1960s-'70s)

The Grateful Dead (1960s-'00s)

1970s

Michael Jackson (1970s-'00s)

The Eagles (1970s-present)

Bruce Springsteen (1970s-present)

1980s

Garth Brooks (1980s-present)

Madonna (1980s-present)

Nirvana (1980s-'90s)

1990s

Mariah Carey (1990s-present)

Coldplay (1990s-present)

2000s

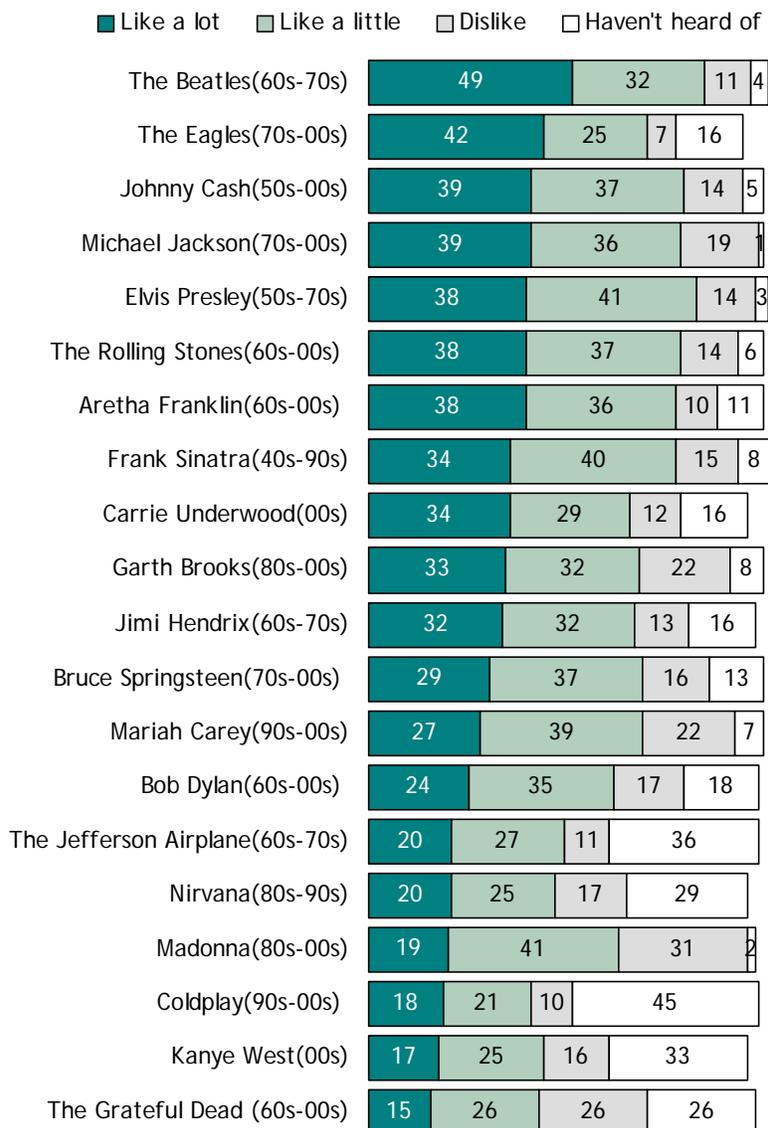
Kanye West

Carrie Underwood

Note: Michael Jackson debuted with the Jackson 5 in the 1960s but did not launch his solo career until the 1970s. Frank Sinatra began singing with bands in the 1930s but did not become a solo artist until 1940.

Popularity of Musical Performers

% saying they ...



Note: Differences less than five percentage points may not be statistically significant.

PewResearchCenter

Who Likes Whom, by Age

Taking a broader look at the popularity of these 20 performers broken down by generation, some clear patterns emerge. Frank Sinatra tops the charts among the oldest age group but runs in the middle of the pack among all others. Elvis runs third in the two oldest groups, then falls back among those ages 30 to 49, and farther back among the 16- to 29-year-olds. Johnny Cash's numbers are higher among the old than the young. Michael Jackson's arc is tilted the other way. He tops the charts among those ages 16 to 29 and runs second among the 30- to 49-year-olds, then drifts down to the middle of the pack among the two older groups. More recent vintage groups such as Nirvana, Coldplay and Kanye West do well with the youngest age group but are stuck at the bottom among everyone 50 and over.

But along with these and other differences by generation, there are also some notable similarities. The Beatles

Popularity of Musical Performers, by Age

% saying they "like a lot" ...

	<u>16-29</u>		<u>30-49</u>		<u>50-64</u>		<u>65+</u>
	%		%		%		%
Michael Jackson	46	The Eagles	54	The Beatles	65	Frank Sinatra	64
The Beatles	45	Michael Jackson	44	The Eagles	54	Johnny Cash	54
The Rolling Stones	35	The Beatles	42	Elvis Presley	53	Elvis Presley	53
Nirvana	33	The Rolling Stones	39	The Rolling Stones	51	The Beatles	43
Jimi Hendrix	32	Aretha Franklin	38	Aretha Franklin	50	Aretha Franklin	41
Kanye West	32	Jimi Hendrix	38	Johnny Cash	42	Garth Brooks	37
Carrie Underwood*	31	Johnny Cash	37	Bruce Springsteen	41	Carrie Underwood	32
Coldplay	30	Carrie Underwood	35	Garth Brooks	40	Bruce Springsteen	26
Mariah Carey*	29	Bruce Springsteen	32	Bob Dylan	38	The Eagles	22
Aretha Franklin	25	Elvis Presley	30	Jimi Hendrix	37	Mariah Carey	22
Frank Sinatra	25	Garth Brooks	30	Carrie Underwood	37	Michael Jackson	21
Johnny Cash*	25	Nirvana	27	The Jefferson			
Elvis Presley	24	Madonna	26	Airplane	36	Bob Dylan	19
Garth Brooks*	24	Frank Sinatra	25	Michael Jackson	35	The Rolling Stones	16
Bob Dylan	20	Mariah Carey	25	Frank Sinatra	35	Jimi Hendrix	14
The Eagles*	20	Coldplay	23	The Jefferson		The Jefferson	
Madonna	18	The Jefferson	21	Mariah Carey	31	Airplane	11
Bruce Springsteen	16	Airplane	21	Madonna	16	Madonna	8
The Grateful Dead	11	Bob Dylan	19	Madonna	16	The Grateful Dead	5
The Jefferson		Kanye West	19	Coldplay	11	Kanye West	4
Airplane	9	Nirvana	10	Nirvana	10	Coldplay	2
		The Grateful Dead	17	Kanye West	9	Nirvana	1

Note: Results for Carrie Underwood, Mariah Carey, Johnny Cash, Garth Brooks and the Eagles are from a separate national survey based on ages 18 and older. Differences less than 11 percentage points may not be statistically significant.

rank in the top four among all four age groups. The Rolling Stones are in the top four in all but the oldest age group. Aretha Franklin is in the top five among all but the youngest age group.

Thus, a question: Might it be that one reason parents and teenage children aren't quarreling as often now as parents and teenagers did a generation ago is that, when push comes to shove, they can always chill out together over a Beatles tune? As researchers like to say: needs further study.

**PEW SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS
WOODSTOCK/GENERATION GAP SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE**

July 20-August 2, 2009

N= 1,815 U.S. residents, ages 16+ (1,164 landline and 651 cell RDD)⁷

NOTE: ALL NUMBERS ARE PERCENTAGES. THE PERCENTAGES GREATER THAN ZERO BUT LESS THAN .5 % ARE REPLACED BY AN ASTERISK (*). COLUMNS/ROWS MAY NOT TOTAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING. ALL TRENDS REFERENCE SURVEYS FROM SOCIAL & DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

Q.1 Generally, how would you say things are these days in your life – would you say that you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy? [PST 2-09]

	<u>Very happy</u>	<u>Pretty happy</u>	<u>Not too happy</u>	<u>DK/Ref(VOL.)</u>
July 2009	33	50	14	3
July 2009 (ages 18+) ⁸	34	49	15	3
April 2009	29	52	16	3
Feb 2009	32	49	15	4
Oct 2008	29	51	17	3
June 2008	35	48	14	3
Sept 2006	36	51	12	1
Oct 2005	34	50	15	1
Late Mar 2003	29	51	16	4
Feb 2003	29	51	17	3
Sept 1996	34	53	11	2

Q.2 How would you rate your own health in general these days? Would you say your health is excellent, good, only fair, or poor? [PST 2-09]

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>DK/Ref(VOL.)</u>
July 2009	29	51	14	5	1
July 2009(ages 18+)	29	51	15	5	1
Feb 2009	31	46	17	5	1
Jan 2008	30	48	17	5	*
Feb 2006	29	51	15	5	*
Oct 2005	30	48	17	5	*
June 2003	28	52	15	5	*
Mid-July 1990	27	53	15	5	*

Q.3 How would you describe your household's financial situation? Would you say you (READ) [PST 1-08].

⁷ The sample design included oversamples of persons aged 16-24 and working adults 65 or older as well as a dual frame sample of respondents reached via landline (1,164) or cell (651) phone. The data are weighted to produce results from a representative sample of the population.

⁸ Results based on only those 18 and older n=1,701. For purposes of this study, a representative sample of adults 16 and older was interviewed. Previous surveys cited in this trend document were conducted with a sample of adults 18 and older. To allow comparisons, question results reported in this document are displayed in two ways. The first result is based on the entire sample. The second result is based only on those 18 and older and should be used to trend to earlier results. In virtually all cases the two results differed by less than a percentage point and never by more than two percentage points.

<u>July 2009</u>	<u>July 2009(ages 18+)</u>		<u>Jan 2008</u>
33	33	Live comfortably	38
27	27	Meet your basic expenses with a little left over for extras	32
26	26	Just meet your basic expenses, or	22
11	11	Don't even have enough to meet basic expenses	7
2	2	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	1

Now I have a few questions on a different topic.

Q. 4 In all countries, there are differences or conflicts between different social groups. In your opinion, in America, how much conflict is there between...[INSERT AND RANDOMIZE] ...Very strong conflicts, strong conflicts, not very strong conflicts, there are not conflicts. [REPEAT CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY] How much conflict is there between...[INSERT NEXT ITEM] READ IF NECESSARY: Very strong conflicts, strong conflicts, not very strong conflicts, there are not conflicts.

a. Young people and older people (GSS 2-92, LAST ASKED IN 2-2000)

<u>July 2009</u>	<u>July 2009 (ages 18+)</u>		<u>GSS Feb 2000⁹</u>	<u>GSS Feb 1992¹⁰</u>
6	6	Very strong conflicts	10	11
20	19	Strong conflicts	31	31
55	56	Not very strong conflicts	48	43
13	14	There are not conflicts	7	10
1	1	Can't choose (VOL.)	4	5
4	4	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)		

b. Poor people and rich people (GSS '87)

<u>July 2009</u>	<u>July 2009 (ages 18+)</u>		<u>GSS Feb 2000</u>	<u>GSS Feb 1992</u>	<u>GSS Feb 1987</u>
15	15	Very strong conflicts	14	20	15
32	32	Strong conflicts	41	46	44
34	34	Not very strong conflicts	37	26	33
10	10	There are not conflicts	3	3	3
3	3	Can't choose (VOL.)	6	5	5
6	6	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)			

c. Blacks and whites

9	Very strong conflicts
30	Strong conflicts
45	Not very strong conflicts
8	There are not conflicts
3	Can't choose (VOL.)
6	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

⁹ The GSS questions didn't include "Don't know/Refused" option.

¹⁰ The question wording is slightly different in the 1992 GSS: "In all countries there are differences or even conflicts between..."

d. Immigrants and people born in the United States

18	Very strong conflicts
37	Strong conflicts
30	Not very strong conflicts
7	There are not conflicts
3	Can't choose (VOL.)
5	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

Q.5 Compared to the late 1960s and early 1970s, how much conflict is there today between the younger and older generations: Would you say there is more conflict now, about the same amount of conflict, or less conflict now than there was back then?

31	More
38	Less
25	About the same
7	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

Q.6 Generally speaking, do you think young people and older people are similar or different today in terms of [INSERT AND RANDOMIZE]? IF SIMILAR OR DIFFERENT: Would you say they are very (similar/different), or just somewhat (similar/different)? What about [INSERT NEXT ITEM]? READ IF NECESSARY: Do you think young people are similar or different today? IF SIMILAR OR DIFFERENT: Would you say they are very (similar/different), or just somewhat (similar/different)?

	Very <u>similar</u>	Somewhat <u>similar</u>	Somewhat <u>different</u>	Very <u>different</u>	DK/Ref <u>(VOL.)</u>
a. The music they like	3	9	17	69	2
b. Their moral values	3	13	26	54	4
c. Their work ethic	4	12	22	58	5
d. The way they use computers, the internet and other kinds of new technology	4	6	13	73	4
e. The respect they show others	5	13	25	53	3
f. Their attitudes toward races and groups that are not like them	6	15	36	34	8
g. Their political views	4	15	30	43	7
h. Their religious beliefs	5	18	27	41	9

[IF Q6b=3,4 N=1,422]

Q.7 You said young people and older people were different in terms of their moral values. In your opinion, who has the better moral values: Young people or older people?

5	Young people
87	Older People
5	Neither better nor worse just different/mixed (VOL.)
3	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

NO QUESTION 8

[IF Q6c=3,4 N=1,425]

Q.9 You also said young people and older people were different in terms of their work ethic. In your opinion, who has the better work ethic: Young people or older people?

4	Young people
93	Older People
2	Neither better nor worse just different/mixed (VOL.)
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

NO QUESTION 10

[IF Q6f=3,4 N=1,241]

Q.11 You also said young people and older people were different in terms of their attitudes toward other races and groups. In your opinion, who has the better attitudes: Young people or older people?

67	Young people
27	Older People
4	Neither better nor worse just different/mixed (VOL.)
2	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

NO QUESTION 12

[IF Q6e=3,4 N=1,370]

Q.12 You also said young people and older people were different in terms of the respect they show others. In your opinion, who is more respectful of others: Young people or older people? Young people or older people?

4	Young people
91	Older People
3	Neither better nor worse just different/mixed (VOL.)
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK ALL

AGE What is your age?

25	16-29
16	16-24
9	25-29
34	30-49
25	50-64
15	65+
1	Don't know/Refused

KIDSA Do you have any children 16 or younger?

31	Yes
69	No
*	Don't know/Refused [VOL.]

IF KIDSA=1 [N=385]

HH16 Do any of these children currently live with you in your household?

90	Yes
10	No
0	Don't know/Refused [VOL.]

ASK ALL

KIDSB Do you have any children older than 16?

45	Yes
55	No
*	Don't know/Refused [VOL.]

[IF KIDSA=1 OR KIDSB=1] [N=1,196]

KIDSC Are any of your children age 16 to 24?

28	Yes
72	No
0	Don't know/Refused [VOL.]

IF KIDSA = 1[N=385]

Q.13a Generally speaking, do you spend more time with your children than your parents did with you, less time, or about the same amount? [PSRA/Newsweek 4-93]

<u>July 2009</u>	<u>July 2009</u> <u>(ages 18+)</u>		<u>PSRA/Newsweek</u> <u>April 1993¹¹</u>
48	48	More time	42
13	13	Less time	17
37	38	About the same amount	40
2	2	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	1

[IF KIDSA = 2 AND KIDSB = 1] [N=811]

Q.13b Generally speaking, did you spend more time with your children when they were growing up than your parents did with you, less time, or about the same amount?

41	More time
15	Less time
42	About the same amount
2	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

[IF KIDSB = 1] [N=913]

Q.14 And what about your relationship with your children [IF KIDSC=1: age 16 to 24/IF KIDSC=2: when they were in their late teens and early 20s.] Would you say you [IF KIDSC=1: have/IF KIDSC=2: had] major disagreements with your children often, sometimes, hardly ever, or never?

10	Often
35	Sometimes
41	Hardly ever
13	Never
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

¹¹ The Question wording in PSRA/Newsweek Poll was "Do you spend more time with your children than your parents did with you, less time, or about the same amount?"

ASK IF RESPONDENT IS AGE 25 OR OLDER [N=1,389]

Q.15 Now I would like you to think about your relationship with your parents when YOU were in your late teens and early 20s. When you were that age, would you say you had major disagreements with your parents often, sometimes, hardly ever, or never? [IF DEMAND A DEFINITION OF 'LATE TEENS AND EARLY 20S': Generally speaking, we mean people roughly 16 to 24 years old.]

19 Often
29 Sometimes
37 Hardly ever
14 Never
1 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK IF RESPONDENT IS AGE 16-24 [N=406]

Q.16 Now I would like you to think about your relationship with your parents. Would you say you have major disagreements with your parents often, sometimes, hardly ever, or never?

13 Often
29 Sometimes
40 Hardly ever
16 Never
1 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

Now I'd like to ask a different kind of question.

ASK ALL

Q.17 This year marks the 40th anniversary of Woodstock. Can you tell me what Woodstock was, or don't you know?

DO NOT READ

58 Yes, Rock concert/Outdoor music festival
13 Yes, Other response (SPECIFY)
28 No, don't know
1 Refused (VOL.)

Q.18 Now I am going to read the names of some types of music. For each, tell me how often you listen to this type of music. What about: (INSERT AND RANDOMIZE) music? Do you listen to this type of music often, sometimes, hardly ever or never?

	<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Hardly ever</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u> <u>(VOL.)</u>
a. Rock	35	30	13	22	1
b. Country	27	34	17	22	1
c. Classical	15	35	23	27	*
d. Jazz	12	32	23	33	*
e. Rap or hip-hop	16	23	17	43	*
f. Salsa or Spanish rock	6	16	21	56	*
g. R&B or rhythm and blues	22	36	19	22	1

Q.19 Now I am going to read the names of some musical groups or performers that some people have heard of and others have not. For each, tell me if you like this group or performer, dislike them, or haven't heard of them. Do you like or dislike [INSERT AND RANDOMIZE]? IF LIKE: Do you like (him/her/they) a lot, or a little? What about [INSERT NEXT ITEM]? READ IF NECESSARY: Do you like or dislike [INSERT ITEM]? IF LIKE: Do you like (him/her/they) a lot, or a little?

	Like a <u>lot</u>	Like a <u>little</u>	<u>Dislike</u>	Have not heard of <u>group/performer</u>	No opinion <u>(VOL.)</u>	Mixed views/like and dislike <u>(VOL.)</u>	DK/Ref <u>(VOL.)</u>
a. Bob Dylan	24	35	17	18	5	1	1
b. Madonna	19	41	31	2	4	2	1
c. The Grateful Dead	15	26	26	26	6	*	1
d. The Rolling Stones	38	37	14	6	4	1	*
e. Coldplay	18	21	10	45	4	*	1
f. The Beatles	49	32	11	4	3	1	*
g. Bruce Springsteen	29	37	16	13	4	1	*
h. Jimi Hendrix	32	32	13	16	6	*	1
i. Kanye West	17	25	16	33	7	*	1
j. Michael Jackson	39	36	19	1	3	2	*
k. The Jefferson Airplane	20	27	11	36	5	1	*
l. Nirvana	20	25	17	29	7	*	2
m. Elvis Presley	38	41	14	3	3	1	*
n. Frank Sinatra	34	40	15	8	3	1	*
o. Aretha Franklin	38	36	10	11	3	*	1

PEW SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS
WOODSTOCK/MUSICAL PERFORMERS SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
August 5-9, 2009
N= 1,011 U.S. residents, ages 18+

NOTE: ALL NUMBERS ARE PERCENTAGES. THE PERCENTAGES GREATER THAN ZERO BUT LESS THAN .5 % ARE REPLACED BY AN ASTERISK (*). COLUMNS/ROWS MAY NOT TOTAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING. ALL TRENDS REFERENCE SURVEYS FROM SOCIAL & DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

PE-1 Now I am going to read the names of some musical groups or performers that some people have heard of and others have not. For each, tell me if you like this group or performer, dislike them, or haven't heard of them. Do you like or dislike [INSERT AND RANDOMIZE]? IF LIKE: Do you like (him/her/them) a lot, or a little? What about [INSERT NEXT ITEM]? READ IF NECESSARY: Do you like or dislike [INSERT ITEM]? IF LIKE: Do you like (him/her/them) a lot, or a little?

	Like a <u>lot</u>	Like a <u>little</u>	<u>Dislike</u>	Have not heard of <u>group/performer</u>	No opinion <u>(VOL.)</u>	Mixed views/like and dislike <u>(VOL.)</u>	DK/Ref <u>(VOL.)</u>
a. Garth Brooks	33	32	22	8	4	*	*
b. Mariah Carey	27	39	22	7	5	1	*
c. The Beatles	51	28	16	*	3	2	*
d. Johnny Cash	39	37	14	5	4	1	*
e. The Eagles	42	25	7	16	7	1	1
f. Coldplay	18	18	8	48	6	1	1
g. Carrie Underwood	34	29	12	16	8	*	*