



Kennedy's Words Live on Fifty Years Later

*** Complete Tables for Poll Appended ***

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This Marist Poll Reports:

Tomorrow marks the fiftieth anniversary of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, and many of President Kennedy's words continue to ring true. Which of the president's quotes do Americans feel is most meaningful today? More than six in ten -- 62% -- think, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country," is most relevant. More than one in five -- 22% -- believes the most meaningful quote from President Kennedy is, "Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate." "The torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans -- born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace" receives 7% while another 7% say, "We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard," is the most memorable. Three percent of Americans are unsure.

Regardless of age, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country" is considered to be the most evocative John F. Kennedy quote. 72% of Americans 60 and older, 63% of those 45 to 59, and 57% of those 30 to 44 have this view. Even a plurality of those under the age of 30, 47%, say the same. Among this age group, one-third -- 33% -- reports that "Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate" is the most relevant quote by John F. Kennedy.

And, when it comes to Kennedy's legacy, most Americans say, fifty years from now, Kennedy will be remembered for his assassination and not his accomplishments while in office. More than seven in ten adults nationally -- 71% -- report Kennedy's death will be his legacy while 24% think the president's initiatives will be thought of as the highlight of his administration. Five percent are unsure.

Nearly Six in Ten Think JFK Assassination was a Conspiracy

58% of Americans believe Lee Harvey Oswald did not act alone when he shot and killed President Kennedy. 28% think only one person was involved, and 14% are unsure.

Americans under the age of 30 -- 67% -- are more likely than any other age group to say that Kennedy's assassination was a conspiracy. This compares with 54% of those 30 to 44, 57% of Americans 45 to 59, and 59% of those 60 and older.

How did Americans older than 54 years old find out about Kennedy's death? Television was the source for 35%. 27% heard from a teacher while 19% heard the news over the radio. Five percent were told by a friend or neighbor, and an additional 5% heard from a colleague at work. A family member was the first source of information for 4% of Americans older than 54 while 3% heard the tragic news from a stranger. One percent learned the news from the newspaper while an additional 1% found out in another way. One percent is unsure.

September 11th, Not Kennedy Assassination, Considered Most Significant Tragedy

When asked which tragic event was the most significant for people living at the time, nearly half of Americans -- 49% -- report the September 11th terrorist attacks were the most impactful event to have occurred. 36% report Pearl Harbor was the most significant while 13% report President Kennedy's assassination was the most consequential. One percent says the explosion of the Space Shuttle Challenger was the most significant. Two percent are unsure.

Age plays a role. Younger Americans are the most likely to say September 11th was the most significant tragic event. Majorities of those under 30 -- 57% -- and those 30 to 44 -- 53% -- think September 11th had the most impact. Nearly half -- 49% -- of Americans 45 to 59 agree. However, among residents 60 and older, 41% think Pearl Harbor was the most significant event to occur while 40% have this impression of September 11th.

A gender gap exists. 55% of women think September 11th was the most significant. This compares with 42% of men who say the same. 41% of men, however, believe Pearl Harbor was the most tragic event to occur.

How the Survey was Conducted

Nature of the Sample: Marist National Poll of 963 Adults

This survey of 963 adults was conducted September 7th and September 8th, 2013 by The Marist Poll. Adults 18 years of age and older residing in the continental United States were interviewed by telephone using live interviewers. Landline telephone numbers were randomly selected based upon a list of telephone exchanges from throughout the nation from ASDE Survey Sampler, Inc. The exchanges were selected to ensure that each region was represented in proportion to its population. To increase coverage, this landline sample was supplemented by respondents reached through random dialing of cell phone numbers from Survey Sampling International. The two samples were then combined and balanced to reflect the 2010 Census results for age, gender, income, race, and region. Respondents in the household were selected by asking for the youngest male. Results are statistically significant within ± 3.2 percentage points. There are 856 registered voters. The results for this subset are statistically significant within ± 3.3 percentage points. The error margin increases for cross-tabulations.

Nature of the Sample

		National Adults	National Registered Voters
		Col %	Col %
National Adults		100%	
National Registered Voters		89%	100%
Party Identification	Democrat	n/a	37%
	Republican	n/a	29%
	Independent	n/a	34%
	Other	n/a	1%
Party Identification	Strong Democrats	n/a	22%
	Not strong Democrats	n/a	15%
	Democratic leaning independents	n/a	13%
	Just Independents	n/a	8%
	Republican leaning independents	n/a	13%
	Not strong Republicans	n/a	12%
	Strong Republicans	n/a	16%
	Other	n/a	1%
Tea Party Supporters		n/a	23%
Political Ideology	Very conservative	n/a	12%
	Conservative	n/a	29%
	Moderate	n/a	32%
	Liberal	n/a	20%
	Very liberal	n/a	7%
Gender	Men	49%	47%
	Women	51%	53%
Age	Under 45	38%	33%
	45 or older	62%	67%
Age	18 to 29	16%	13%
	30 to 44	22%	21%
	45 to 59	30%	31%
	60 or older	33%	35%
Race	White	68%	69%
	African American	11%	12%
	Latino	14%	13%
	Other	6%	6%
Region	Northeast	18%	19%
	Midwest	22%	22%
	South	37%	37%
	West	23%	22%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	50%	47%
	\$50,000 or more	50%	53%
Education	Not college graduate	58%	56%
	College graduate	42%	44%
Interview Type	Landline	72%	76%
	Cell phone	28%	24%

Marist Poll National Adults. Interviews conducted September 7th and September 8th, 2013, n=963 MOE +/- 3.2 percentage points.
National Registered Voters: n=856 MOE +/- 3.3 percentage points. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Marist Poll National Tables

National Adults

Which one of the following quotes from President John F. Kennedy, do you feel is most meaningful today:

		Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country	The torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans - born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace	We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard	Let us never negotiate out of fear but let us never fear to negotiate	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
National Adults		62%	7%	7%	22%	3%
National Registered Voters		63%	7%	6%	22%	2%
Party Identification^	Democrat	56%	8%	6%	28%	2%
	Republican	71%	7%	4%	15%	3%
	Independent	65%	5%	9%	19%	2%
Party Identification*	Strong Democrats	61%	4%	5%	26%	3%
	Soft Democrats	55%	10%	8%	27%	1%
	Just Independents	54%	11%	16%	18%	1%
	Soft Republicans	71%	4%	5%	18%	2%
	Strong Republicans	73%	8%	3%	12%	3%
Tea Party Supporters^		73%	7%	3%	14%	2%
Political Ideology^	Very liberal-Liberal	59%	6%	7%	25%	2%
	Moderate	61%	7%	9%	22%	1%
	Conservative-Very conservative	68%	7%	4%	18%	3%
Region	Northeast	60%	6%	6%	24%	3%
	Midwest	66%	9%	4%	19%	2%
	South	60%	5%	8%	24%	3%
	West	62%	7%	7%	21%	3%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	56%	10%	5%	27%	2%
	\$50,000 or more	65%	4%	8%	21%	1%
Education	Not college graduate	62%	7%	5%	22%	4%
	College graduate	62%	7%	9%	21%	1%
Race	White	64%	8%	7%	20%	2%
	African American	56%	4%	4%	32%	4%
	Latino	66%	9%	3%	22%	0%
Age	18 to 29	47%	12%	8%	33%	0%
	30 to 44	57%	7%	9%	22%	4%
	45 to 59	63%	6%	6%	24%	2%
	60 or older	72%	5%	5%	15%	3%
Age	Under 45	53%	9%	9%	27%	3%
	45 or older	67%	6%	5%	19%	2%
Gender	Men	60%	8%	9%	22%	2%
	Women	64%	6%	5%	22%	3%
Interview Type	Landline	66%	6%	6%	18%	3%
	Cell phone	51%	8%	7%	32%	2%

Marist Poll National Adults. Interviews conducted September 7th and September 8th, 2013, n=963 MOE +/- 3.2 percentage points.

^National Registered Voters: n=856 MOE +/- 3.3 percentage points. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

*Soft Democrats include registered voters who identify as "not strong Democrats" or Democratic leaning independents. Soft Republicans include those registered voters who identify as "not strong Republicans" or Republican leaning independents.

Marist Poll National Tables

		National Adults		
		Fifty years from now, will John F. Kennedy be remembered more for:		
		His assassination while president	His accomplishments as president	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %
National Adults		71%	24%	5%
National Registered Voters		71%	24%	5%
Party Identification^	Democrat	65%	29%	6%
	Republican	76%	20%	4%
	Independent	73%	22%	5%
Party Identification*	Strong Democrats	61%	32%	7%
	Soft Democrats	71%	26%	3%
	Just Independents	66%	20%	14%
	Soft Republicans	74%	23%	3%
	Strong Republicans	81%	15%	4%
Tea Party Supporters^		79%	18%	3%
Political Ideology^	Very liberal-Liberal	65%	31%	4%
	Moderate	74%	21%	4%
	Conservative-Very conservative	75%	21%	4%
Region	Northeast	73%	24%	3%
	Midwest	71%	24%	5%
	South	64%	28%	8%
	West	79%	18%	3%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	68%	27%	6%
	\$50,000 or more	75%	22%	3%
Education	Not college graduate	69%	26%	6%
	College graduate	74%	22%	4%
Race	White	74%	23%	3%
	African American	62%	28%	10%
	Latino	71%	22%	7%
Age	18 to 29	78%	22%	0%
	30 to 44	77%	19%	4%
	45 to 59	66%	27%	6%
	60 or older	68%	26%	6%
Age	Under 45	77%	21%	2%
	45 or older	67%	27%	6%
Gender	Men	71%	23%	5%
	Women	70%	25%	5%
Interview Type	Landline	69%	25%	6%
	Cell phone	74%	23%	3%

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*Soft Democrats include registered voters who identify as "not strong Democrats" or Democratic leaning independents. Soft Republicans include those registered voters who identify as "not strong Republicans" or Republican leaning independents.

Marist Poll National Tables

		National Adults		
		Do you think one man was responsible for the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, or do you think there was a conspiracy and other people were involved?		
		One man responsible	Conspiracy and other people involved	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %
National Adults		28%	58%	14%
National Registered Voters		29%	57%	14%
Party Identification^	Democrat	27%	62%	11%
	Republican	29%	53%	18%
	Independent	32%	56%	12%
Party Identification*	Strong Democrats	31%	60%	9%
	Soft Democrats	29%	61%	9%
	Just Independents	33%	43%	24%
	Soft Republicans	26%	56%	18%
Tea Party Supporters^	Strong Republicans	30%	57%	13%
		28%	59%	13%
Political Ideology^	Very liberal-Liberal	36%	50%	14%
	Moderate	29%	61%	10%
	Conservative-Very conservative	26%	58%	16%
Region	Northeast	28%	57%	15%
	Midwest	36%	53%	11%
	South	24%	61%	15%
	West	26%	61%	13%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	21%	67%	12%
	\$50,000 or more	35%	52%	13%
Education	Not college graduate	21%	66%	13%
	College graduate	37%	48%	15%
Race	White	32%	55%	13%
	African American	18%	70%	13%
	Latino	14%	76%	10%
Age	18 to 29	17%	67%	16%
	30 to 44	30%	54%	16%
	45 to 59	28%	57%	15%
	60 or older	31%	59%	10%
Age	Under 45	25%	59%	16%
	45 or older	30%	58%	12%
Gender	Men	29%	56%	14%
	Women	27%	60%	13%
Interview Type	Landline	30%	56%	14%
	Cell phone	21%	66%	13%

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Marist Poll National Tables

		Born before 1959
		Col %
How did you learn about	TV	35%
the assassination of	Teacher	27%
President John F. Kennedy	Radio	19%
in 1963?	Friend/Neighbor	5%
	Work colleague	5%
	Family member	4%
	A person you didn't know	3%
	Newspaper	1%
	Other	1%
	Unsure	1%

Marist Poll National Adults Born Before 1959. Interviews conducted September 7th and September 8th, 2013, n=361 MOE +/- 5.2 percentage points. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Marist Poll National Tables

		National Adults				
		Which one of the following tragic events do you feel was most significant for people living at that time:				
		The bombing of Pearl Harbor	The assassination of President John F. Kennedy	The Challenger explosion	September 11th	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
National Adults		36%	13%	1%	49%	2%
National Registered Voters		36%	13%	0%	49%	2%
Party Identification^	Democrat	29%	17%	1%	52%	2%
	Republican	38%	9%	0%	51%	2%
	Independent	41%	12%	1%	45%	2%
Party Identification*	Strong Democrats	26%	17%	0%	55%	2%
	Soft Democrats	33%	15%	1%	49%	1%
	Just Independents	44%	10%	0%	43%	3%
	Soft Republicans	46%	10%	1%	43%	1%
	Strong Republicans	35%	8%	0%	54%	3%
Tea Party Supporters^		40%	10%	0%	48%	2%
Political Ideology^	Very liberal-Liberal	35%	17%	0%	47%	1%
	Moderate	38%	13%	1%	45%	2%
	Conservative-Very conservative	35%	10%	0%	53%	2%
Region	Northeast	33%	14%	3%	48%	2%
	Midwest	35%	11%	1%	52%	2%
	South	33%	12%	0%	53%	2%
	West	43%	16%	0%	40%	2%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	36%	14%	1%	49%	1%
	\$50,000 or more	36%	12%	0%	50%	2%
Education	Not college graduate	31%	14%	1%	50%	3%
	College graduate	42%	11%	0%	46%	1%
Race	White	41%	12%	1%	45%	2%
	African American	18%	18%	0%	63%	2%
	Latino	32%	19%	0%	49%	0%
Age	18 to 29	29%	13%	0%	57%	0%
	30 to 44	34%	9%	3%	53%	1%
	45 to 59	35%	13%	0%	49%	2%
	60 or older	41%	15%	1%	40%	3%
Age	Under 45	32%	11%	2%	55%	1%
	45 or older	38%	14%	0%	44%	3%
Gender	Men	41%	13%	1%	42%	2%
	Women	30%	13%	0%	55%	2%
Interview Type	Landline	39%	13%	1%	45%	2%
	Cell phone	28%	12%	1%	57%	2%

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