



American Experiences Survey:
A Nationally Representative Multi-Mode Survey
February 2021 Omnibus Results – Full Survey

Overview of Methodology

Each month, Consumer Reports fields the American Experiences Survey (AES) to track consumer attitudes and behaviors over time. February results are based on interviews conducted from February 4-15, 2021. This document includes all sections of the omnibus survey.

The survey was administered by NORC at the University of Chicago through its AmeriSpeak® Panel to a nationally representative sample. Interviews were conducted in English and in Spanish, and were administered both online and by phone. In total NORC collected 2,514 interviews, 2,338 by web mode and 176 by phone mode. Final data are weighted by age, gender, race/Hispanic ethnicity, housing tenure, telephone status, education, and Census Division to be proportionally representative of the US adult population.

The margin of error for results based on the total sample is +/-2.75 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Smaller subgroups will have larger error margins, and only those subgroups for which there are at least 100 unweighted cases are included.

TOPLINE RESULTS WITH MONTHLY TRENDS

The February omnibus contained five blocks of questions (items on consumer experiences, COVID-19, broadband internet use, lawn care, and returning items purchased online). Respondents saw the consumer experiences and COVID-19 blocks first, in that order, followed by the other blocks in a random order.

The questions presented below were shown to respondents in this order within sections unless otherwise noted. Where appropriate, question verbiage, response answer choices, or direction of scales were randomized or rotated and those instances are noted below.

Also shown, where available, are trends over time. Not every item was asked on every recent omnibus survey, and where minor revisions to the wording of an item or response choices were made, they are noted below. *Note these changes may impact comparability of results.*

Prepared by CR Survey Research Department, February 2021

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Survey Notes for Monthly Trends

February 2021 results are based on interviews conducted from February 4-15, 2021 with a nationally representative sample of 2,514 US adults.

January 2021 results are based on interviews conducted from January 7-19, 2021 with a nationally representative sample of 2,223 US adults.

December 2020 results are based on interviews conducted from December 10-21 with a nationally representative sample of 2,982 US adults.

November 2020 results are based on interviews conducted from November 5-16 with a nationally representative sample of 2,851 US adults.

October 2020 results are based on interviews conducted from October 8-26 with a nationally representative sample of 2,670 US adults.

September 2020 results are based on interviews conducted from September 11-21 with a nationally representative sample of 2,303 US adults.

August 2020 results are based on interviews conducted from August 7-19 with a nationally representative sample of 2,236 US adults.

July 2020 results are based on interviews conducted from July 9-20 with a nationally representative sample of 2,031 US adults.

June 2020 results are based on interviews conducted from June 4-16 with a nationally representative sample of 1,014 US adults.

May 2020 results are based on interviews conducted from May 8-18 with a nationally representative sample of 2,085 US adults.

CONSUMER EXPERIENCES (STATE OF THE CONSUMER)

SOCINTRO.

For this section, please answer thinking about the way things have been in general for the last few years, not specifically anything that has changed due to COVID-19.

SOC1. [ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS.]

Which of the following comes closest to your own view even if neither is exactly right?

	Total
	%
It is harder to be a consumer in today's world than it was ten or twenty years ago	38
It is easier to be a consumer in today's world than it was ten or twenty years ago	62
Base: All respondents	2,498

SOC2. [SHOW "EASIER" OR "HARDER" DEPENDING ON RESPONSE TO SOC1.]

Would you say it is much [harder/easier] or just somewhat [harder/easier]?	
	Total
	%
Much	56
Somewhat	44
Base: All respondents	2,492

Combined responses to SOC1 and SOC2	
	Total
	%
Much easier	41
Somewhat easier	21
Somewhat harder	23
Much harder	15
Base: All respondents	2,492

SOC3. [RESPONSES TO SOC1 AND SOC2 WERE COMBINED AND PIPED INTO THE QUESTION STEM. THIS WAS AN OPEN-ENDED QUESTION. RESPONDENTS WERE INVITED TO WRITE THEIR RESPONSES IN A TEXTBOX.]

Why do you feel it's [much harder; somewhat harder; much easier; somewhat easier] now?

SOC4. [ROTATE THE TWO SUBSTANTIVE RESPONSE OPTIONS; HOLD "NOT APPLICABLE" AT END.]

Thinking about your experiences shopping in the last few years, which of the following comes closest to your own view, even if neither is exactly right?	
	Total
	%
Shopping is a better experience today because the internet makes it easier to get whatever I want, whenever I want it	76
Shopping is a worse experience today because the internet gives me too many options to choose from	12
Not applicable: I rarely or never shop online	12
Base: All respondents	2,508

How concerned or not concerned are you about COVID-19 continuing to spread in your local area over the NEXT MONTH?

	FEBRUARY '21 AES	DECEMBER '20 AES	NOVEMBER AES	OCTOBER AES	SEPTEMBER AES	AUGUST AES	JULY AES	JUNE AES	MAY AES
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very concerned	40	51	51	44	42	44	53	41	41
Somewhat concerned	36	30	30	32	33	34	29	34	36
Not too concerned	17	13	14	17	18	16	12	16	18
Not concerned at all	7	6	5	6	7	6	5	8	6
Base: All respondents	2,514	2,977	2,850	2,668	2,300	2,233	2,031	1,014	2,082

even if neither is exactly right:

	Total
	%
Online shopping platforms have given me more options by allowing me to see and compare a wider range of products	78
Online shopping platforms have given me fewer options because they use algorithms to only show me curated results based on what they know about me	11
Not applicable: I rarely or never shop online	11
Base: All respondents	2,503

SOC6. [ROTATE THE TWO SUBSTANTIVE RESPONSE OPTIONS; HOLD "NOT APPLICABLE" AT END.]

Thinking about online shopping, which of the following comes closest to your own view, even if neither is exactly right?

	Total
	%
I don't like it when online shopping platforms and search engines use information like past purchases and browsing history to limit what I see instead of showing me all of my choices	56
I like it when online shopping platforms and search engines use information like past purchases and browsing history to narrow my choices	34
Not applicable: I rarely or never shop online	9
Base: All respondents	2,502

COVID-19

COVCONCERNNOW.

How concerned or not concerned are you about COVID-19 continuing to spread in your local area over the next month?

	FEBRUARY '21 AES	DECEMBER '20 AES	NOVEMBER AES	OCTOBER AES	SEPTEMBER AES	AUGUST AES	JULY AES	JUNE AES	MAY AES
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very concerned	40	51	51	44	42	44	53	41	41
Somewhat concerned	36	30	30	32	33	34	29	34	36
Not too concerned	17	13	14	17	18	16	12	16	18
Not concerned at all	7	6	5	6	7	6	5	8	6
Base: All respondents	2,514	2,977	2,850	2,668	2,300	2,233	2,031	1,014	2,082

COVCONCERN6MOS.

How concerned or not concerned are you about COVID-19 continuing to spread in your local area over the next 6 months?							
	FEBRUARY '21 AES	DECEMBER '20 AES	NOVEMBER AES	OCTOBER AES	SEPTEMBER AES	AUGUST AES	JULY AES
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very concerned	35	44	49	45	41	44	53
Somewhat concerned	38	34	32	31	35	33	29
Not too concerned	20	15	14	18	17	17	13
Not concerned at all	8	6	6	7	7	6	6
Base: All respondents	2,505	2,948	2,809	2,643	2,282	2,214	2,031

COVVACCINE.

Vaccines to protect against COVID-19 are currently in the early stages of distribution. Have you gotten a COVID-19 vaccine?		
	FEBRUARY '21 AES	JANUARY '21 AES
	Total	Total
	%	%
Yes	17	5
No	83	95
Base: All respondents	2,512	2,221

COVADULTVAC. [IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY, SHOW IF COVVACCINE = "NO," DON'T KNOW, SKIPPED, OR REFUSED THE QUESTION.]

When one becomes available to you, what is the likelihood that you will get a COVID-19 vaccine?								
	FEBRUARY '21 AES	JANUARY '21 AES	DECEMBER '20 AES	NOVEMBER AES	OCTOBER AES	SEPTEMBER AES	JULY AES	MAY AES
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very likely	46	44	38	32	29	32	42	40
Somewhat likely	21	24	28	31	32	28	25	25
Not too likely	16	15	17	19	19	20	16	17
Not at all likely	17	17	17	18	20	20	16	17
Base: All respondents								
* Respondents who have not yet gotten a COVID-19 vaccine	2,079*	2,098*	2,973	2,833	2,661	2,287	2,031	2,080

Note: May 2020 AES worded as "potential" vaccines to protect against COVID-19. This was dropped in July and later months. Initial wording included "if one becomes available"; in December 2020, this was changed to "when one becomes available." In January 2021 and subsequent months, this was changed to "when one becomes available to you," reflecting that approved vaccines exist but certain populations are being prioritized. Before January 2021, the question stem had an additional sentence referring to potential or actual vaccines in development; in January and February 2021, the question that preceded this question included the phrase "Vaccines to protect against COVID-19 are being developed," so that wording was dropped from this specific question. Prior to January 2021, COVVACCINE was not asked, so question was shown to all respondents.

In May and July, "Unsure" responses were included rather than based out, so these may total 99% rather than 100%.

COVADULTNOVAC. [SHOW IF COVADULTVAC = 'NOT TOO LIKELY' OR 'NOT AT ALL LIKELY.' RANDOMIZE ITEMS, WITH 'OTHER' SHOWN LAST.]

What is the <u>main</u> reason that you wouldn't get a COVID-19 vaccine for yourself?							
	FEBRUARY '21 AES	JANUARY '21 AES	DECEMBER '20 AES	NOVEMBER AES	SEPTEMBER AES	JULY AES	MAY AES
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
I worry that a COVID-19 vaccine in particular is unsafe	42	46	48	51	46	44	45
In general, I don't believe vaccines are safe	17	13	15	15	17	16	15
I believe the health threat of the COVID-19 virus has been exaggerated	12	11	11	9	13	14	14
I am not worried about being infected with COVID-19	9	9	8	6	6	7	8
I've already had the COVID-19 virus so I wouldn't need the vaccine	4	4	4	2	2	2	1
I'm afraid it would cost too much	0	2	2	2	2	3	4
Other, please specify:	15	14	13	14	14	13	13
Base: Respondents who are not too or not at all likely to get a COVID-19 vaccine	633	630	933	934	856	643	656

Note: In January 2021, wording changed to "I worry that a COVID-19 vaccine in particular is unsafe" from "will be unsafe" in all prior months.

INFO1. [INTRO TEXT SHOWN TO RESPONDENTS; THEN ROTATE ORDER OF COVVACCONFSAFE AND COVVACCONFEFFEC.]

Before vaccines are approved for use by the public, they undergo a series of clinical trials to test for effectiveness and safety.

COVVACCONFSAFE. [ROTATE ORDER OF COVVACCONFSAFE AND COVVACCONFEFFEC.]

How confident are you in the <u>safety</u> of these vaccines?				
	FEBRUARY '21 AES	JANUARY '21 AES	DECEMBER '20 AES	OCTOBER AES
	Total	Total	Total	Total
	%	%	%	%
Very confident	28	25	20	9
Somewhat confident	43	43	43	36
Not too confident	18	21	22	30
Not confident at all	11	11	15	24
Base: All respondents	2,506	2,212	2,970	2,652

Note: In October and December, the stem (after INFO1) read, "If a COVID-19 vaccine were to become available today, how confident would you be in its safety?" In January and February 2021, the stem (again, after INFO1) was changed to "As mentioned, vaccines to protect from COVID-19 are in the early stages of distribution. How confident are you in the safety of these vaccines?"

COVVACCONFEEFEC. [ROTATE ORDER OF COVVACCONFSAFE AND COVVACCONFEEFEC.]

How confident are you in the <u>effectiveness</u> of these vaccines?				
	FEBRUARY '21 AES	JANUARY '21 AES	DECEMBER '20 AES	OCTOBER AES
	Total	Total	Total	Total
	%	%	%	%
Very confident	27	25	21	9
Somewhat confident	47	46	46	39
Not too confident	16	19	21	32
Not confident at all	9	10	11	19
Base: All respondents	2,507	2,212	2,975	2,655

Note: In October and December, the stem (after INFO1) read, "If a COVID-19 vaccine were to become available today, how confident would you be in its effectiveness?" In January and February 2021, the stem (again, after INFO1) was changed to "As mentioned, vaccines to protect from COVID-19 are in the early stages of distribution. How confident are you in the effectiveness of these vaccines?"

COVVACREQEMPLOY. [ROTATE ORDER OF COVVACREQEMPLOY AND COVVACREQPARTIC. RANDOMIZE ITEMS ACROSS TWO SCREENS, FIVE ITEMS ON THE FIRST SCREEN, WITH 'GROCERY/FOOD STORE STAFF' AND 'SALES CLERKS/CASHIERS' KEPT TOGETHER.]

Please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following statements, thinking about employees in each type of job:			
<i>Once a COVID-19 vaccine is available, employees should be <u>required to get vaccinated</u> to work in this type of job.</i>			
	FEBRUARY '21 AES	JANUARY '21 AES	DECEMBER '20 AES
	Total	Total	Total
	%	%	%
Supermarket, grocery, or other food store staff			
Strongly agree	29	28	28
Agree	23	25	24
Neither agree nor disagree	22	19	20
Disagree	12	13	13
Strongly disagree	14	15	16
Base: All respondents	2,506	2,211	2,975
Sales clerks or cashiers (such as at clothing or electronics stores)			
Strongly agree	25	23	24
Agree	23	26	23
Neither agree nor disagree	25	23	24
Disagree	13	14	14
Strongly disagree	14	15	16
Base: All respondents	2,508	2,214	2,974
Healthcare workers			
Strongly agree	45	44	46
Agree	18	19	18
Neither agree nor disagree	15	15	15
Disagree	9	9	8
Strongly disagree	13	14	14
Base: All respondents	2,507	2,216	2,973

	FEBRUARY '21 AES	JANUARY '21 AES	DECEMBER '20 AES
	Total	Total	Total
(continued)	%	%	%
Teachers or other school staff			
Strongly agree	37	35	36
Agree	21	23	20
Neither agree nor disagree	18	17	17
Disagree	9	10	11
Strongly disagree	14	15	15
Base: All respondents	2,504	2,213	2,971
Food or beverage service workers (such as waiters, kitchen staff, or bartenders)			
Strongly agree	33	31	32
Agree	21	23	21
Neither agree nor disagree	20	19	20
Disagree	11	12	12
Strongly disagree	14	15	16
Base: All respondents	2,506	2,217	2,970
Transit workers (such as bus or taxi drivers)			
Strongly agree	31	29	28
Agree	23	24	24
Neither agree nor disagree	21	20	21
Disagree	11	13	12
Strongly disagree	15	15	16
Base: All respondents	2,506	2,215	2,968
Hairdressers, nail technicians, or other personal care workers			
Strongly agree	28	26	27
Agree	23	26	23
Neither agree nor disagree	22	21	21
Disagree	11	12	13
Strongly disagree	15	15	16
Base: All respondents	2,504	2,212	2,971
Mail carriers or package delivery drivers			
Strongly agree	22	19	20
Agree	22	25	22
Neither agree nor disagree	27	26	26
Disagree	13	14	15
Strongly disagree	15	15	17
Base: All respondents	2,505	2,212	2,971
Individuals who work in an office building with shared spaces (such as cubicles, bathrooms, or cafeterias)			
Strongly agree	24	23	23
Agree	23	27	24
Neither agree nor disagree	25	22	24
Disagree	12	13	13
Strongly disagree	15	15	16
Base: All respondents	2,505	2,210	2,972

	FEBRUARY '21 AES	JANUARY '21 AES	DECEMBER '20 AES
(continued)	Total	Total	Total
	%	%	%
Those who said "agree" or "strongly agree" for ANY of the job types we asked about	67	65	66
Base: All respondents	2,514	2,223	2,982

COVVACREQPARTIC. [ROTATE ORDER OF COVVACREQEMPLOY AND COVVACREQPARTIC. RANDOMIZE ITEMS, WITH 'TRAVELING BY PLANE' AND 'TRAVELING ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION' KEPT TOGETHER.]

Please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following statements, thinking about each type of activity:

Once a COVID-19 vaccine is available, people should be required to show proof they have been vaccinated before they can participate in this activity.

	FEBRUARY '21 AES	JANUARY '21 AES	DECEMBER '20 AES
	Total	Total	Total
	%	%	%
<i>Traveling by plane</i>			
Strongly agree	31	30	31
Agree	23	22	20
Neither agree nor disagree	18	18	18
Disagree	12	13	13
Strongly disagree	16	17	17
Base: All respondents	2,502	2,212	2,972
<i>Traveling on public transportation (such as bus, rail, subway)</i>			
Strongly agree	22	22	24
Agree	20	21	20
Neither agree nor disagree	24	23	22
Disagree	17	17	16
Strongly disagree	17	18	18
Base: All respondents	2,507	2,210	2,973
<i>Attending school or college</i>			
Strongly agree	25	26	28
Agree	25	26	22
Neither agree nor disagree	20	18	19
Disagree	13	13	13
Strongly disagree	17	17	18
Base: All respondents	2,503	2,212	2,974
<i>Attending large arena events (such as sporting events and concerts)</i>			
Strongly agree	25	26	27
Agree	23	22	20
Neither agree nor disagree	22	20	21
Disagree	14	14	14
Strongly disagree	17	17	19
Base: All respondents	2,505	2,213	2,977

	FEBRUARY '21 AES	JANUARY '21 AES	DECEMBER '20 AES
(continued)	Total	Total	Total
	%	%	%
Attending an amusement park			
Strongly agree	21	21	22
Agree	23	22	21
Neither agree nor disagree	24	22	23
Disagree	16	16	16
Strongly disagree	17	18	19
Base: All respondents	2,498	2,209	2,971
Going in person to a doctor's office, hospital, or other medical facility			
Strongly agree	19	17	20
Agree	18	20	20
Neither agree nor disagree	26	25	23
Disagree	18	18	18
Strongly disagree	19	20	20
Base: All respondents	2,505	2,214	2,974

	FEBRUARY '21 AES	JANUARY '21 AES	DECEMBER '20 AES
(continued)	Total	Total	Total
	%	%	%
Those who said "agree" or "strongly agree" for ANY of the activities we asked about	59	59	58
Base: All respondents	2,514	2,223	2,982

BROADBAND INTERNET

INTERNET1.

In general, how many days a week do you rely on the internet?

By "rely on the internet" we mean, you need to access the internet, or use other services provided by your ISP (internet service provider), without disruption to carry out your daily activities. An ISP provides you with access to the internet and other related services, and may also give you access to cable TV, wireless, or telephone services.

	Total
	%
0	2
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	6
6	4
7	75
Not applicable, I do not use the internet at all	3
Base: All respondents	2,511

INTERNET2.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Internet service is as important as electricity or water service in today's world.

	FEBRUARY '21 AES	APRIL '20 AES
	Total	Total
	%	%
Strongly agree	40	46
Agree	35	33
Neither agree nor disagree	12	10
Disagree	10	9
Strongly disagree	3	2
Base: All respondents	2,506	2,149

LAWN CARE

LAWN1.

Do you have a lawn?	
	Total
	%
Yes	74
No	26
Base: All respondents	2,507

LAWN2. [SHOW IF LAWN1 = 'YES.' ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTION TEXT: 'HERE WE ARE ASKING ABOUT FERTILIZER PRODUCTS OR PESTICIDES YOU CHOOSE TO HAVE APPLIED – WE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN ACCIDENTAL APPLICATIONS, SUCH AS A NEIGHBOR'S LAWN TREATMENTS SPILLING ACROSS THE PROPERTY LINE. WE ARE ALSO NOT INTERESTED IN COMPOST.' SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. SHOWN WITH LAWNCARE COMPANY BEFORE SELF/HOUSEHOLD MEMBER. 'NO, I DO NOT HAVE FERTILIZERS AND/OR PESTICIDES APPLIED TO MY LAWN' AND 'UNSURE' WERE EXCLUSIVE.]

Do you have fertilizer products and/or pesticides (herbicides, insecticides, or fungicides) applied to your lawn?	
	Total
	%
Yes, I, or someone in my household, applies fertilizers and/or pesticides to my lawn	30
Yes, a lawncare company applies fertilizers and/or pesticides to my lawn	16
No, I do not have fertilizers and/or pesticides applied to my lawn	51
Unsure	5
Base: Respondents who have a lawn	1,772

LAWN3. [SHOW IF LAWN1 = 'YES.' RANDOMIZE ITEMS. ROTATE RESPONSE SCALE ORDER AND SHOW EITHER "AGREE OR DISAGREE" OR "DISAGREE OR AGREE" IN STEM TO MATCH RESPONSE SCALE ORDER.]

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.	
	Total
	%
<i>I feel I have a responsibility to the people who live around me to keep my lawn well maintained.</i>	
Strongly agree	17
Agree	45
Neither agree nor disagree	25
Disagree	10
Strongly disagree	4
Base: Respondents who have a lawn	1,764
<i>I try to make 'green' or sustainable choices about my lawncare.</i>	
Strongly agree	16
Agree	38
Neither agree nor disagree	34
Disagree	9
Strongly disagree	4
Base: Respondents who have a lawn	1,759
<i>I think about the safety of the products used on my lawn.</i>	
Strongly agree	22
Agree	43
Neither agree nor disagree	24
Disagree	7
Strongly disagree	4
Base: Respondents who have a lawn	1,756

RETURNS

RETURN1.

Have you made any online purchases in the last year?	
	Total
	%
Yes	93
No	7
Base: All respondents	2,510

RETURN2. [SHOW IF RETURN1 = 'YES']

In the last year, have you tried to return or exchange anything you purchased online?	
	Total
	%
Yes	65
No	35
Base: Respondents who have made online purchases	2,339

RETURN3. [SHOW IF RETURN2 = 'YES']

You said that you have tried to return something you purchased online at least once in the last year.	
During any of these occasions, when you contacted the retailer about the return, did they offer to reimburse you or to send a replacement without you having to return the original item?	
	Total
	%
Yes	61
No	39
Base: Respondents who have tried to return online purchases	1,532

RETURN4. [SHOW IF RETURN3 = 'YES'. RANDOMIZE; SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. KEEP 'CLOTHING' AND 'SHOES' TOGETHER; KEEP LARGE AND SMALL HOME APPLIANCES TOGETHER; HOLD 'OTHER' AT END.]

What kind(s) of items were you told to keep rather than send back for a return or exchange?	
	Total
	%
Clothing	28
Electronics (such as headphones, smartphone, laptop)	20
Food/groceries	17
Home décor	13
Shoes	10
Pet supplies	9
Toiletries and makeup	8
Toys/games	8
Tools and gardening supplies	7
School or office supplies	7
Small home appliances (such as toaster or coffee maker)	6
Home cleaning supplies	6
Furniture	5
Books	4
Large home appliances (such as dishwasher or washing machine)	1
Other, please specify	15
Base: Respondents who were told to keep an item they wanted to return	932

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