

Firefighters, Scientists And Teachers Top List As “Most Prestigious Occupations,” According To Latest Harris Poll

Bankers, Actors And Real Estate Agents Are At The Bottom Of The List

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – August 1, 2007 – Firefighters, scientists and teachers are seen as the most prestigious occupations by U.S. adults, while bankers, actors and real estate agents are the least prestigious occupations.

These are some of the results of the annual Harris Poll measuring public perceptions of 23 professions and occupations, conducted by telephone between July 10 and 16, 2007, by Harris Interactive® among a nationwide sample of 1,010 U.S. adults. However, only about half of these adults were asked about each occupation.

Six occupations are perceived to have “very great” prestige by at least half of all adults - firefighters (61%), scientists (54%), teachers (54%), doctors (52%), military officers (52%), and nurses (50%). They are followed by police officers (46%) priests/ministers/clergy (42%) and farmers (41%).

By way of contrast, the list includes ten occupations which are perceived by less than 20 percent of adults to have “very great” prestige, with two of these under 10 percent. The lowest ratings for “very great prestige” go to real estate brokers (5%), actors (9%), bankers (10%), accountants (11%), entertainers (12%), stockbrokers (12%), union leaders (13%), journalists (13%), business executives (14%), and athletes (16%).

In the bottom ten, two broad categories are represented. Four occupations come from the media, sports and entertainment category – actors, entertainers, journalists and athletes. An additional four occupations come from the business world –bankers, accountants, stockbrokers, and business executives.

There are five occupations that are perceived by one-quarter or more of adults to have “hardly any prestige at all.” These include stockbrokers (25%), union leaders (30%), entertainers (31%), real estate brokers (34%) and actors (38%).

Changes Over The Last Quarter Century

Harris Interactive has been asking about the prestige of different professions and occupations since 1977. Over the 30 years since then, there have been some interesting changes:

- Those who see **teachers** as having “very great” prestige has risen 25 points from 29 to 54 percent;
- Those who say **lawyers** have “very great” prestige has fallen 14 points, from 36 to 22 percent;
- **Scientists** have fallen 12 points from 66 to 54 percent;
- **Athletes** have fallen ten points from 26 to 16 percent;
- **Doctors** have fallen nine points from 61 to 52 percent;
- **Bankers** have fallen seven points from 17 to 10 percent;
- **Entertainers** have fallen six points from 18 percent to 12 percent.

The Harris Poll® #77, August 1, 2007

By Regina Corso, Director, The Harris Poll, Harris Interactive®

Teachers are the only occupation, among the 11 tracked since 1977, to see a large rise in prestige; priests/ministers/clergy have seen a one point rise since 1977.

Changes Since Last Year

- Those who say farmers have “very great prestige” has risen five points from 36 to 41 percent;
- Bankers have fallen seven points from 17 to 10 percent, as have athletes from 23 to 16 percent;
- Three occupations have fallen six points in those saying they have “very great prestige” – doctors (from 58% to 52%); entertainers (from 18% to 12%); and accountants (17% to 11%).

So What?

One thing to notice is that while Americans have become celebrity obsessed, with gossip magazines and websites as must reads, they do not hold these celebrities in high regard. Actors and entertainers occupy two of the bottom five positions in the list of prestigious occupations showing that while people may enjoy reading about them, they do not regard these occupations as prestigious.

**TABLE 1
PRESTIGE OF 23 PROFESSIONS AND OCCUPATIONS**

"I am going to read off a number of different occupations. For each, would you tell me if you feel it is an occupation of very great prestige, considerable prestige, some prestige or hardly any prestige at all?"

Base: All Adults

	Very Great Prestige	Considerable Prestige	Some Prestige	Hardly Any Prestige At All	Not Sure/Refused
	%	%	%	%	%
Firefighter	61	26	10	2	-
Scientist	54	28	13	4	*
Teacher	54	24	16	6	*
Doctor	52	35	12	1	-
Military officer	52	29	15	4	*
Nurse	50	29	17	4	-
Police officer	46	27	19	7	*
Priest/Minister/Clergy	42	23	26	9	*
Farmer	41	16	26	17	-
Engineer	30	37	25	6	1
Member of Congress	26	32	23	17	2
Architect	23	33	39	6	*
Lawyer	22	20	41	17	*
Athlete	16	20	45	19	*
Business executive	14	28	42	15	*
Journalist	13	24	47	16	*
Union Leader	13	20	36	30	1
Stockbroker	12	17	46	25	1
Entertainer	12	16	42	31	-
Accountant	11	25	48	16	1
Banker	10	28	45	17	*
Actor	9	19	34	38	-
Real estate agent/broker	5	18	43	34	*

"-No Response

*Less Than 0.5%

TABLE 2
29-YEAR TREND FOR “VERY GREAT” PRESTIGE

“I am going to read off a number of different occupations. For each, would you tell me if you feel it is an occupation of very great prestige, considerable prestige, some prestige or hardly any prestige at all?”

Base: All Adults

	1977	1982	1992	1997	1998	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Firefighter***	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	55	48	56	63	61
Scientist	66	59	57	51	55	56	53	51	57	52	56	54	54
Teacher	29	28	41	49	53	53	54	47	49	48	47	52	54
Military officer	NA	22	32	29	34	42	40	47	46	47	49	51	52
Doctor	61	55	50	52	61	61	61	50	52	52	54	58	52
Nurse	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	47	44	50	55	50
Police Officer **	NA	NA	34	36	41	38	37	40	42	40	40	43	46
Priest/Minister/ Clergy****	41	42	38	45	46	45	43	36	38	32	36	40	42
Farmer	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	36	41
Engineer	34	30	37	32	34	32	36	34	28	29	34	34	30
Member of Congress	NA	NA	24	23	25	33	24	27	30	31	26	28	26
Architect	NA	NA	NA	NA	26	26	28	27	24	20	27	27	23
Lawyer	36	30	25	19	23	21	18	15	17	17	18	21	22
Athlete	26	20	18	21	20	21	22	21	17	21	23	23	16
Business executive**	18	16	19	16	18	15	12	18	18	19	15	11	14
Journalist	17	16	15	15	15	16	18	19	15	14	14	16	13
Union leader	NA	NA	12	14	16	16	17	14	15	16	15	12	13
Stockbroker	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	8	10	8	11	12
Entertainer	18	16	17	18	19	21	20	19	17	16	18	18	12
Accountant	NA	13	14	18	17	14	15	13	15	10	13	17	11
Banker	17	17	17	15	18	15	16	15	14	15	15	17	10
Actor	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	13	16	16	12	9
Real estate broker/agent	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	6	5	9	6	5

* No trend; NA not asked

** In surveys prior to 2001 we used the words “policeman” (now changed to “police officer”) and businessman (now changed to “business executive”) which may account for the changes from 2001 to 2002.

***In surveys prior to 2006, we used the word “fireman” (now changed to firefighter) which may account for some of the changes from 2005 to 2006.

****In surveys prior to 2007, we used the word “clergyman” now changed to clergy which many account for some of the changes from 2006 to 2007.

**TABLE 3
CHANGES FOR "VERY GREAT" PRESTIGE**

"I am going to read off a number of different occupations. For each, would you tell me if you feel it is an occupation of very great prestige, considerable prestige, some prestige or hardly any prestige at all?"

Base: All Adults

	2007 Total for Very Great Prestige	Changes since 1977	Changes since last year
	%	%	%
Firefighter	61	NA	-2
Scientist	54	-12	0
Teacher	54	+25	+2
Military officer	52	NA	+1
Doctor	52	-9	-6
Nurse	50	NA	-5
Police Officer	46	NA	+3
Priest/Minister/Clergy	42	+1	+2
Farmer	41	NA	+5
Engineer	30	-4	-4
Member of Congress	26	NA	-2
Architect	23	NA	-4
Lawyer	22	-14	+1
Athlete	16	-10	-7
Business executive	14	-4	+3
Journalist	13	-4	-3
Union leader	13	NA	+1
Stockbroker	12	NA	+1
Entertainer	12	-6	-6
Accountant	11	NA	-6
Banker	10	-7	-7
Actor	9	NA	-3
Real estate broker/agent	5	NA	-1

Note: N/A indicates occupation wasn't asked about in 1977

Methodology

The Harris Poll[®] was conducted by telephone within the United States between July 10 and 16, 2007 among a nationwide cross section of 1,010 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race, education, number of adults, number of voice/telephone lines in the household, region and size of place were weighted where necessary to align them with their actual proportions in the population. However, only approximately 500 people were asked about each occupation.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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About Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive is the 12th largest and fastest-growing market research firm in the world. The company provides innovative research, insights and strategic advice to help its clients make more confident decisions which lead to measurable and enduring improvements in performance. Harris Interactive is widely known for The Harris Poll, one of the longest running, independent opinion polls and for pioneering online market research methods. The company has built what it believes to be the world's largest panel of survey respondents, the Harris Poll Online. Harris Interactive serves clients worldwide through its United States, Europe and Asia offices, its wholly-owned subsidiaries Novatris in France and MediaTransfer AG in Germany, and through a global network of independent market research firms. More information about Harris Interactive may be obtained at www.harrisinteractive.com. To become a member of the Harris Poll Online and be invited to participate in online surveys, register at www.harrispollonline.com.

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