



George Mason University  
Center for Climate Change Communication

## **Climate Change in the American Mind: Americans' Global Warming Beliefs and Attitudes in January 2010**

Interview dates: December 24, 2009 – January 3, 2010

Interviews: 1,001 Adults (18+)

Margin of error: +/- 3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

NOTE: All results show percentages among all respondents, unless otherwise labeled. Totals may occasionally sum to more than 100 percent due to rounding.

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<http://environment.yale.edu/uploads/AmericansGlobalWarmingBeliefs2010.pdf>

*(Questions 1-46 to be released at a later date.)*

Q47. Recently, you may have noticed that global warming has been getting some attention in the news. Global warming refers to the idea that the world's average temperature has been increasing over the past 150 years, may be increasing more in the future, and that the world's climate may change as a result. What do you think? Do you think that global warming is happening?

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2008*</b>
Yes	57	71
No	20	10
Don't Know	23	19

*People who answered yes to question 47 (i.e. those who believe global warming is happening) were asked the following question.*

Q48. How sure are you that global warming is happening?

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2008</b>
Extremely sure	24	35
Very sure	35	37
Somewhat sure	37	24
Not at all sure	5	4

*People who answered no to question 47 (i.e. those who do not believe global warming is happening) were asked the following question.*

Q49. How sure are you that global warming is not happening?

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2008</b>
Extremely sure	28	26
Very sure	31	28
Somewhat sure	34	38
Not at all sure	7	8

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\*All 2008 data comes from a nationally representative survey of 2,189 American adults, aged 18 and older, fielded October 8 – 14, 2008. The sample was weighted to correspond with US Census Bureau parameters for the United States. The margin of sampling error was plus or minus 2 percent, with 95 percent confidence.

People who answered yes to question 47, those who believe global warming is happening, were asked the following question.

Q49a. Over the past year, have you become more or less sure that GW is happening? I have become...

	2010	2008
Much more sure	28	-
Somewhat more sure	37	-
Neither more or less sure	31	-
Somewhat less sure	4	-
Much less sure	1	-

People who answered no to question 47, those who do not believe global warming is happening, were asked the following question.

Q49b. Over the past year, have you become more or less sure that global warming is not happening? I have become...

	2010	2008
Much more sure	41	-
Somewhat more sure	25	-
Neither more or less sure	24	-
Somewhat less sure	8	-
Much less sure	3	-

Q50. Assuming global warming is happening, do you think it is...

	2010	2008
Caused mostly by human activities	47	57
Caused mostly by natural changes in the environment	36	33
None of the above because global warming isn't happening	9	3
Caused by both human activities and natural changes (volunteered)	6	5
Other	1	1
Don't know (volunteered)	1	1

(Questions 51-58 to be released at a later date.)

Q59. Which comes closer to your own view?

	2010	2008
Most scientists think global warming is happening	34	47
Most scientists think global warming is not happening	5	3
There is a lot of disagreement among scientists about whether or not global warming is happening	40	33
Don't know enough to say	22	18

Q60. How worried are you about global warming?

	2010	2008
Very worried	12	17
Somewhat worried	38	46
Not very worried	27	24
Not at all worried	23	13

Q61. How concerned are you about the impact of global warming on your health? (Measured on a scale from 1-7, with one being “not at all concerned” and seven being “extremely concerned”).

	2010	2008
One (Not at all concerned)	29	-
Two	13	-
Three	12	-
Four	17	-
Five	14	-
Six	7	-
Seven (Extremely concerned)	7	-

Q62. How much do you think global warming will harm you personally?

	2010	2008
A great deal	14	10
A moderate amount	23	22
Only a little	22	24
Not at all	31	22
Don't know	11	23

Q63. How much do you think global warming will harm your family?

	2010	2008
A great deal	15	11
A moderate amount	25	24
Only a little	21	23
Not at all	28	19
Don't know	11	23

Q64. How much do you think global warming will harm people in your community?

	2010	2008
A great deal	15	13
A moderate amount	27	26
Only a little	22	21
Not at all	24	17
Don't know	12	23

Q65. How much do you think global warming will harm people in the United States?

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2008</b>
A great deal	22	22
A moderate amount	29	28
Only a little	16	15
Not at all	22	14
Don't know	12	22

Q66. How much do you think global warming will harm people in other modern industrialized countries?

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2008</b>
A great deal	23	22
A moderate amount	29	28
Only a little	16	13
Not at all	19	13
Don't know	13	24

Q67. How much do you think global warming will harm people in developing countries?

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2008</b>
A great deal	29	32
A moderate amount	25	22
Only a little	14	11
Not at all	19	13
Don't know	13	23

Q68. How much do you think global warming will harm future generations of people?

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2008</b>
A great deal	42	44
A moderate amount	22	17
Only a little	9	7
Not at all	15	10
Don't know	12	22

Q69. How much do you think global warming will harm plant and animal species?

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2008</b>
A great deal	43	46
A moderate amount	19	17
Only a little	11	8
Not at all	15	9
Don't know	12	20

Q70. When do you think global warming will start to harm people in the United States?

	2010	2008
They are being harmed now	25	34
In 10 years	12	13
In 25 years	14	13
In 50 years	13	13
In 100 years	13	12
Never	23	15

Q71. When do you think global warming will start to harm other people around the world?

	2010	2008
They are being harmed now	28	38
In 10 years	13	13
In 25 years	12	12
In 50 years	12	12
In 100 years	13	11
Never	22	14

Q72. How much had you thought about global warming before today?

	2010	2008
A lot	15	20
Some	31	35
A little	36	33
Not at all	18	12

Q73. How important is the issue of global warming to you personally?

	2010	2008
Extremely important	5	11
Very important	15	21
Somewhat important	38	39
Not too important	23	18
Not at all important	20	11

Q74. On some issues people feel that they have all the information they need in order to form a firm opinion, while on other issues they would like more information before making up their mind. For global warming, where would you place yourself?

	2010	2008
I need a lot more information	22	30
I need some more information	23	30
I need a little more information	26	22
I do not need any more information	29	18

Q75. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? “I could easily change my mind about global warming.”

	2010	2008
Strongly agree	5	5
Somewhat agree	30	27
Somewhat disagree	31	34
Strongly disagree	34	33

*(Questions 76-134 to be released at a later date.)*

Q135. Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

	2010	2008
Humans can reduce global warming, and we are going to do so successfully	10	6
Humans could reduce global warming, but it's unclear at this point whether we will do what's needed	45	51
Humans could reduce global warming, but people aren't willing to change their behavior, so we're not going to	17	22
Humans can't reduce global warming, even if it is happening	15	16
Global warming isn't happening	13	5

Q136. If you were to change your lifestyle to reduce your personal contribution to global warming, how do you think it would affect your quality of life?

	2010	2008
Improve my quality of life a lot	11	12
Improve my quality of life a little	18	19
Have no impact on my quality of life	33	32
Decrease my quality of life a little	10	9
Decrease my quality of life a lot	5	3
I don't know	22	25

*(Questions 137-160 to be released at a later date.)*

Q161. How much do you trust or distrust the following as a source of information about global warming?

Television weather reporters

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2008</b>
Strongly trust	5	6
Somewhat trust	51	60
Somewhat distrust	30	24
Strongly distrust	14	10

The mainstream news media

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2008</b>
Strongly trust	3	4
Somewhat trust	33	43
Somewhat distrust	35	33
Strongly distrust	29	20

Scientists

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2008</b>
Strongly trust	22	29
Somewhat trust	52	54
Somewhat distrust	19	14
Strongly distrust	7	4

Religious leaders

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2008</b>
Strongly trust	6	5
Somewhat trust	39	42
Somewhat distrust	34	30
Strongly distrust	21	22

Arnold Schwarzenegger

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2008</b>
Strongly trust	3	-
Somewhat trust	32	-
Somewhat distrust	41	-
Strongly distrust	24	-



Sarah Palin

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2008</b>
Strongly trust	5	-
Somewhat trust	31	-
Somewhat distrust	29	-
Strongly distrust	36	-

Al Gore

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2008</b>
Strongly trust	17	15
Somewhat trust	30	43
Somewhat distrust	23	20
Strongly distrust	30	22

Barack Obama

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2008</b>
Strongly trust	16	15
Somewhat trust	35	38
Somewhat distrust	21	23
Strongly distrust	28	26

*(Questions 162-234 to be released at a later date.)*

Q235. The actions of a single individual won't make any difference in global warming.

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2008</b>
Strongly agree	17	9
Somewhat agree	29	22
Somewhat disagree	37	45
Strongly disagree	17	24

Q236. I have personally experienced the effects of global warming.

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2008</b>
Strongly agree	5	4
Somewhat agree	21	29
Somewhat disagree	35	43
Strongly disagree	40	24

Q237. New technologies can solve global warming, without individuals having to make big changes in their lives.

	2010	2008
Strongly agree	6	4
Somewhat agree	42	26
Somewhat disagree	33	45
Strongly disagree	19	25

Q238. Most of my friends are trying to act in ways that reduce global warming.

	2010	2008
Strongly agree	5	4
Somewhat agree	43	44
Somewhat disagree	37	40
Strongly disagree	14	11

## Methodology

These results come from a nationally representative survey of 1,001 American adults, aged 18 and older. The completion rate was 50 percent. The sample was weighted to correspond with US Census Bureau parameters for the United States. The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 3 percent, with 95 percent confidence. The survey was designed by Anthony Leiserowitz of Yale University and Edward Maibach and Connie Roser-Renouf of George Mason University and conducted December 24 through January 3 by Knowledge Networks, using an online research panel of American adults.