

The Pew Charitable Trusts

Topline Report • Aug. 28, 2019

The survey was conducted for The Pew Charitable Trusts via telephone (landline and cell) by SSRS, an independent research company. Interviews were conducted Aug. 20-25, 2019, among a representative sample of 1,011 total respondents. The margin of error with design effect for the total respondents is +/-3.08 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

Based on Total Respondents

DEBT1. The next questions will ask you about student loan debt in the United States. This is debt that people have taken out to pay for community college, university, or vocational schools—even if they haven’t finished their degree.

In the past six months, how much have you heard or read about the issue of student loan debt in the United States?

	Total
A lot	43%
A little	36%
Nothing at all	20%
Don’t know	*
Refused	*

Note: Percentage less than 0.5 printed as *.

Based on Total Respondents

DEBT2. Currently, 43 million Americans owe the federal government \$1.5 trillion in student loan debt. I’m going to read some statements. For each statement I read, please tell me yes or no. Do you think that...

a. When borrowers struggle to pay back their loans, it can negatively affect the economy.

	Total
Yes (Net)	69%
Yes, strongly agree	38%
Yes, somewhat agree	31%
No	28%
Don’t know	4%
Refused	*

Note: Percentage less than 0.5 printed as *.

b. Many borrowers have a hard time paying back student loans.

	Total
Yes (Net)	89%
Yes, strongly agree	64%
Yes, somewhat agree	25%
No	8%
Don't know	3%
Refused	-

c. The government should make it easier for borrowers to repay their loans.

	Total
Yes (Net)	80%
Yes, strongly agree	58%
Yes, somewhat agree	22%
No	17%
Don't know	3%
Refused	*

Note: Percentage less than 0.5 printed as *.

d. It is reasonable to take on student loan debt considering the benefits of college.

	Total
Yes (Net)	70%
Yes, strongly agree	39%
Yes, somewhat agree	31%
No	26%
Don't know	3%
Refused	1%

e. Many borrowers need to do more to prioritize repayment of their loans.

	Total
Yes (Net)	79%
Yes, strongly agree	46%
Yes, somewhat agree	32%
No	18%
Don't know	4%
Refused	*

Note: Percentage less than 0.5 printed as *.

Based on Total Respondents

DEBT2. “Yes, strongly agree” summary table

	Total
Many borrowers have a hard time paying back student loans.	64%
The government should make it easier for borrowers to repay their loans.	58%
Many borrowers need to do more to prioritize repayment of their loans.	46%
It is reasonable to take on student loan debt considering the benefits of college.	39%
When borrowers struggle to pay back their loans, it can negatively affect the economy	38%

Based on Total Respondents

DEBT2. NET “Yes” summary table (“Yes, strongly agree” + “Yes, somewhat agree”)

	Total
Many borrowers have a hard time paying back student loans.	89%
The government should make it easier for borrowers to repay their loans.	80%
Many borrowers need to do more to prioritize repayment of their loans.	79%
It is reasonable to take on student loan debt considering the benefits of college.	70%
When borrowers struggle to pay back their loans, it can negatively affect the economy	69%