The General Social Survey

GSS

2024 GSS
(Cross-section
Study)

What's New in 2024 – The Latest on GSS Methodology Release 3a



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Introduction

Introduction to the General Social Survey (GSS)

The General Social Survey (GSS) has been tracking trends in public opinion since 1972. To keep every aspect of the survey as comparable as possible, the GSS generally minimizes changes to its design over time. This includes maintaining the same sampling approach over long periods of time and not altering question wording for questions that have been previously asked on the GSS. The goal is always the same: enabling the cleanest comparison to show changes in public opinion in the United States.

The GSS continued methodological changes in the 2024 Cross-section survey, which were introduced in the 2022 Cross-section survey. The changes relate to shifts in the mode of data collection, experiments related to mode sequence of data collection, oversamples of Hispanic, Black, and Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) respondents, and a new design that allowed for follow-on studies. Most notably, the 2022 and 2024 GSS Cross-sections are multi-mode studies, with respondents able to complete via a face-to-face interview, a web self-administered questionnaire, or, if necessary, a phone interview.



We recommend our users include one of the following statements when reporting on the GSS 2021, 2022, and 2024 Cross-section data:

Total Survey Error Summary Perspective for the GSS Cross-section:

Changes in opinions, attitudes, and behaviors observed in 2021, 2022, and 2024 relative to historical trends may be due to actual change in concept over time and/or may have resulted from methodological changes made to the survey methodology during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Suggested Statement to Include in Articles and Reports That Use GSS Data

Changes in opinions, attitudes, and behaviors observed in 2021, 2022, and 2024 relative to historical trends may be due to actual change in concept over time and/or may have resulted from methodological changes made to the survey methodology during the COVID-19 global pandemic. Research and interpretation done using the 2021, 2022, and 2024 GSS data should take extra care to ensure the analysis reflects actual changes in public opinion and is not unduly influenced by the change in data collection methods. For more information on the 2021, 2022, and 2024 GSS methodology and its implications, please visit https://gss.norc.org/Get-The-Data.

What is New About the 2024 GSS Release 3a: Frequently Asked Questions

What are the new elements of the 2024 GSS Cross-section in Release 3a?

The R3a release of the 2024 GSS data includes new elements that all users should be aware of:

- Detailed paradata file for GSS 2024
- LLM experiment for open-ended questions from the 2024 GSS Next follow-on

We have also published an updated GSS Methodological Report 140 discussing the mode sequence experiment. This revised report updates the 2022 estimates based on the R3a data and incorporates results from 2024. The underlying research questions, study design, methodological approach, and conclusions remain unchanged.

What are the new paradata for the 2024 GSS?

- An independent paradata file associated with the 2024 GSS. The datafile contains YEAR and ID for the single year, but does not include any other variables found in the traditional single-year or Cumulative datafile. Several different types of paradata are made available in this file:
  - Timestamps between sections of the questionnaire,
  - Mode flags associated with transitions between sections of the questionnaire, and
  - Device type, OS, and web browser associated with each ID.
- Due to its nature, and the difficulty of working with the GSS's traditional timing formats, the paradata file is not cleaned in the same manner as the single-year or Cumulative datafile, and may contain inconsistencies or contradictory information, particularly with regards to timestamps.
- Paradata is available in SAS.

What is the LLM experiment in the GSS 2024 Next follow-on?

- Large language models (LLMs) are transforming survey science by expanding the capacity to process, code, and analyze open-ended data. Automated coding can significantly reduce the time and effort required from human coders, but questions remain about the reliability, bias, and implications for data quality.
- As part of an experiment in the GSS Next follow-on study, two open-ended questions were asked of respondents covering two domains: the most important issues facing America today (TOPPROB) and respondents' household composition (HHTYPE). These questions differ in complexity, with one opinion-based and nuanced, and the other more factual and difficult to capture with standard question batteries. Respondents were asked to classify their open-ended responses into predefined GSS response categories, enabling direct comparison between the LLM coding versus respondent-provided classification. We test three LLMs across two prompting conditions to evaluate the output of LLM coding with traditional human coding. Please see GSS Methodological Report 150 to read more about the experiment and testing.
- An independent file associated with this experiment is available as a CSV. The datafile contains YEAR and ID for the single year, but does not include any other variables found in the traditional single-year or Cumulative datafile not associated with this experiment. This file includes:
  - Respondent-coded responses for TOPPROB and HHTYPE,
  - Human-coded responses for TOPPROB and HHTYPE,
  - LLM-coded responses for TOPPROB and HHTYPE based on different LLM models and prompts, and
  - LLM-produced confidence scores for the different LLM models.

Previous Frequently Asked Questions (Release 3)

What are the new elements of the 2024 GSS Cross-section in Release 3?

The R3 release of the 2024 GSS data includes new elements that all users should be aware of:

- Oversample of Hispanic, Black, and Asian American and Native Hawaii and Other Pacific Islander (AANHPI) persons originating from the NORC AmeriSpeak Panel, available only in the single-year datafile for 2024;
- GSS 2024 Next follow-on study (a web-based instrument fielded in August-October 2025); and
- Previously unreleased paradata now available, including:
  - Interviewer characteristics
  - Interviewer observations
  - Interview length
  - Respondent incentives

Are there variables included in Release 3 impacted by the recently updated disclosure review process?

A few newly released variables underwent the same disclosure review process as those released in R1 and R2. The following variables were impacted:

- Paradata and interviewer characteristics that were coarsened: DWELLING, INTAGE, and INTYRS.
- YEARSUSA and MNTHSUSA are now restricted variables, but replacement variables describing migration have been released: MIGAGE and MIGHIST. For more details on these new variables, see GSS Methodological Report 144.
- For more details, see the 2024 GSS Codebook.

What is the oversample of minorities using the AmeriSpeak panel?

- The 2024 GSS Cross-section includes an oversample of Hispanic, Black, and Asian American and Native Hawaii and Other Pacific Islander (AANHPI) persons, drawn from NORC's AmeriSpeak Panel. AmeriSpeak is an online probability panel of households drawn from the same sample frame as the GSS. Households with known demographics of interest were invited to complete the baseline GSS survey.
- AmeriSpeak cases have been included in the 2024 single-year datafile only, not the Cumulative 1972-2024 datafile. In the 2024 single-year datafile, AmeriSpeak cases are treated at parity with all other GSS cases. A nonresponse-adjusted post-stratification weight, WTSSNRPS_AS, was created to incorporate the additional 677 AmeriSpeak cases allowing all 3,986 cases to be analyzed together.
- AmeriSpeak respondents did not participate in either the GSS-ANES Collaboration follow-ons or the GSS Next follow-on in 2024 and 2025, respectively.
- GSS Methodological Report 148 analyzes the impact of integrating the AmeriSpeak cases into the single year 2024 GSS data.

What is the GSS 2024 Next follow-on survey?

- The 2024 GSS included a multi-subject follow-on study put together with topics by various sponsors including the GSS Scientific Advisory Board and GSS Module Competition winners. This includes content on:
  - Credit history

    - Importance of cultural values
    - Expanded abortion items
    - Ideal number of children
    - Self-reported skin tone
    - Household pets
    - Social networks
- Respondents who completed the baseline interview were eligible to participate in the GSS Next follow-on. In total, 1,065 GSS respondents completed the follow-on. Respondent eligibility and participation can be tracked by the variables NEXTELIGIBLE and NEXTSTATUS.
- The follow-on study items are included in the 2024 GSS Cross-section data like any other variables. Those analyzing items from the GSS Next follow-on should use the follow-on specific analysis weight: WTSSNRPS_NEXT.

Are there additional resources to better help users understand various methodological changes in the 2024 GSS Cross-section?

Beyond those mentioned above, the GSS team has released additional documentation on many of the various methodological changes that have occurred in recent cross-sections:

- GSS Methodological Report 142 details some of the graphical tools the GSS team used to monitor data collection in 2024.
- GSS Methodological Report 143 details the implementation of the PERLA skin tone scale, replacing the Massey-Martin skin tone scale (RATETONE) in 2024, including a self-reporting implementation in the GSS 2024 Next follow-on on the web.
- GSS Methodological Report 144 details the creation of new migration variables, MIGAGE and MIGHIST, following the removal of YEARSUSA from the public use data file.
- GSS Methodological Report 145 details updates to the religion sequence, beginning in 2021, that impacts RELIG, IVQRELIG, RELGSPEC, and the introduction of a new variable NORELGSP.
- GSS Methodological Report 146 examines the implementation of RELTRAD, a historical non-GSS construct measure of religious tradition, in the wake of the detailed religious congregation removal from the public use data file.
- GSS Methodological Report 147 describes how the GSS navigated Joe Biden dropping out of the presidential race partway through 2024 data collection and the need to pivot the question asking who respondents were likely to vote for in the 2024 election (WHOVOTE24).
- GSS Methodological Report 148 examines the AmeriSpeak Panel oversample fielded as part of the 2024 GSS to collect additional sample of Black, Hispanic, and Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) persons. This report builds off of previous GSS work examining the 2022 AmeriSpeak oversample (see GSS Methodological Report 138).

Previous Frequently Asked Questions (Release 2)

What are the new elements of the 2024 GSS Cross-section in Release 2?

The 2024 GSS includes new elements that all users should be aware of:

- Previously unreleased data on religion, including new measures of non-religious beliefs and religious tradition;
- Previously unreleased data on industry and occupation, household composition, and risky behaviors;
- Revisited items from the 1996 Gender module, including conflicts due to family responsibilities; and
- New items on reparations and additional timely topics.

Are there variables included in Release 2 impacted by the recently updated disclosure review process?

- Newly released variables underwent the same disclosure review process as those released in R1. The following variables were impacted:
  - Variables coarsened
    - Education: DIPGED, MAJOR1, MAJOR2
    - Geography: REGION, REG16
    - Household composition: BABIES, BABIES_EXP, CHILDSINHH, CHILDS_EXP, FAMGEN, FAMGEN_EXP, HOMPOP, HOMPOP_EXP, PRETEEN, PRETEEN_EXP, RPLACE, TEENS, TEENS_EXP, UNRELAT
    - Religion: CODEN, DENOM, DENOM16, SPDEN
    - Risky behaviors: HIVTEST1, HIVTEST2, PARTNERS
    - Other: AGEKDBRN, OTHLANG1, OTHLANG2
    - All of these variables have been historically preserved (e.g., MAJOR1_1222, BABIES_7222).
  - Restricted variables
    - Geography: SIZE, SRCBELT
    - Household composition: AWAY1-AWAY14, GENDER1-GENDER14, HEFINFO1, HHTYPE, MAR1-MAR14, OLD1-OLD14, RELATE1-RELATE14, RELHH1-RELHH14, RELHHD1-RELHHD14, RELSP1-RELSP14, RESPNUM, RESPNUMH, WHERE1-WHERE14
    - Race/ethnicity: ETH2, ETH3, ETHREGION1-ETHREGION95, RACEACS11-RACEACS13
    - Religion: COJEW, COOTHER JEW, JEW16, OTHER, OTH16, SPJEW, SPOTHER
    - Risky behaviors: IDU30
- RACECEN1, RACECEN2, and RACECEN3 have been expanded to include 13 categories, up from the 6 categories originally released in Release 1.
- RACEACS14 now includes responses historically included in RACEACS11-RACEACS13.
- For more details, see the 2024 GSS Codebook.

Previous Frequently Asked Questions (Release 1)

What are the new elements of the 2024 GSS Cross-Section?

The 2024 GSS includes new elements which all users should be aware of:

- SPSS cumulative datafile (1972-2024) and single-year SPSS datafiles for GSS years 2021, 2022, and 2024;
- An update to FAMILY16 and the MA-/PA- series to include same-sex parents;
- New modules on digital societies, national identity and citizenship, mental health stigma; and
- Perception of femininity and masculinity experiment (FEMSEE1, MASCSEE1, FEMSELF1, MASCSELF1).

What historical variables have been renamed?

- MARHOMO has been renamed MARSAME;
- MARHOMO1 has been renamed MARSAME1;
- RACOPENY has been incorporated into RACOPENV;
- CHNGTIME has been incorporated into CHNGTME; and
- ETHREGION96 has been renamed ETHREGION95 (removing the duplicate variable for Jamaica).

What are the returning, updated, and new modules of the 2024 GSS Cross-Section?

- *American National Election Studies*: In the 2024 GSS, the American National Election Studies (ANES) questions were included for the first time in the cross-sectional questionnaire. It focuses on voting behaviors and attitudes and opinions about politics, government, and the economy.
- *ISSP National Identity and Citizenship*: This module combines two previous ISSP modules: National Identity (1995, 2003, 2013) and Citizenship (2004, 2014). It focuses on ways of belonging to and participating in civic life in order to belong to a nation, or act as a good citizen. As it combines two previous ISSP modules, five-sixths of the items are repeated from previous rounds, while one-sixth are new.
- *ISSP Digital Societies*: This is the first time this module has been conducted. It focuses on attitudes and opinions on internet use and attitudes and opinions about technology and media usage.
- *Mental Health Stigma (Adult)*: This module has previously been asked three times, beginning in 1996. It contains two parts; a vignette about a hypothetical person suffering from some sort of problem, and a series of questions about what the respondent thinks that person should do. The vignettes included are randomized by gender, race, education, and condition. The module also includes several questions on individual mental health.
- *Mental Health Stigma (Child)*: Returning after 20 years, this module has been previously asked in 2002 and has three new conditions added in 2024. It contains two parts: a vignette about a hypothetical child suffering from sort of problem, and a series of questions about what the respondent thinks the child should do. The vignettes included are randomized by race, gender, and age, as well as condition. The module also includes several questions on respondent mental health, as well as respondent family background.
- *High-Risk Behaviors:* High-Risk Behaviors, developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is a self-administered module that has been in use with modifications since 1988. It includes items on recent sexual history as well as sexual history since the age of 18, as well as drug use, HIV testing, and sexuality. This module has been substantially redesigned in 2024 and also includes a new set of questions on self-reported perceptions of femininity and masculinity.

What is the data collection design of the 2024 GSS?

- The 2024 GSS replicated the data collection design of the 2022 GSS conducting via face-to-face interview, web self-administered questionnaire, and computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI). The 2024 design also duplicated the 2022 multi-mode assignment experiment randomly assigning all cases to be initially offered either the web questionnaire or a face-to-face interview.
- The 2024 GSS, building on the 2022 GSS, continues to help bridge the traditional face-to-face design (from 1972-2018), the web self-administered design necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic (2021), and the introduction of the multi-mode design (2022).
- The GSS still cautions its data users to be mindful of potential sensitivities to mode of administration. The GSS is intended to be used as a whole sample and so analyzing the data by a single mode is not recommended. Mode-specific experiments (e.g., volunteered response experiment) were maintained in 2024 and are necessarily sensitive to mode of administration.
- Details regarding the design can be found in the 2024 GSS Codebook. Additional information on the impetus for the design can be found in the 2022 GSS Codebook.

Do recent changes in the GSS disclosure review process have an impact on how I use the data?

- NORC has enhanced privacy protections in the GSS and developed a plan for the 2024 data release to reduce identification risks, especially in demographic variables. This plan does not affect past data and focuses on safer data sharing in the future. The GSS has always been committed to ensuring the confidentiality of respondents and has engaged in various forms of disclosure review over its 50-year history. As recent advances in statistical disclosure analysis lead to increasing risks for respondent identification, the GSS team has chosen to make a variety of changes to the 2024 GSS, limiting or restricting more disclosive variables, beginning with the 2024 data release. This change affects released variables in three ways – new policies on Default Variable Names and Historical Variable Preservation, as well as an expansion of what variables will only appear in Restricted Data.
    - *Default Variable Names*: The GSS will always use the cleanest, historical variable name for the active trend, which will include recoding back to the start of the trend where possible. Documentation will highlight when variables are shifting in this fashion. As of R1 of the 2024 GSS data, this policy affects the following variables: EARNRS, HISPANIC, NUMEMPS, RACECEN1, RACECEN2, RACECEN3, SIBS, USCITZN. For more details, see Appendix E in the 2024 GSS Codebook.
    - *Historical Variable Preservation*: When a multi-year variable is no longer being maintained, it will now be amended with _XXYY, which will designate the years where the trend was active (e.g., _0022 designates the trend was active from 2000 through 2022). As of R1 of the 2024 GSS data, this policy leads to the creation of the following variables: EARNRS_7222, HISPANIC_0022, NUMEMPS_0422, RACECEN1_0022, RACECEN2_0022, RACECEN3_0022, SIBS_7222, USCITZN_0822, USCITZNV_2122, USCITZNNV_2122.
    - *Restricted Data*: Some variables will be moved to restricted data if they cannot be safely preserved in the public datafile, including additional sensitive topics, (e.g. drug use) and overlapping or complementary measures of similar concepts (e.g. race, place). These variables will be made available upon request via the sensitive data process.