

# Only about One-Third of Americans Are “Very Happy”

**Most of the married say they are very happily married, however.**

When asked how happy they are, only about one in three Americans say they are “very happy.” The 54 percent majority reports feeling only “pretty happy.” Older people are happier than middle-aged or younger adults. Forty percent of people aged 65 or older say they are “very happy” compared with 29 to 31 percent of people under age 65.

The 62 percent majority of married Americans say they are very happily married. Married college graduates are much more likely to report being very happily married (72 percent) than married people without a bachelor’s degree (57 percent).

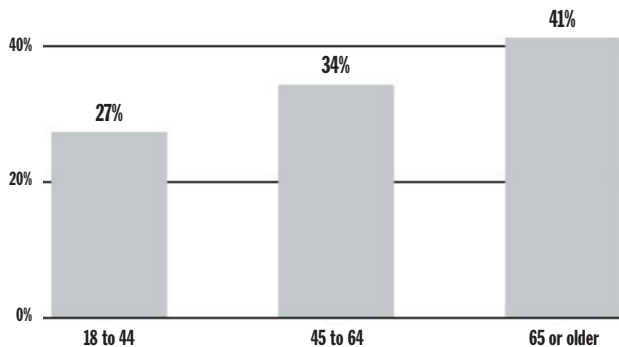
Americans are evenly split on whether life is “exciting” (47 percent) or “pretty routine” (48 percent). Again, education makes the biggest difference, and 61 percent of college graduates say life is exciting compared with a smaller 43 percent of those with less education.

Few believe most people can be trusted. Only 32 percent of the public says that most people can be trusted, down from 37 percent who felt that way 10 years earlier. Young adults are far less trusting than older Americans, and only 27 percent of 18-to-44-year-olds believe most people can be trusted compared with 41 percent of people aged 65 or older.

■ Young and middle aged adults are struggling with a deteriorating economy, which reduces their happiness and increases their distrust.

## Few young adults trust others

*(percent of people aged 18 or older who think most people can be trusted, by age, 2008)*



**Table 1.1 General Happiness, 1998 and 2008**

“Taken all together, how would you say things are these days—would you say that you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?”

(percent of people aged 18 or older responding, 1998 and 2008; and percent of people aged 18 or older responding by demographic characteristic, 2008)

	very happy	pretty happy	not too happy
<b>TEN-YEAR TREND</b>			
2008	31.7%	54.4%	14.0%
1998	33.3	55.9	10.9
<b>2008 PROFILE</b>			
<b>Total people</b>	<b>31.7</b>	<b>54.4</b>	<b>14.0</b>
Men	30.7	55.6	13.7
Women	32.5	53.3	14.2
Black	22.4	49.1	28.5
Hispanic	26.3	53.0	20.7
White	33.3	55.3	11.4
Aged 18 to 44	29.4	56.6	14.0
Aged 45 to 64	30.6	55.4	14.0
Aged 65 or older	40.4	46.0	13.7
Less than a bachelor’s degree	29.7	53.8	16.5
Bachelor’s degree or more	37.3	56.0	6.7

Source: Survey Documentation and Analysis, Computer-assisted Survey Methods Program, University of California, Berkeley; General Social Surveys, 1972–2008 Cumulative Data Files, Internet site <http://sda.berkeley.edu/cgi-bin32/hsga?harsda+gss08>; calculations by New Strategist

# Many Americans Are Well Educated

**More than half the adult population has some college experience.**

The educational attainment of Americans has increased dramatically over the past few decades. Just 30 years ago, more than half of adults had not even graduated from high school. Today, most adults have at least some college education and 29 percent have at least a bachelor's degree.

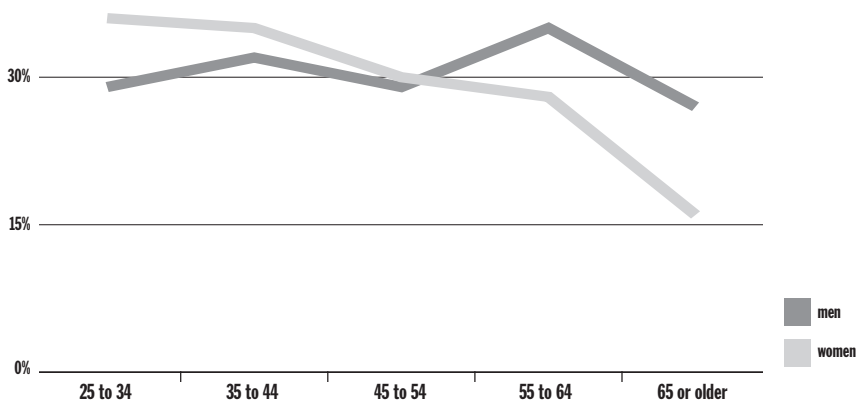
Among men, the share with a college degree peaks at 34.5 percent among men aged 55 to 64—the age group now filling with the oldest boomers. Boomer men are better educated than younger men because, as young adults during the Vietnam War, many boomers stayed in college to avoid the draft.

Among women aged 65 or older, only 16 percent have a college degree. But among women under age 45, an impressive 35 to 36 percent have a bachelor's degree. Although women overall are slightly less likely than men to have graduated from college (29 versus 30 percent), women under age 45 are better educated than their male counterparts. Among 25-to-34-year-olds, 36 percent of women have a bachelor's degree compared with only 29 percent of men.

■ Because the educational attainment of younger women is higher than that of younger men, women's incomes should continue to gain on men's.

## Among Americans under age 55, women are better educated than men

*(percent of people with a bachelor's degree, by age and sex, 2008)*



**Table 2.1 Educational Attainment by Age, 2008**

(number and percent distribution of people aged 25 or older by educational attainment and age, 2008; numbers in thousands)

	total	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 or older
<b>Total people</b>	<b>196,305</b>	<b>40,146</b>	<b>42,132</b>	<b>43,935</b>	<b>33,302</b>	<b>36,790</b>
Not a high school graduate	26,340	4,767	4,792	4,737	3,735	8,308
High school graduate only	61,183	11,297	12,039	14,068	10,221	13,558
Some college, no degree	33,812	7,396	7,200	7,682	6,012	5,523
Associate's degree	17,182	3,717	4,159	4,464	2,966	1,877
Bachelor's degree	37,559	9,421	9,204	8,431	6,096	4,406
Master's degree	14,765	2,792	3,507	3,282	3,055	2,129
Professional degree	2,991	489	693	744	611	453
Doctoral degree	2,472	266	538	527	605	536
High school graduate or more	169,964	35,378	37,340	39,198	29,566	28,482
Some college or more	108,781	24,081	25,301	25,130	19,345	14,924
Associate's degree or more	74,969	16,685	18,101	17,448	13,333	9,401
Bachelor's degree or more	57,787	12,968	13,942	12,984	10,367	7,524
<b>Total people</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Not a high school graduate	13.4	11.9	11.4	10.8	11.2	22.6
High school graduate only	31.2	28.1	28.6	32.0	30.7	36.9
Some college, no degree	17.2	18.4	17.1	17.5	18.1	15.0
Associate's degree	8.8	9.3	9.9	10.2	8.9	5.1
Bachelor's degree	19.1	23.5	21.8	19.2	18.3	12.0
Master's degree	7.5	7.0	8.3	7.5	9.2	5.8
Professional degree	1.5	1.2	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.2
Doctoral degree	1.3	0.7	1.3	1.2	1.8	1.5
High school graduate or more	86.6	88.1	88.6	89.2	88.8	77.4
Some college or more	55.4	60.0	60.1	57.2	58.1	40.6
Associate's degree or more	38.2	41.6	43.0	39.7	40.0	25.6
Bachelor's degree or more	29.4	32.3	33.1	29.6	31.1	20.5

Source: Bureau of the Census, 2008 Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Internet site [http://pubdb3.census.gov/macro/032008/perinc/new03\\_000.htm](http://pubdb3.census.gov/macro/032008/perinc/new03_000.htm); calculations by New Strategist

## Health Trends

■ **Most Americans say their health is “very good” or “excellent.”**

Only among people aged 65 or older does the share fall below 50 percent.

■ **Weight problems are growing in every age group.**

Sixty-one percent of the nation’s adults are overweight, and 26 percent are obese.

■ **The babies being born today promise great diversity tomorrow.**

Of the 4.3 million babies born in 2007, only 54 percent were born to non-Hispanic whites. Twenty-five percent were born to Hispanics and 15 percent to blacks.

■ **Fifteen percent of Americans are without health insurance.**

The number of people without health insurance rose 19 percent between 2000 and 2007, to 46 million.

■ **Many children have asthma.**

Thirteen percent of children under age 18 have been diagnosed with asthma. Nearly 8 percent have learning disabilities.

■ **Lower back pain is the most frequently reported health condition.**

More than half of people aged 75 or older have been diagnosed with arthritis. Nearly one in four has had a heart attack.

■ **Heart disease and cancer are the biggest killers.**

Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death, and Alzheimer’s is sixth.

# Homeownership Is Near Its Record High

## Rates are down in most age groups, however.

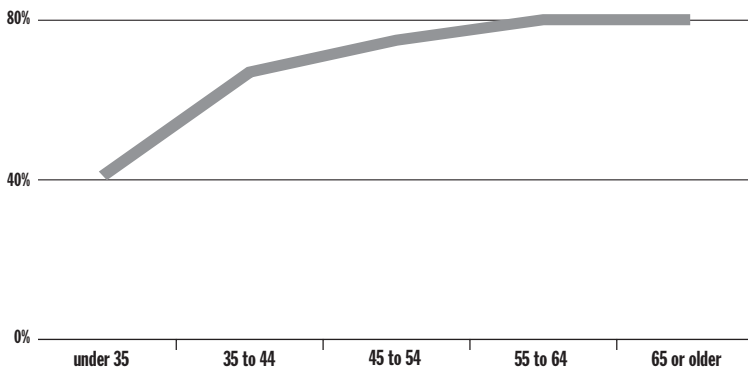
In 2008, 67.8 percent of households owned their home—below the record high of 69.0 percent reached in 2004 but still higher than the homeownership rate of 2000. Homeownership rates fell in all but the youngest age group between 2000 and 2008, with householders aged 45 to 54 experiencing the biggest decline. Their homeownership rate fell by 1.5 percentage points between 2000 and 2008, to 75.0 percent.

Homeownership rates climbed for every household type and every race and Hispanic origin group between 2000 and 2008. Eighty-three percent of couples owned their home in 2008—the highest rate of homeownership among all household types. Seventy-five percent of non-Hispanic whites owned a home in 2008 compared with 47 percent of blacks and 49 percent of Hispanics.

■ Although foreclosures are increasing in number, their impact remains small among the nation’s 76 million homeowners.

### Homeownership rates are highest among older Americans

*(percent of householders who own their home, by age, 2008)*



**Table 4.1 Homeownership Rates by Age, Household Type, Race, and Hispanic Origin, 2000 and 2008**

(percent of households that own their home by age of householder, household type, race, and Hispanic origin of householder, 2000 and 2008; percentage point change, 2000–08)

	2008	2000	percentage point change 2000–08
<b>TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS</b>	<b>67.8%</b>	<b>67.4%</b>	<b>0.4</b>
<b>Age of householder</b>			
Under age 35	41.0	40.8	0.2
Aged 35 to 44	67.0	67.9	–0.9
Aged 45 to 54	75.0	76.5	–1.5
Aged 55 to 64	80.1	80.3	–0.2
Aged 65 or older	80.1	80.4	–0.3
<b>Type of household</b>			
Married couple	83.4	82.4	1.1
Female hh, no spouse present	49.5	49.1	0.4
Male hh, no spouse present	57.6	57.5	0.1
Women living alone	58.6	58.1	0.5
Men living alone	50.6	47.4	3.2
<b>Race and Hispanic origin</b>			
American Indian	56.5	56.2	0.3
Asian	59.5	52.8	6.7
Black	47.4	47.2	0.2
Hispanic	49.1	46.3	2.8
Non-Hispanic white	75.0	73.8	1.2

Note: American Indians, Asians, and blacks are those who identified themselves as being of the race alone.

Source: Bureau of the Census, Housing Vacancy Surveys, Internet site <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/hvs/hvs.html>; calculations by New Strategist