

THE GALLUP ORGANIZATION

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Kerry Wins Debate

Viewers also more favorable to Kerry, but opinions about Iraq and military leadership still favor Bush

by David W. Moore

GALLUP NEWS SERVICE

PRINCETON, NJ -- John Kerry won the debate Thursday night, 53% to 37%, according to a random sample of 615 registered voters who watched the event. Almost half of the viewers said they felt more favorable about the senator because of the debate, and 60% said Kerry expressed himself more clearly than did President Bush.

Regardless of which candidate you happen to support, who do you think did the better job in the debate -- [ROTATED: John Kerry (or) George W. Bush]?

	Kerry	Bush	NEITHER (vol.)	BOTH/ EQUALLY (vol.)	No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%
Overall	53	37	1	8	1
Republicans	17	71	1	10	1
Independents	60	29	*	10	1
Democrats	87	8	0	5	0
Male	53	37	1	9	*
Female	53	38	*	8	1
Voting for Kerry (pre-debate)	93	3	0	4	0
Voting for Bush (pre-debate)	19	68	1	11	1

* Less than 0.5%

(vol.) Volunteered response

Democrats rallied behind Kerry's performance by 87% to 8%, while Republicans rallied behind Bush's performance by a somewhat smaller margin, 71% to 17%. But independents chose Kerry by a two-to-one margin, 60% to 29%.

Among viewers who indicated in the pre-debate survey that they intended to vote for Kerry, 93% thought Kerry won the debate and only 3% said Bush did.

Bush's supporters were not as convinced their candidate won -- choosing Bush by 68% to 19%, with 11% saying it

was a tie.

Men and women expressed virtually identical views in favor of Kerry.

Despite the positive assessment, viewers said they favored Bush in handling the war in Iraq and serving as commander in chief, little changed from opinions expressed before the debate. And a majority of viewers said it was Bush who better demonstrated he is tough enough for the job.

The poll shows that 46% of viewers said they felt more favorable toward Kerry as a result of the debate, while just 13% felt less favorable. By comparison, just 21% of viewers felt more favorable toward Bush, and 17% felt less favorable.

How has your opinion of John Kerry/George W. Bush been affected by the debate? Is your opinion of Kerry -- more favorable, less favorable, or has it not changed much? [Names rotated.]

	More favorable	Less favorable	Not changed much	No opinion
Kerry	46%	13	41	*
Bush	21%	17	62	*
* Less than 0.5%				

However, viewers did not change their minds about who would do a better job in Iraq or better serve as the country's military leader.

Prior to the debate, viewers chose Bush over Kerry in handling the Iraq war by 54% to 40%. After the debate, the comparable figures were essentially unchanged, 54% to 43%.

Next, regardless of which presidential candidate you support, please tell me if you think John Kerry or George W. Bush would better handle the situation in Iraq.

	Kerry	Bush	SAME (vol.)	No opinion
Kerry/Bush 2004				
2004 Sep 30 (Post-debate)	43%	54	1	2
2004 Sep 28-29 (Pre-debate)	40%	54	2	4
(vol.) Volunteered response				

Similarly, viewers pointed to Bush as the candidate they would trust more to handle the responsibilities of commander in chief -- before the debate by 55% to 42%, and after the debate by 54% to 44%.

Who do you trust more to handle the responsibilities of commander in chief of the military -- [ROTATED: John Kerry, (or) George W. Bush]?

	Kerry	Bush	BOTH/ EQUALLY (vol.)	NEITHER (vol.)	No opinion
Kerry/Bush 2004					
2004 Sep 30 (Post-debate)	44%	54	1	*	1
2004 Sep 28-29 (Pre-debate)	42%	55	*	1	2
* Less than 0.5%					
(vol.) Volunteered response					

Viewers saw Kerry as more articulate in the debate than Bush (60% to 32%), though they divided equally as to which candidate had a better understanding of the issues (41% each).

Thinking about the following characteristics and qualities, please say whether you think each one better described John Kerry or George W. Bush during tonight's debate. How about -- [Random Order]?

2004 Sep 30

(sorted by advantage for Kerry)

	Kerry	Bush	Advantage
	%	%	pct. pts.
Expressed himself more clearly	60	32	+28
Had a good understanding of the issues	41	41	0
Agreed with you more on the issues you care about	46	49	-3
Was more believable	45	50	-5
Was more likable	41	48	-7
Demonstrated he is tough enough for the job	37	54	-17

+ *Advantage indicates Kerry lead*

- *Advantage indicates Bush lead*

Viewers leaned toward Bush on which candidate agreed with them on issues, who was more believable, and who was more likable. And by 54% to 37%, viewers said Bush better demonstrated he is tough enough for the job.

These results are based on a CNN/*USA Today*/Gallup survey, conducted Thursday night immediately after the end of the presidential debate, which ended at 10:30 p.m. Eastern time. Respondents in the sample were first interviewed Sept. 28-29, when they indicated they expected to watch the debate and that they were willing to be called when the debate finished.

In that pre-debate survey, 52% of the viewers who were included in Thursday night's sample said they supported Bush and 44% supported Kerry, similar to the vote preference measured among likely voters in the Sept. 24-26 CNN/*USA Today*/Gallup poll. Thirty-six percent of Thursday night's viewers identified themselves as Republicans, 32% as independents, and 32% as Democrats.

Survey Methods

All results are based on telephone interviews with 615 registered voters, aged 18 and older, who watched the presidential debate Sept. 30, 2004. Respondents were first interviewed Sept. 28-29, 2004, when they indicated there was some chance they would watch Thursday's debate and were willing to be called back. For results based on the total sample of debate watchers, one can say with 95% confidence that the margin of sampling error is ± 4 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

Polls conducted entirely in one day, such as this one, are subject to additional error or bias not found in polls conducted over several days.

1. *Regardless of which candidate you happen to support, who do you think did the better job in the debate -- [ROTATED: John Kerry (or) George W. Bush]?*

	Kerry	Bush	NEITHER	BOTH/ EQUALLY	No
			(vol.)	(vol.)	opinion
Kerry/Bush 2004					
2004 Sep 30	53%	37	1	8	1
(vol.) Volunteered response					

Trends for Comparison:

	Gore	Bush	NEITHER (vol.)	BOTH/ EQUALLY (vol.)	No opinion
Gore/Bush 2000					
2000 Oct 17	46%	44	*	10	*
2000 Oct 11	36%	49	1	13	1
2000 Oct 3	48%	41	2	8	1
* Less than 0.5%					
(vol.) Volunteered response					

	Clinton	Dole	No opinion
Clinton/Dole 1996	%	%	%
1996 Oct 16	59	29	12
1996 Oct 6	51	32	17

	Clinton	Bush	Perot	NONE IN PARTICULAR (vol.)	No opinion
Clinton/Bush/Perot 1992	%	%	%	%	%
1992 Oct 19	28	28	37	7	*
1992 Oct 16-18	58	16	15	7	4
1992 Oct 11	30	16	47	5	2
* Less than 0.5%					

	Dukakis	Bush	NEITHER (vol.)	No opinion
Dukakis/Bush 1988				
1988 Sep 27-28	38%	29	31	2

	Mondale	Reagan	NEITHER (vol.)	No opinion
Mondale/Reagan 1984				
1984 Oct 21	40%	43	--	17
1984 Sep 28-30	54%	35	8	3
(vol.) Volunteered response				

Q.2-3 ROTATED

2. How has your opinion of John Kerry been affected by the debate? Is your opinion of Kerry -- more favorable, less favorable, or has it not changed much?

	More favorable	Less favorable	Not changed much	No opinion
Kerry/Bush 2004				
2004 Sep 30	46%	13	41	*
* Less than 0.5%				

3. How has your opinion of George W. Bush been affected by the debate? Is your opinion of Bush -- more favorable, less favorable, or has it not changed much?

	More favorable	Less favorable	Not changed much	No opinion
Kerry/Bush 2004				
2004 Sep 30	21%	17	62	*
* Less than 0.5%				

Trends for Comparison:

	More favorable	Less favorable	Not changed much	No opinion
Al Gore	%	%	%	%
2000 Oct 17	29	22	49	--
2000 Oct 11	24	16	60	--
2000 Oct 3	27	18	55	*
George W. Bush				
2000 Oct 17	31	17	51	1
2000 Oct 11	40	12	47	1
2000 Oct 3	34	14	52	*
Bill Clinton				
1992 Oct 19	27	22	50	1
1992 Oct 11	29	14	57	*
George H. W. Bush				
1992 Oct 19	29	25	46	--
1992 Oct 11	13	24	62	1
Ross Perot				
1992 Oct 19	63	5	32	--
1992 Oct 11	62	5	32	--
* Less than 0.5%				

4. Next, regardless of which presidential candidate you support, please tell me if you think John Kerry or George W. Bush would better handle the situation in Iraq.

	Kerry	Bush	SAME (vol.)	No opinion
Kerry/Bush 2004				
2004 Sep 30 (Post-debate)	43%	54	1	2
2004 Sep 28-29 (Pre-debate)	40%	54	2	4
(vol.) Volunteered response				

5. Who do you trust more to handle the responsibilities of commander-in-chief of the military -- [ROTATED: John Kerry, (or) George W. Bush]?

BOTH/

	Kerry	Bush	EQUALLY (vol.)	NEITHER (vol.)	No opinion
Kerry/Bush 2004					
2004 Sep 30 (Post-debate)	44%	54	1	*	1
2004 Sep 28-29 (Pre-debate)	42%	55	*	1	2
* Less than 0.5%					
(vol.) Volunteered response					

6. Thinking about the following characteristics and qualities, please say whether you think each one better described John Kerry or George W. Bush during tonight's debate. How about -- [Random Order]?

A. Agreed with you more on the issues you care about

	Kerry	Bush	BOTH/ EQUALLY (vol.)	NEITHER (vol.)	No opinion
Kerry/Bush 2004					
2004 Sep 30	46%	49	2	3	*

Trends for Comparison:

	Gore	Bush	BOTH/ EQUALLY (vol.)	NEITHER (vol.)	No opinion
Gore/Bush 2000					
2000 Oct 17	45%	51	2	1	1
2000 Oct 11	43%	52	4	1	*

B. Expressed himself more clearly

	Kerry	Bush	BOTH/ EQUALLY (vol.)	NEITHER (vol.)	No opinion
Kerry/Bush 2004					
2004 Sep 30	60%	32	7	1	*

Trends for Comparison:

	Gore	Bush	BOTH/ EQUALLY (vol.)	NEITHER (vol.)	No opinion
Gore/Bush 2000					
2000 Oct 17	57%	33	8	1	1
2000 Oct 11	47%	39	13	*	1

C. Had a good understanding of the issues

	Kerry	Bush	BOTH/ EQUALLY (vol.)	NEITHER (vol.)	No opinion
Kerry/Bush 2004					
2004 Sep 30	41%	41	17	1	*

Trends for Comparison:

	Clinton	Bush	Perot	BOTH/ EQUALLY (vol.)	NEITHER (vol.)	No opinion
Clinton/Bush/Perot 1992						
1992 Oct 19	41%	33	18	5	2	1
1992 Oct 11	28%	39	26	5	1	1

D. Was more believable

	Kerry	Bush	BOTH/ EQUALLY (vol.)	NEITHER (vol.)	No opinion
Kerry/Bush 2004					
2004 Sep 30	45%	50	4	*	1

Trends for Comparison:

	Gore	Bush	BOTH/ EQUALLY (vol.)	NEITHER (vol.)	No opinion
Gore/Bush 2000					
2000 Oct 17	41%	52	5	1	1
2000 Oct 11	38%	51	9	2	*

E. Was more likable

	Kerry	Bush	BOTH/ EQUALLY (vol.)	NEITHER (vol.)	No opinion
Kerry/Bush 2004					
2004 Sep 30	41%	48	9	1	1

Trends for Comparison:

	Gore	Bush	BOTH/ EQUALLY (vol.)	NEITHER (vol.)	No opinion
Gore/Bush 2000					
2000 Oct 17	31%	60	6	2	1
2000 Oct 11	31%	56	10	2	1

F. Demonstrated he is tough enough for the job

	Kerry	Bush	BOTH/ EQUALLY (vol.)	NEITHER (vol.)	No opinion
Kerry/Bush 2004					
2004 Sep 30	37%	54	8	1	*

* Less than 0.5%

(vol.) Volunteered response

SUMMARY TABLE: KERRY VS. BUSH ON QUALITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS**2004 Sep 30***(sorted by advantage)*

	Kerry	Bush	Advantage
	%	%	pct. pts.
Expressed himself more clearly	60	32	+28
Had a good understanding of the issues	41	41	0
Agreed with you more on the issues you care about	46	49	-3
Was more believable	45	50	-5
Was more likable	41	48	-7
Demonstrated he is tough enough for the job	37	54	-17

+ *Advantage indicates Kerry lead*- *Advantage indicates Bush lead***Q.7-8 ROTATED***7. In the debate tonight, overall, do you think John Kerry's criticism of George W. Bush was fair or unfair?*

	Fair	Unfair	No opinion
Kerry/Bush 2004			
2004 Sep 30	63%	34	3

8. In the debate tonight, overall, do you think George W. Bush's criticism of John Kerry was fair or unfair?

	Fair	Unfair	No opinion
Kerry/Bush 2004			
2004 Sep 30	68%	28	4

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