

# Attitudes of Parents towards Museums

Omnibus Survey

Research Study Conducted for  
National Museum Directors' Conference



February 2004

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# Introduction

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This report presents the findings of a survey among parents. The research was conducted by MORI (Market & Opinion Research International) on behalf of National Museum Directors' Conference.

The objectives of the research were to examine parental attitudes towards the importance of museums as a resource for educating children and whether they think that museum visiting should be part of the National Curriculum. In addition, the survey aimed to examine the role played by museums in providing objective information, in relation to other sources.

**Methodology:** questions were placed on the MORI Omnibus, the regular MORI survey among the general public. A nationally representative quota sample of 664 parents (aged 15 and over) was interviewed throughout Great Britain by MORI in 194 different sampling points.

Interviews were conducted face to face, in respondents' homes, using CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing) between 12<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2004).

**Reporting:** in the graphs and tables, the figures quoted are percentages. The size of the sample base from which the percentage is derived is indicated. Note that the base may vary – the percentage is not always based on the total sample. Caution is advised when comparing responses between small sample sizes.

As a rough guide, please note that the percentage figures for the various sub-samples or groups generally need to differ by a certain number of percentage points for the difference to be statistically significant. This number will depend on the size of the sub-group sample and the % finding itself - as noted in the appendix.

Where an asterisk (\*) appears it indicates a percentage of less than one, but greater than zero. Where percentages do not add up to 100% this can be due to a variety of factors – such as the exclusion of 'Don't know' or 'Other' responses, multiple responses or computer rounding.

**Publication of Data:** our standard Terms and Conditions apply to this, as to all studies we carry out. Compliance with the MRS Code of Conduct and our clearing of any copy or data for publication, web-siting or press release which contains any data derived from MORI research is necessary. This is to protect our client's reputation and integrity as much as our own. We recognise that it is in no one's best interests to have survey findings published which could be misinterpreted, or could appear to be inaccurately, or misleadingly, presented.

# Summary of Findings

Four in five parents regard museums and galleries as among the most important resources for educating children with just over a third (36%) strongly agreeing with this statement. Strength of agreement increases with age and those aged 45-54 (46%) and especially those aged 55+ (57%) are significantly more likely than parents in other age bands to “strongly” agree.

Q1.	To what extent do you agree or disagree that “Museums and galleries are among the most important resources for educating our children”	
	<i>Base: All parents</i>	(664) %
	Strongly agree	36
	Tend to agree	44
	Neither agree nor disagree	10
	Tend to disagree	7
	Strongly disagree	2
	Don't know/no opinion	1

*Source: MORI*

Class is also a key factor – ABC1 parents are significantly more likely than those from social grades C2DE to agree “strongly” (41% vs 32%).

In general, broadsheet newspaper readers are more likely than those who read tabloids to see museums as one of the most important resources for educating children (90% vs 81%) along with parents of children aged 6-10 (84% vs 80% overall).

In a similar study conducted for the American Association of Museums in February 2001, slightly more parents rated science centres and children's museums (86%) and a similar proportion rated art and history museums (80%) as important resources for educating children. The survey also asked adults to rate a number of other educational resources including schools (rated first overall at 98%) and public libraries (second at 93%). Less important than museums were aquariums, zoos and botanical gardens (74%), historical landscapes (74%), community centres (59%), parks (55%) and symphonies and orchestras (50%).

Q	How important that institution is as a <u>resource</u> for <u>educating</u> our children?							
	Most impt	Very impt	Smwt impt	Not very impt	Don't know	impt	Not impt	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Public libraries	36	57	6	1	0	93	7	
Parks	12	44	35	9	1	55	44	
Science centers and children's museums	29	57	13	1	0	86	14	
Symphonies and orchestras	13	37	38	10	1	50	48	
Art and History Museums	27	53	17	2	0	80	20	
Aquariums, zoos and botanical gardens	23	51	23	3	0	74	26	
Historical landmarks	27	48	22	3	0	74	25	
Community centers	15	44	33	8	1	59	40	
Schools	76	22	2	1	0	98	2	

Base: All US adults (1,000), February 2001, AAM/Lake Snell Perry and Associates

Q	How important that institution is as a <u>resource</u> for <u>educating</u> our children?	
	Most impt %	Very impt %
Public libraries	37	94
Parks	13	57
Science centers and children's museums	31	87
Symphonies and orchestras	11	46
Art and History Museums	26	79
Aquariums, zoos and botanical gardens	23	78
Historical landmarks	27	76
Community centers	11	63
Schools	76	97

Base: All US parents, February 2001, AAM/Lake Snell Perry and Associates

An even higher proportion in the British survey, 85% believe that “visits to museums and galleries should be part of the National Curriculum” with the highest proportion (45%) strongly endorsing this statement. Broadsheet readers feel most strongly about this issue (61%), along with ABs (55%), those who live in London and the South East (56%) and older middle aged parents (53%).

Q2.	<b>To what extent do you agree or disagree that “Visits to museums and galleries should be part of the National Curriculum”</b>	
<i>Base: All parents</i>	(664)	%
Strongly agree	45	
Tend to agree	40	
Neither agree nor disagree	8	
Tend to disagree	5	
Strongly disagree	1	
Don't know/no opinion	1	

*Source: MORI*

C1 parents are also among those keenest to see visits to museums and galleries become part of the National Curriculum (92% overall) but they do not feel particularly strongly about it. At least four in five of all other groups would also like to see this happen.

Museums are regarded as one of the most trustworthy sources of objective information, ranked second after television news (59%). Over two in five (43%) regard museums as trustworthy, from a list provided, and over a third (36%) think of museums as one of the most trustworthy sources. Museums are more highly valued overall than books (39%), radio (35%), newspapers (27%), the internet (25%) and magazine (13%).

Q3.	<b>Which of the following information sources, if any, do you regard as trustworthy sources of objective information?</b>	
Q4.	<b>And which two or three of these, if any, do you consider to be the MOST trustworthy sources of objective information?</b>	
	Q3	Q4
<i>Base: All parents</i>	(664)	(664)
	%	%
Television news	59	53
Museums	43	36
Books	39	33
Radio	35	27
Newspapers	27	20
The internet	25	18
Magazines	13	5
None of these	6	7
Don't know	1	1

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*Source: MORI*

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The high rating achieved for television news is in contrast to the findings of the AAM survey in 2001. Then, museums achieved top scores overall when respondents were asked to rate all these items on a scale (87%). Television news was considered trustworthy by 49% of respondents in the US study. However, it must be borne in mind that the MORI research was conducted just after the publication of the Hutton Inquiry, at a time when the probity of television journalism has been very much in the spotlight. Another MORI survey for the BMA in February 2003, saw television newsreaders achieving a net trustworthy score of +42%, behind doctors, teachers, professors, judges, clergymen and scientists but above the man in the street, pollsters, civil servants, trades union officials, business leaders, government ministers, politicians generally and journalists.

Q	How trustworthy it is as a source of objective information?							
	One of the most trustwly	Vert trustwly	Smwht trustwly	A little trustwly	Not very trustwly	Don't know	trustwly	Not trustwly
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Newspapers	7	28	49	11	5	0	35	65
Radio	4	21	56	12	7	0	25	75
The internet	4	19	44	14	10	8	23	69
Television news	8	41	38	8	5	0	49	51
Museums	39	49	9	3	0	0	88	12
Magazines	3	19	52	15	10	2	23	76
Books	20	44	30	4	0	2	64	34

Base: All US parents, February 2001, AAM/Lake Snell Perry and Associates

Middle aged parents aged 35-54 are among those who most trust museums(42%), along with ABC1 parents (43%), those with degrees or higher qualifications (45%), men (39%) and broadsheet readers (39%).

Television news is trusted most by those with fewest qualifications (those educated to GCSE or NVQ level), tabloid readers and C2DEs (59% each). Women and young people aged 25-34 are also among those who trust television news most (57% each).

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Jane Robinson

Melanie Briere



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# Appendices

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# Technical Details

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## Sample Design

The sample design is a constituency based quota sample. There are 641 parliamentary constituencies covering Great Britain. From these, we select one in three (210) to be used as the main sampling points on the MORI Omnibus. These points are specially selected to be representative of the whole country by region, social grade, working status, MOSAIC rurality, tenure, ethnicity and car ownership. Within each constituency, one local government ward is chosen which is representative of the constituency.

Within each ward or sampling point, we interview ten respondents whose profile matches the quota. The total sample therefore is around 2,100 (10 interviews multiplied by 210 sampling points).

Gender:	Male; Female
Household Tenure:	Owner occupied; Council Tenant/HAT; Other
Age:	15 to 24; 25 to 44; 45+
Working Status	Full-time; part time/not working

These quotas reflect the socio-demographic makeup of that area, and are devised from an analysis of the 1991 Census combined with more recent ONS (Office of National Statistics) data. Overall, quotas are a cost-effective means of ensuring that the demographic profile of the sample matches the actual profile of GB as a whole, and is representative of all adults in Great Britain aged 15 and over.

## Fieldwork

Fieldwork is carried out by MORI using CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing). All interviews are conducted face to face, in the home - one interview per household. No incentives are offered to respondents.

## Weighting and Data Processing

Data entry and analysis are carried out by an approved and quality-assured data processing company. The data are weighted using 6 sets of simple and interlocking rim weights for social grade, standard region, unemployment within region, cars in household, and age and working status within gender. This is to adjust for any variance in the quotas or coverage of individual sampling points so that the sample is representative of the GB adult population.

# Statistical Reliability

Because a sample, rather than the entire population, was interviewed the percentage results are subject to sampling tolerances – which vary with the size of the sample and the percentage figure concerned. For example, for a question where 50% of the people in a (weighted) sample of 664 respond with a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that this result would not vary more than 3.8 percentage points, plus or minus, from the result that would have been obtained from a census of the entire population (using the same procedures). The tolerances that may apply in this report are given in the table below.

<b>Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels (at the 95% confidence level)</b>			
	<b>10% or 90% ±</b>	<b>30% or 70% ±</b>	<b>50% ±</b>
<b>Size of sample or sub-group on which survey result is based</b>			
664 (all parents)	2.3	3.5	3.8
300 (ABC1 parents)	3.4	5.2	5.7
159 (London & South East residents)	4.7	7.1	7.8
<i>Source: MORI</i>			

Tolerances are also involved in the comparison of results between different elements of the sample. A difference must be of at least a certain size to be statistically significant. The following table is a guide to the sampling tolerances applicable to comparisons between sub-groups.

<b>Differences required for significance at the 95% confidence level at or near these percentages</b>			
	<b>10% or 90% ±</b>	<b>30% or 70% ±</b>	<b>50% ±</b>
<b>Size of sample on which survey result is based</b>			
241 vs 402 (15-34 vs 35-54 year olds)	4.8	7.3	8.0
300 vs 364 (ABC1 vs C2DE parents)	6.0	9.2	10
88 vs 290 (broadsheet vs tabloid readers)	9.5	14.5	15.8
<i>Source: MORI</i>			

## Definition of Social Grades

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The grades detailed below are the social class definitions as used by the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising, and are standard on all surveys carried out by MORI (Market & Opinion Research International Limited).

<b>Social Grades</b>			
	<b>Social Class</b>	<b>Occupation of Chief Income Earner</b>	<b>Percentage of Population</b>
A	Upper Middle Class	Higher managerial, administrative or professional	2.9
B	Middle Class	Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional	18.9
C1	Lower Middle Class	Supervisor or clerical and junior managerial, administrative or professional	27.0
C2	Skilled Working Class	Skilled manual workers	22.6
D	Working Class	Semi and unskilled manual workers	16.9
E	Those at the lowest levels of subsistence	State pensioners, etc, with no other earnings	11.7