



What Americans Believe About the Arts

The American public is more broadly engaged in the arts than previously understood—believing that the arts not only play a vital role in personal well-being and healthier communities, but that the arts are also core to a well-rounded education.

1. **“The arts provide meaning to our lives.”** 63 percent of the population believe the arts “lift me up beyond everyday experiences,” 64 percent feel the arts give them “pure pleasure to experience and participate in,” and 73 percent say the arts are a “positive experience in a troubled world.”
2. **“Most of us seek out arts experiences.”** Seven in 10 American adults (68 percent) attended an arts event in the past year, like going to the theater, museum, zoo, or a musical performance.
3. **“We often experience the arts in unexpected places.”** An even greater proportion of Americans (77 percent) say they experienced the arts in a “non-arts” venue such as a park, hospital, shopping mall, or airport.
4. **“Across demographic groups, the arts are part of our lives.”** People of color were more likely to attend an arts event than their white counterparts (71 percent vs. 66 percent). Higher rates of attendance for people of color were noted for multiple art forms, including dance, museums, and theater.
5. **“Arts institutions add value to our communities.”** Regardless of whether people engage with the arts or not, 87 percent believe they are important to quality of life, and 82 percent believe they are important to local businesses and the economy.
6. **“We donate to the arts.”** 27 percent of the population (more than 1 in 4 Americans) made a donation to an arts, culture, or public broadcasting organization within the past year. Donors were typically younger and had higher incomes and education.
7. **“We will support candidates who want to increase arts funding.”** Americans are more than twice as likely to vote in favor of a candidate who increases arts spending from 45 cents to \$1 per person than to vote against them (37 percent in favor, 16 percent against).
8. **“We believe the arts are part of a well-rounded education.”** Nine in ten American adults (88 percent) agree that the arts are part of a well-rounded K-12 education.
9. **“We believe the arts should be taught in grades K–12.”** 90 percent believe students should receive an education in the arts in elementary school, middle school, and high school. 82 percent say the arts should also be taught outside of the classroom in the community.
10. **“We are making art in our personal time.”** Half of all Americans are personally involved in artistic activities (49 percent) such as painting, singing in a choir, making crafts, writing poetry, or playing music.
11. **“We engage in the arts because it makes us feel creative.”** Among those who are personally involved in making art or displaying art in their home, 60 percent say that “arts and music outside of the home” makes them feel more creative—a rate that jumps to 70 percent for Millennials.
12. **“Social media increases our exposure to the arts.”** 53 percent of social media users say that they are more exposed to the arts thanks to connecting online. 59 percent agree that art created on social media is a legitimate form of art.
13. **“Yes! Tattoos are art.”** 27 percent of Americans boast a tattoo (12 percent have more than one). Three-quarters believe that tattoos are a form of art (73 percent).
14. **“The arts unify our communities.”** The personal benefits of the arts extend beyond the individual and to the community. 67 percent of Americans believe “the arts unify our communities regardless of age, race, and ethnicity” and 62 percent agree that the arts “helps me understand other cultures better.”
15. **“Despite the benefits the arts provide, not everyone in our communities has equal access to the arts.”** Despite the individual and community benefits, just 45 percent believe that “everyone in their community has equal access to the arts.”

www.AmericansForTheArts.org

Source: *Americans Speak Out About The Arts, Americans for the Arts. 2016.*

*The 3,020 respondents self-identified by race and Hispanic ethnicity. For the report, the “white” category is non-Hispanic whites. Included in the “people of color” category are blacks, Asians, all Hispanics, and others.