

April 11, 2013

A Third of Americans Say They Like Doing Their Income Taxes

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A Third of Americans Say They Like Doing Their Income Taxes

As April 15 approaches, a majority of Americans (56%) have a negative reaction to doing their income taxes, with 26% saying they hate doing them. However, about a third (34%) say they either like (29%) or love (5%) doing their taxes.

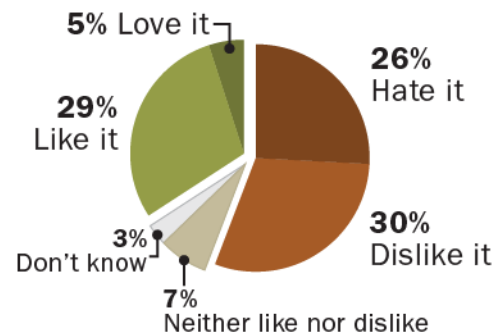
The national survey by the Pew Research Center, conducted April 4-7 among 1,003 adults, finds that the expectation of getting a refund is cited most often for why people like doing their taxes, but it is not the only factor.

When asked why they like doing their income taxes, 29% say that they are getting a refund, while 17% say they just don't mind it or they are good at it; 13% say doing their taxes gives them a sense of control, while the same percentage cites a feeling of obligation – that it is their duty to pay their fair share.

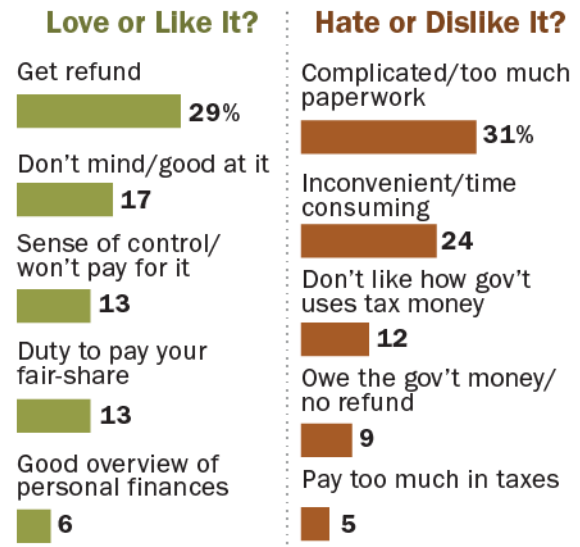
Among those who dislike or hate doing their taxes, most cite the hassles of the process or the amount of time it takes: 31% say it is complicated, requires too much paperwork or they are afraid of making mistakes, while 24% say it is inconvenient and time-consuming. A much smaller share (12%) says they dislike doing their taxes because of how the government uses tax money. Just 5% of those who dislike or hate doing their income taxes say it is because they pay too much in taxes.

How Americans Feel about Doing Their Taxes?

Which of the following best describes how you feel about doing your taxes?



In your own words, why do you...



PEW RESEARCH CENTER April 4-7, 2013.

Overall, people with lower incomes are more likely to have a positive view of doing their taxes than those with higher incomes.

About four-in-ten (41%) of those with family incomes of less than \$30,000 a year say they like or love doing their income taxes compared with 30% of those with incomes of \$75,000 or more. Blacks are far more likely than whites to say they like doing their taxes (52% vs. 28%).

Democrats have a less negative view of doing their taxes than do Republicans or independents. Six-in-ten Republicans (60%) say they dislike or hate doing their taxes. Just 32% like it or love it. The balance of opinion is similar among independents (62% dislike or hate it, 31% like or love it). Democrats' opinions are more mixed: just under half (46%) either dislike or hate doing their taxes, while four-in-ten (40%) like or love it.

Overall, a third (33%) of Americans say they do their own taxes while 56% say someone else prepares their taxes. About six-in-ten (61%) of those who say they hate or dislike doing their income taxes have someone else do it for them, compared with 52% of those who say they like or love doing it.

More Republicans than Democrats Dislike Doing Their Taxes

How do you feel about doing your income taxes?

	Love/ Like %	Dislike/ Hate %	(Vol.) Neither %	DK %
Total	34	56	7	3=100
<i>Family income</i>				
\$75,000+	30	63	6	1=100
\$30k-\$75,000	34	59	6	2=100
<\$30,000	41	50	6	4=100
<i>Party ID</i>				
Republican	32	60	6	2=100
Democrat	40	46	10	4=100
Independent	31	62	5	2=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER April 4-7, 2013. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Not Reporting Income Seen as Morally Wrong

Seven-in-ten (71%)

Americans agree that not reporting all income on your taxes is morally wrong, while 19% say it is not a moral issue; just 6% see this as morally acceptable.

This is down slightly from February 2006, when 79% said that not reporting all income was morally wrong.

Republicans are more likely than both Democrats and independents to describe not reporting all income as morally wrong – 78% of Republicans say this, compared with 68% of

Democrats and 69% of independents. There is almost no difference among partisans who say that not reporting all income is morally acceptable – rather, Democrats and independents are more likely to say that it is not a moral issue.

Across all demographic groups, majorities agree that this is morally wrong. However, those with less educational attainment and lower family income are less likely than those with college degrees and higher incomes to say this. About two-thirds of those with a high school diploma or less (65%) or incomes below \$30,000 (66%) say that not reporting all income is morally wrong, compared with about three-quarters of those in higher income and education groups.

Broad Agreement that Failing to Report All Income Is Morally Wrong

Do you believe that not reporting all income on your taxes is...?

	Morally wrong	Not a moral issue	Morally acceptable	Other/DK
	%	%	%	%
Total	71	19	6	4=100
Men	67	21	7	5=100
Women	74	18	4	3=100
College grad +	73	21	4	2=100
Some college	75	18	4	3=100
HS or less	65	20	8	6=100
<i>Family income</i>				
\$75,000+	74	20	4	2=100
\$30,000-\$74,999	76	17	4	3=100
<\$30,000	66	21	8	5=100
Republican	78	15	5	2=100
Democrat	68	21	7	4=100
Independent	69	22	5	5=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Jan. 9-13, 2013. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

About the Surveys

Most of the analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted April 4-7, 2013 among a national sample of 1,003 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (500 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 503 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 229 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Universal Survey under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see: <http://people-press.org/methodology/>.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region to parameters from the 2011 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status, based on extrapolations from the 2012 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1,003	3.7 percentage points
Republicans	262	7.3 percentage points
Democrats	301	6.8 percentage points
Independents	359	6.2 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

The question about the morality of not reporting all income was asked on a telephone survey conducted January 9-13, 2013 among a national sample of 1,502 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (752 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 750 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 369 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and nativity and region to parameters from the 2011 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status and relative usage of landline and cell phones (for those with both), based on extrapolations from the 2012 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1,502	2.9 percentage points
Republicans	403	5.7 percentage points
Democrats	473	5.2 percentage points
Independents	557	4.8 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

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

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
April 4-7, 2013, OMNIBUS
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1,003

PEW.1 AND PEW.4-PEW.7 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

NO QUESTIONS PEW.2-PEW.3

ASK ALL:

Thinking about your income taxes this year...

PEW.8 Did you and your spouse – or WILL you - prepare your own taxes, or is someone else preparing your 2012 income tax returns?

Apr 4-7	
<u>2013</u>	
33	Prepare your own taxes
56	Someone else preparing your taxes
6	Other (VOL.)
5	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK ALL:

PEW.9 All in all, which of the following best describes how you feel about doing your income taxes? – you love it, you like it, you dislike it, or you hate it?

Apr 4-7	
<u>2013</u>	
5	Love it
29	Like it
30	Dislike it
26	Hate it
7	Neither like or dislike (VOL.)
3	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

FOR COMPARISON (Gallup):

The Gallup Organization asked this question between 1990 and 2001, but in a different context from the current Pew Research survey. Prior to asking this question the Gallup surveys asked: "Do you consider the amount of federal income tax which you have to pay as too high, about right, or too low?" The Gallup surveys often also asked more detailed questions about tax preparation, such as: "...how many hours have you or will you spend doing your income taxes this year." The Pew Research survey does not introduce these issues, which could affect how people describe their feelings about doing taxes.

	Apr 6-8 <u>2001</u>	Apr 7-9 <u>2000</u>	Mar 28-30 <u>1991</u>	Mar 8-11 <u>1990</u>
Love it	3	3	2	2
Like it	21	15	22	21
Dislike it	35	39	40	33
Hate it	31	32	25	30
Neither like or dislike (VOL.)	6	9	8	10
No opinion (VOL.)	4	2	3	4

ASK IF RESPONSE GIVEN IN PEW.9 (PEW.9=1-4):

PEW.10 In your own words, why would you say you **[INSERT RESPONSE TO PEW.9]**? **[IF NECESSARY: Why is it you (love, like, dislike, hate) doing your income taxes?]**

[OPEN END: RECORD VERBATIM RESPONSE. PROBE FOR CLARITY – DO NOT PROBE FOR ADDITIONAL MENTIONS. IF MORE THAN ONE MENTION, RECORD IN ORDER OF MENTION]

AMONG THOSE WHO LOVE OR LIKE DOING THEIR INCOME TAXES (PEW.9=1,2) [N=307]:

Apr 4-7

2013

29	Get refund/money/tax credit
17	Don't mind it/good at it/it's easy
13	Sense of control/independence/won't pay others to do taxes
13	Duty to pay your fair share/everyone should pay taxes/country needs it
6	Good overview of personal finances/learn something about taxes
5	Someone else does them or helps
3	Taxes have to get done
2	Don't pay very much/pay nothing/don't have to file
8	Other
8	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

AMONG THOSE WHO DISLIKE OR HATE DOING THEIR INCOME TAXES (PEW.9=3,4) [N=596]:

Apr 4-7

2013

31	Taxes are complicated/too much paperwork/afraid of mistakes/not good with numbers
24	Inconvenient/hassle/time consuming (General)
12	Don't like how government uses tax money/should not have to pay taxes/not fair
9	Owe the government money
5	Pay too much in taxes
2	Favor a flat tax
2	Someone else does them or helps
2	Taxes have to get done
14	Other
5	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
 JANUARY 2013 POLITICAL SURVEY
 FINAL TOPLINE
 January 9-13, 2013
 N=1,502**

NOTE: OTHER QUESTIONS FROM THIS SURVEY PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

ASK ALL:

Now, a different kind of question ...

Q.18 Do you personally believe that **[INSERT ITEM AND RANDOMIZE]** is morally acceptable, morally wrong, or is it not a moral issue. **[IF NECESSARY: And is [INSERT ITEM] morally acceptable, morally wrong, or is it not a moral issue?]**

	<u>Morally acceptable</u>	<u>Morally wrong</u>	<u>Not a moral issue</u>	(VOL.) <u>Depends on the situation</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
c. Not reporting all income on your taxes					
Jan 9-13, 2013	6	71	19	1	3
February, 2006	5	79	14	1	1