

# Los Angeles Times / Bloomberg

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## DEBATE WATCHERS

Field dates: September 26-28, 2008  
Original National Survey Field Dates: September 19-22, 2008

### Watchers Say Neither Candidate Won, But Give Obama Wider Lead Post-Debate

**How the Poll Was Conducted:** The Los Angeles Times / Bloomberg Poll interviewed registered voters who watched Friday's presidential debate nationwide by telephone Friday through Sunday, September 26-28. The survey re-contacted all 1,287 registered voters who had completed interviews in a Times/Bloomberg survey September 19-22, 2008 after the debate to sample their opinions of the candidates and the debate. After multiple attempts, 701 were interviewed, and among them, 448 had watched the debate.

**Original Sample methodology:** Telephone numbers were chosen randomly in separate samples of landline and cell phone exchanges in the nation, allowing listed and unlisted numbers to be contacted, and multiple attempts were made to contact each number. Cell phone numbers were hand-dialed. The cell and landline samples were combined and adjusted for sample size and non-response. Adults in the combined sample were adjusted to the most recent estimates from the National Health Interview Survey for household phone types and to census proportions of sex, ethnicity, age, education, and national region.

The margin of sampling error for all registered voters and likely voters in the original sample is plus or minus 3 percentage points. Among debate watchers, it is plus or minus four. For smaller subgroups, the error margin may be higher. Survey results may also be affected by combining samples and by factors such as question wording and the order in which they are asked. Interviews in both surveys were conducted by Interviewing Service of America, Inc. in Van Nuys.

#### Guide to column headings:

ALL	All registered voters in the pre-debate poll
WATCHED	Debate watchers

#### Survey Notes:

- (vol) indicates a volunteered response
- '—' indicates that a response added up to less than 0.5% of the question base
- Numbers are percentages, tables are read vertically
- Tables are among all respondents unless otherwise noted.
- Unless otherwise noted, missing questions are operational, or will be published in a subsequent release

*The order of candidate names and the order of any choices, arguments, or statements were rotated in all questions that mention them. Question and group order is also rotated, whenever required to eliminate order bias. In this release, question order has been changed in order to facilitate readability. For original question order, contact the LA Times Poll.*

*Asked Only of Debate Watchers*

Did you get a chance to watch or listen to the presidential debate while it was taking place, or not? (IF DID NOT WATCH OR LISTEN TO DEBATE) Well, have you seen news items about the debate, or heard or read about it, or discussed it with anyone?

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
Did (net)	<b>100</b>
Watched or listened live	<b>92</b>
Saw news/heard/read/discussed the debate	<b>8</b>

*Asked Of Those Who Watched/Listened To Debate Live*

Did you watch or listen to the first half of the debate, or the last half of it, or most of it, or did you watch or listen to the debate all the way through?

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
Half (net)	<b>27</b>
First half of it	<b>19</b>
Last half of it	<b>8</b>
Most/all (net)	<b>72</b>
Most of it	<b>19</b>
All the way through	<b>53</b>
Don't know (net)	<b>1</b>

*Asked Of All Registered in Original Survey and Debate Watchers in Panelback*

If the November 2008 general election for president were being held today and the choices were Barack Obama and Joe Biden on the Democrat ticket, and John McCain and Sarah Palin on the Republican ticket, for which ticket would you vote for: Obama and Biden or McCain and Palin, or would you vote for a ticket from some other party? (Includes Leaners)

----- Question Asked In Original Survey -----

	Registered Voters		Likely Voters	
	<u>ALL</u>	<u>WATCHED</u>	<u>ALL</u>	<u>WATCHED</u>
Obama / Biden	<b>46</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>49</b>
McCain / Palin	<b>44</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>45</b>
Someone else	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Don't know	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	Registered Voters		Likely Voters	
	<u>WATCHED</u>		<u>WATCHED</u>	
Obama / Biden	<b>49</b>		<b>50</b>	
McCain / Palin	<b>44</b>		<b>46</b>	
Someone Else	<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>	
Don't know	<b>6</b>		<b>3</b>	

*Asked Only of Debate Watchers*

First off... who do you think did the best job -- or won -- the debate between Barack Obama and John McCain, or do you think the debate was about even?

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
Obama (net)	<u>33</u>
Obama by wide margin	18
Obama by narrow margin	16
About even	<u>34</u>
McCain (net)	<u>29</u>
McCain by narrow margin	7
McCain by wide margin	21
Don't know (net)	<u>4</u>

*Asked Only of Debate Watchers*

Who did you think seemed more knowledgeable -- Barack Obama or John McCain, or do you think they were about even? Did (Obama/McCain) seem more knowledgeable by a narrow margin or a wide margin?

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
Obama (net)	<u>32</u>
Obama by wide margin	21
Obama by narrow margin	12
About even	<u>27</u>
McCain (net)	<u>38</u>
McCain by narrow margin	10
McCain by wide margin	27
Don't know (net)	<u>3</u>

*Asked Only of Debate Watchers*

Who do you think seemed more "presidential"-- Barack Obama or John McCain, or do you think they were about even? Did (Obama/McCain) seem more presidential by a narrow margin or a wide margin?

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
Obama (net)	<u>46</u>
Obama by a wide margin	37
Obama by a narrow margin	9
About Even	<u>19</u>
McCain (net)	<u>33</u>
McCain by a narrow margin	7
McCain by a wide Margin	26
Don't know (net)	<u>2</u>

*Asked Only of Debate Watchers*

Did you think that one candidate attacked his opponent more than the other, or did they attack each other equally? (IF ONE ATTACKED MORE) Which one attacked more? (WAIT FOR REPLY) Did (Obama/McCain) attack much more than (McCain/Obama) or somewhat more?

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
Obama attacked more(net)	<u>8</u>
Obama much more	4
Obama somewhat more	4
Equally	<u>60</u>
McCain attacked more (net)	<u>27</u>
McCain somewhat more	12
McCain much more	15
Don't know (net)	<u>5</u>

*Asked Only of Debate Watchers*

Do you think either candidate made a mistake, or not? (IF YES) Which one? (IF BOTH) Who made the worst mistake? (WAIT FOR REPLY) Do you think it was a small mistake or a big blunder?

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
Obama made a mistake (mistake)	<u>20</u>
Obama made a big blunder	<u>11</u>
Obama made a small mistake	<u>9</u>
Neither candidate made a mistake	<u>44</u>
McCain made a mistake (net)	<u>16</u>
McCain made a small mistake	<u>9</u>
McCain made a big blunder	<u>8</u>
Don't know (net)	<u>19</u>

*Asked Only of Debate Watchers*

Now that you have heard both candidates talk about the issues during the debate, thinking of the issues which are most important to you, are you more in agreement on those issues with Barack Obama or John McCain?

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
Neither (vol)	<u>3</u>
Barack Obama	<u>50</u>
John McCain	<u>41</u>
Not sure	<u>6</u>

*Asked Only of Debate Watchers*

Did either of the candidates say a phrase or sentence that sticks in your mind when you think about the debate, or not? (IF YES) Who said it, Obama or McCain?

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
No statement stands out	<u>62</u>
Obama	<u>12</u>
McCain	<u>16</u>
Not sure	<u>10</u>

*Asked Of Debate Watchers Who Recalled A Statement/Phrase*

Was the statement you remember a positive or negative one about Obama, or a positive or negative one about McCain, or was it neutral, that is not about either candidate in particular?

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
Positive Obama	<u>24</u>
Negative Obama	<u>34</u>
Negative McCain	<u>18</u>
Positive McCain	<u>12</u>
Neutral	<u>10</u>
Not sure	<u>2</u>

*Asked Of All Registered in Original Survey and Debate Watchers in Panelback*

Do you have a positive or negative feeling about Barack Obama? (IF POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE) Is it very or only somewhat (positive/negative)?

----- Question Asked In Original Survey -----

	<u>ALL</u>	<u>WATCHED</u>
Haven't heard (vol)	<u>1</u>	-
Positive (net)	<u>50</u>	<u>51</u>
Very positive	<u>36</u>	<u>39</u>
Somewhat positive	<u>14</u>	<u>12</u>
Negative (net)	<u>37</u>	<u>42</u>
Somewhat negative	<u>15</u>	<u>13</u>
Very negative	<u>22</u>	<u>29</u>
Neutral (vol)	<u>10</u>	<u>6</u>
Don't know (net)	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
Positive (net)	<u>54</u>
Very positive	<u>41</u>
Somewhat positive	<u>14</u>
Negative (net)	<u>34</u>
Somewhat negative	<u>8</u>
Very negative	<u>25</u>
Neutral (vol)	<u>11</u>
Don't know (net)	<u>1</u>

*Asked Of All Registered in Original Survey and Debate Watchers in Panelback*

Do you have a positive or negative feeling about John McCain? (IF POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE) Is it very or only somewhat (positive/negative)?

----- Question Asked In Original Survey -----

	<u>ALL</u>	<u>WATCHED</u>
Haven't heard (vol)	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
Positive (net)	<u>50</u>	<u>50</u>
Very positive	<u>30</u>	<u>33</u>
Somewhat positive	<u>20</u>	<u>17</u>
Negative (net)	<u>36</u>	<u>39</u>
Somewhat negative	<u>15</u>	<u>18</u>
Very negative	<u>21</u>	<u>20</u>
Neutral (vol)	<u>11</u>	<u>9</u>
Don't know (net)	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
Positive (net)	<u>51</u>
Very positive	<u>25</u>
Somewhat positive	<u>26</u>
Negative (net)	<u>40</u>
Somewhat negative	<u>19</u>
Very negative	<u>21</u>
Neutral (vol)	<u>9</u>

*Asked Only of Debate Watchers*

Did you hear or read anything about John McCain wanting to postpone this first debate, or haven't you heard anything about that?

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
Heard about it	<b>94</b>
Haven't heard about it	<b>6</b>

*Asked Only of Debate Watchers*

As you may know, last week, John McCain said he would suspend his presidential campaign and called for postponing the debate unless a bill to address the financial crisis was passed in time. Critics say he was playing politics with the financial crisis. Supporters say that it showed his willingness to put the good of the country ahead of his own political ambitions. How about you? Do you think McCain was playing politics, or acting in good faith for the good of the country?

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
Playing politics	<b>46</b>
Acting for the good of the country	<b>38</b>
Some of both (vol)	<b>7</b>
Not sure	<b>9</b>

*Asked Of Registered Voters in Original Survey*

Do you think Barack Obama has the right experience to be president, or not?

----- Question Asked In Original Survey -----

	<u>ALL</u>	<u>WATCHED</u>
Yes	<b>47</b>	<b>47</b>
No	<b>45</b>	<b>48</b>
Not sure	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>

*Asked Only of Debate Watchers*

Did Barack Obama's performance in the debate make you change your mind about whether or not he has the right experience to be president? (IF CHANGED) Are you more, or less, inclined to think that he has the right experience to be president, now? (IF MORE/LESS) Much (more/less) or only somewhat (more/less)?

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
More (net)	<b>9</b>
Much more	<b>4</b>
Somewhat more	<b>5</b>
Less (net)	<b>9</b>
Somewhat less	<b>7</b>
Much less	<b>2</b>
Did not change opinion	<b>81</b>
Don't know (net)	<b>1</b>

*Asked Of Registered Voters in Original Survey*

Do you think John McCain has the right experience to be president, or not?

----- Question Asked In Original Survey -----

	<u>ALL</u>	<u>WATCHED</u>
Yes	<b>80</b>	<b>82</b>
No	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>
Not sure	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>

*Asked Only of Debate Watchers*

Did John McCain's performance in the debate make you change your mind about whether or not he has the right experience to be president? (IF CHANGED) Are you more, or less, inclined to think that he has the right experience to be president, now? (IF MORE/LESS) Much (more/less) or only somewhat (more/less)?

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
More (net)	<b><u>11</u></b>
Much more	<b>6</b>
Somewhat more	<b>5</b>
Less (net)	<b><u>5</u></b>
Somewhat less	<b>2</b>
Much less	<b>3</b>
Did not change opinion	<b><u>81</u></b>
Don't know (net)	<b><u>3</u></b>

*Asked Of All Registered in Original Survey and Debate Watchers in Panelback*

Who would do a better job of handling this financial crisis next year: Barack Obama or John McCain?

----- Question Asked In Original Survey -----

	<u>ALL</u>	<u>WATCHED</u>
Neither of them (vol)	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
Barack Obama	<b>48</b>	<b>45</b>
John McCain	<b>35</b>	<b>39</b>
Both equally (vol)	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
Not sure	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
Neither of them (vol)	<b>8</b>
Barack Obama	<b>48</b>
John McCain	<b>36</b>
Both equally (vol)	<b>2</b>
Not sure	<b>6</b>

*Asked Of All Registered in Original Survey and Debate Watchers in Panelback*

Do you have a lot of confidence, some confidence, or no confidence in Barack Obama's ability to deal wisely with an international crisis?

----- Question Asked In Original Survey -----

	<u>ALL</u>	<u>WATCHED</u>
Confidence (net)	<u>67</u>	<u>61</u>
A lot of confidence	<u>31</u>	<u>32</u>
Some confidence	<u>36</u>	<u>29</u>
No confidence	<u>29</u>	<u>36</u>
Don't know (net)	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
Confidence (net)	<u>69</u>
A lot of confidence	<u>34</u>
Some confidence	<u>34</u>
No confidence	<u>29</u>
Don't know (net)	<u>2</u>

*Asked Of All Registered in Original Survey and Debate Watchers in Panelback*

Do you have a lot of confidence, some confidence, or no confidence in John McCain's ability to deal wisely with an international crisis?

----- Question Asked In Original Survey -----

	<u>ALL</u>	<u>WATCHED</u>
Confidence (net)	<u>77</u>	<u>79</u>
A lot of confidence	<u>42</u>	<u>47</u>
Some confidence	<u>35</u>	<u>32</u>
No confidence	<u>20</u>	<u>19</u>
Don't know (net)	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
Confidence (net)	<u>76</u>
A lot of confidence	<u>42</u>
Some confidence	<u>34</u>
No confidence	<u>23</u>
Don't know (net)	<u>1</u>

*Asked Of All Registered in Original Survey and Debate Watchers in Panelback*

Who do you think has the better ideas for strengthening the nation's economy: Barack Obama or John McCain?

----- Question Asked In Original Survey -----

	<u>ALL</u>	<u>WATCHED</u>
Neither of them (vol)	<u>8</u>	<u>15</u>
Barack Obama	<u>46</u>	<u>48</u>
John McCain	<u>32</u>	<u>32</u>
Both equally (vol)	<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>
Not sure	<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
Neither of them (vol)	<u>12</u>
Barack Obama	<u>49</u>
John McCain	<u>28</u>
Both equally (vol)	<u>7</u>
Not sure	<u>4</u>



*Asked Of All Registered in Original Survey and Debate Watchers in Panelback*

Who do you think would be best at dealing with the rising gas and oil prices: Barack Obama or John McCain?

----- Question Asked In Original Survey -----

	<u>ALL</u>	<u>WATCHED</u>
Neither of them (vol)	11	12
Barack Obama	46	48
John McCain	31	33
Both equally (vol)	5	4
Not sure	7	3

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
Neither of them (vol)	18
Barack Obama	43
John McCain	30
Both equally (vol)	5
Not sure	4

*Asked Of All Registered in Original Survey and Debate Watchers in Panelback*

Who do you think has more honesty and integrity: Barack Obama or John McCain?

----- Question Asked In Original Survey -----

	<u>ALL</u>	<u>WATCHED</u>
Neither of them (vol)	4	4
Barack Obama	40	40
John McCain	37	40
Both equally (vol)	14	11
Not sure	5	5

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
Neither of them (vol)	4
Barack Obama	43
John McCain	34
Both equally (vol)	17
Not sure	2

*Asked Of All Registered in Original Survey and Debate Watchers in Panelback*

Who do you think will substantially change the way things are done in Washington: Barack Obama or John McCain?

----- Question Asked In Original Survey -----

	<u>ALL</u>	<u>WATCHED</u>
Neither of them (vol)	12	10
Barack Obama	51	50
John McCain	27	31
Other candidate (vol)	-	-
Both equally (vol)	6	7
Not sure	4	2

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
Neither of them (vol)	18
Barack Obama	47
John McCain	25
Both equally (vol)	8
Not sure	2

*Asked Of All Registered in Original Survey and Debate Watchers in Panelback*

Who do you think would be best at achieving success in Iraq: Barack Obama or John McCain?

----- Question Asked In Original Survey -----

	<u>ALL</u>	<u>WATCHED</u>
Neither of them (vol)	7	8
Barack Obama	34	35
John McCain	50	52
Both equally (vol)	3	1
Not sure	6	4

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
Neither of them (vol)	3
Barack Obama	35
John McCain	48
Both equally (vol)	7
Not sure	7

*Asked Of All Registered in Original Survey and Debate Watchers in Panelback*

Who do you think cares more about people like you: Barack Obama or John McCain?

----- Question Asked In Original Survey -----

	<u>ALL</u>	<u>WATCHED</u>
Neither of them (vol)	6	6
Barack Obama	48	45
John McCain	31	34
Both equally (vol)	10	12
Not sure	5	3

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
Neither of them (vol)	8
Barack Obama	51
John McCain	27
Other candidate (vol)	1
Both equally (vol)	11
Not sure	2

*Asked Of All Registered in Original Survey and Debate Watchers in Panelback*

Who would be best at protecting the country from terrorism: Barack Obama or John McCain?

----- Question Asked In Original Survey -----

	<u>ALL</u>	<u>WATCHED</u>
Neither of them (vol)	5	6
Barack Obama	29	31
John McCain	54	52
Both equally (vol)	7	8
Not sure	5	3

----- Voters Contacted Post-Debate -----

	<u>WATCHED</u>
Neither of them (vol)	3
Barack Obama	34
John McCain	52
Both equally (vol)	8
Not sure	3