Appendix A: Sample and survey question wording

Survey sample information

YouGov invited 2,680 people to complete Wave 1 of the survey, which was conducted between December 16, 2020 and December 23, 2020. The response rate was 69.31%. The eligible and complete responses were then matched down to a sample of 1,500 to produce the final dataset for Wave 1. The respondents were matched to a sampling frame on gender, age, race, and education. The frame was constructed by stratified sampling from the full 2018 American Community Survey 1-year sample with selection within strata by weighted sampling with replacements (using the person weights on the public use file). Those same 1,500 people were invited to complete the second wave of the survey, which was collected from March 2, 2021 to March 8, 2021. In total, 1015 respondents completed Wave 2, for a retention rate of 67.66%. After removing respondents who sped through specific batteries of questions in the survey, the final sample was N_{W1} = 1421 and N_{W2} = 975. All analyses presented in the study do not use YouGov sampling weights, though results are substantively the same whether or not sampling weights are included.

Political interest

The following two items were averaged together to create a measure of political interest (M_{W1} = 3.50, SD_{W1} = 1.01, r_{W1} = .76)

How closely do you follow news and information about current events?

1. Not at all closely
2. Not very closely
3. Somewhat closely
4. Very closely
5. Extremely closely

More generally, how interested are you in politics?

1. Not at all interested
2. Not very interested
3. Somewhat interested
4. Very interested
5. Extremely interested

News media use

Four of the following items were averaged together to create a measure of traditional news use (M_{W1} = 3.12, SD_{W1} = 1.49, α_{W1} = .71; M_{W2} = 3.04, SD_{W2} = 1.47, α_{W2} = .65) and three other items were averaged together for a measure of online news use (M_{W1} = 3.69, SD_{W1} = 1.62, α_{W1} = .68; M_{W2} = 3.53, SD_{W2} = 1.58, α_{W2} = .61).

How often have you used the sources listed below to get news or information about current events in the past 14 days? Please select the response option that best represents how often you used these sources.

Traditional news media
National nightly television news on ABC, CBS, NBC, or PBS
Local television news
Local or regional newspapers (online or in print)
National newspapers (online or in print)

Online news media
Online news sites
Mobile news apps on a phone or tablet (such as Apple News or Google News)
Search engine (such as Google or Bing)

1. Never
2. Once
3. Once per week
4. A couple times per week
5. Several times per week
6. Every day
7. Several times a day

Social media news use
The following three items were averaged together to create a measure of political interest (M_{W1} = 3.29, SD_{W1} = 1.79, α_{W1} = .86; M_{W2} = 2.90, SD_{W2} = 1.68, α_{W2} = .83).

How often in the past 14 days have you used social media for the following reasons?

To get news or information about politics
To get news or information about science
To get news or information about health

1. Never
2. Once in the past 14 days
3. Once per week
4. A few times per week
5. Several times per week
6. Every day
7. Several times a day

Do your own research perceptions
The following three items were averaged together to create a measure of DYOR perceptions (M_{W1} = 4.16, SD_{W1} = 1.42, α_{W1} = .80; M_{W2} = 3.99, SD_{W2} = 1.45, α_{W2} = .82).

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Anyone can be an expert on something if they do enough research.

I prefer to do my own research rather than rely on experts and intellectuals.
The opinions of people who have done their own research are just as valid as the opinions of experts and intellectuals.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Somewhat Disagree
4. Neither Disagree nor Agree
5. Somewhat Agree
6. Agree
7. Strongly Agree

Trust in science institutions

The following four items were averaged together to create a measure of trust in science institutions (M_{W1} = 4.79, SD_{W1} = 1.39, α_{W1} = .86; M_{W2} = 4.74, SD_{W2} = 1.42, α_{W2} = .87).

How trustworthy do you think the following groups are when it comes to acting in the best interest of the American people?

Colleges and universities
Scientists
Doctors and medical scientists
The Center for Disease Control (CDC)

1. Extremely untrustworthy
2. Mostly untrustworthy
3. Somewhat untrustworthy
4. Neither trustworthy nor untrustworthy
5. Somewhat trustworthy
6. Mostly trustworthy
7. Extremely trustworthy

COVID-19 beliefs

The following items were coded so high values reflected accurate beliefs and then averaged together to create a measure of beliefs about COVID-19 (M_{W1} = 3.63, SD_{W1} = 0.76; α_{W1} = .81; M_{W2} = 3.62, SD_{W2} = 0.81; α_{W1} = .82).

In your opinion, are the following statements about COVID-19 true or false?

The current strain of COVID-19 was made in a lab (reverse coded).
It is possible to transmit COVID-19 to others even if you do not have symptoms.
COVID-19 is more deadly than the flu.
It is impossible to get COVID-19 twice (reverse coded).
Only the elderly and people with preexisting conditions are susceptible to severe illness and death from COVID-19 (reverse coded).
Taking mega-doses of vitamin C can prevent or cure COVID-19 (reverse coded).
Hydroxychloroquine can prevent or cure COVID-19 (reverse coded).
COVID-19 will get worse during the colder months.

Hospitals and doctors are profiting off COVID-19 (reverse coded).

1. Definitely false
2. Probably false
3. Unsure
4. Probably true
5. Definitely true

Concern about COVID-19

Two of the following items were averaged together to create a measure of COVID-19 health concern (M_{W1} = 5.05, SD_{W1} = 1.77, r_{W1} = .75; M_{W2} = 4.79, SD_{W2} = 1.83, r_{W2} = .75) and the two other items were averaged together for a measure of COVID-19 economic concerns (M_{W1} = 5.33, SD_{W1} = 1.38, r_{W1} = .43; M_{W2} = 5.12, SD_{W2} = 1.42, r_{W2} = .40).

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

COVID-19 health concerns
I am personally concerned about contracting the COVID-19.
I am concerned about my friends and family contracting the COVID-19.

COVID-19 economic concerns
I am worried about the impact of COVID-19 on my finances and income.
I am worried about the economic impact COVID-19 is having on my community.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Somewhat Disagree
4. Neither Disagree nor Agree
5. Somewhat Agree
6. Agree
7. Strongly Agree