



THOUGHT STARTER

What a difference a year makes!

At the end of 2019, Ipsos surveyed Americans on their thoughts about the past year and their expectations for 2020. At the time, 74 percent of Americans felt optimistic looking ahead. Unfortunately, the coronavirus pandemic turned 2020 into one of the most challenging years most of us have ever experienced.

2020: Good riddance

At the end of 2019, a strong economy and low unemployment had many Americans feeling good about 2020, according to findings from Ipsos. That positivity was short-lived. In January 2020, the U.S. reported its first confirmed case of the coronavirus. The following months added to Americans' distress as the pandemic spread across the country, punctuated by widespread protests, growing unemployment, and political strife.

In response to these events, only one-third of Americans (34 percent) now state that 2020 has been a good year for them personally, down by half from what they reported in 2019. Fewer than one-in-ten Americans say 2020 was a good year for the U.S.

Year-end comparisons:

American sentiment:	2020 %	2019 %	2018 %	2017 %
Personal level				
Good year	34	72	75	68
Bad year	66	28	25	32
Country as a whole				
Good year	9	50	52	39
Bad year	91	50	48	61

As Americans gear up for an especially difficult 2020 holiday season, families face huge challenges to safely celebrate together. COVID-19 worries are front and center as 2020 ends. Americans rate the grueling political landscape as a much lower concern when it comes to celebrating the holidays.

Makes celebrating holidays with family/friends more challenging:	2020 %
Coronavirus	63
Neither	25
Political landscape	12





Also facing a turbulent holiday season: U.S. retailers. Americans say they expect their holiday spending to change significantly this year. Almost twice as many Americans indicate they plan to spend less this holiday season compared to 2019.

Compared to last year's holiday spending, plan to spend:	2020 %	2019 %
More	7	11
The same	53	67
Less	40	22

New year, new you

Despite the pandemic and the political landscape, Americans say they plan to make positive changes in 2021 when it comes to their personal lives. Those plans are similar to ones from their pre-pandemic lives, with Americans placing fitness and finances at the top of their list of New Year's resolutions.

Plan to change in 2021:	%
Exercise more	48
Lose weight	41
Save more/improve finances	40
Eat cleaner/healthier	39
Have a more positive attitude	37
Be more patient/kind	33
Travel more	29
Be more respectful of others	23
Use less social media	20
Be more accepting/inclusive	19
Get new job	19
Volunteer more	16
Quit/cut down on looking at the news	14
Quit smoking cigarettes	8
Quit/cut down on alcohol	7
Quit vaping/e-cigarettes	3
Other	2
None of the above	8

Also on the minds of Americans as the new year approaches: Buying a home. The National Association of Realtors reported existing home sales hit a 14-year high in August 2020, and inventory is experiencing new record lows. Looking ahead to 2021, 12 percent of Americans expect to purchase a home, in line with 2020 expectations (13 percent).

Staying hopeful

For people ready to say goodbye to all things 2020, the new year is likely to bring circumstances that may offer hope. Several COVID-19 vaccines will soon be available. A new president takes office in January. A nationwide return to in-class learning is expected.

Americans are a resilient group. The majority of us say we are optimistic heading into 2021, even after such a difficult year.

Think of upcoming year:	2021 %	2020 %
Optimistic—net	69	74
Very optimistic	14	25
Somewhat optimistic	55	49
Pessimistic—net	31	26
Somewhat pessimistic	24	20
Very pessimistic	7	6

Although 2021 is looking more encouraging to Americans, the majority do not think COVID-19 restrictions will end anytime soon. Looking ahead to next year's winter holiday season, the vast majority of Americans think masks and social distancing will still be around. Only 12 percent think we won't be seeing masks or social distancing.

Most-described restrictions in U.S. a year from now, end of 2021—masks and social distancing:	2020 %
Required indoors in more than half the states	41
Required indoors in less than half the states	18
Not required but strongly encouraged in all states	29
Rarely seen/gone in all states	12





Want to learn more about how Americans feel? Try Ipsos eNation Omnibus

One of the most important aspects of marketing is knowing your audience. The Ipsos eNation Omnibus is the ideal marketing tool because it can quickly measure public opinion and consumer attitudes about any topic, any time. Our rapid-response research is affordable, efficient, accurate, flexible and includes overnight and custom study options. These actionable Ipsos insights can be incorporated into your marketing strategy immediately.

Our **2020 Year In Review Study** provides details on what to expect for spending and health habits in 2021. This valuable information allows you to optimize messaging on an infinite number of products and categories or identify growth with potential product extensions.

If you would like complimentary access to this **2020 Year In Review Study**, a copy of a past Thought Starter omnibus study, or to learn more about eNation Omnibus, please contact us today.

Ipsos eNation Omnibus Thought Starters still available:

- End of Summer
- Coronavirus
- Recycling

Ipsos U.S. eNation Omnibus completes five national surveys each week. Ipsos Omnibus offers a variety of services, including overnight and custom studies. Data for this study was generated by an Ipsos eNation online omnibus study of 1,005 American adults, age 18 and older, conducted November 6–9, 2020. If you would like complimentary access to the **2020 Year In Review Study**, or to learn more about eNation omnibus, please contact:

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