

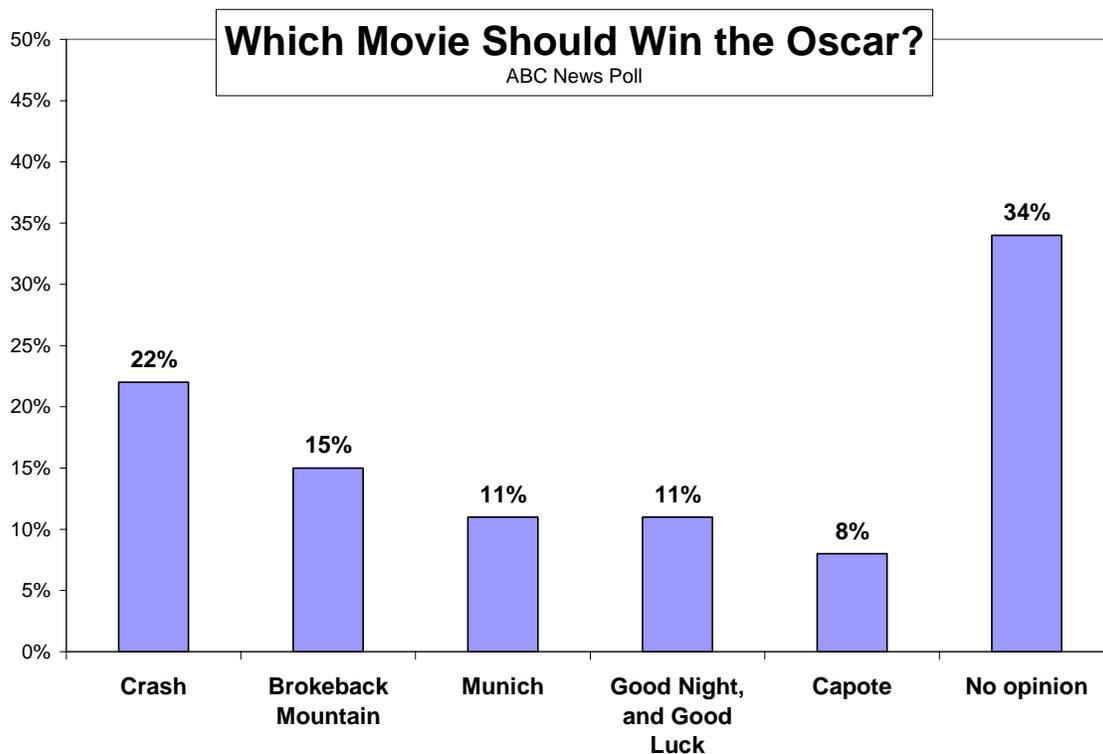
Oscar Crashers

“Crash” breaks through as the public’s top Oscar choice this year, but the real winner in a list of box-office laggards is no choice at all.

Twenty-two percent in this ABC News poll pick “Crash” for the Best Picture statuette, with “Brokeback Mountain” in second place at 15 percent. But – unusually – the biggest group, 34 percent, has no opinion on which flick should win.

That’s what happens when the nominees all rank 29th or lower on the year’s list for gross box office receipts: A lot of people just haven’t seen them. “No opinion” on the Oscar pick is 10 or more points higher this year than in recent years, when nominees included blockbusters such as “Lord of the Rings” and “Gladiator.”

As things stand, “Brokeback” is closely pursued by “Munich” and “Good Night, and Good Luck.” “Capote” rounds out the five-picture list.



ART – Hollywood ticket sales were down for a third straight year in 2005, and this year’s nominees, in particular, seem to be more about art than money. The top grosser on the

list, “Brokeback,” ranks only 29th for domestic ticket sales; “Crash” ranks 49th; “Capote” is 104th. Indeed the box office gross for all five nominees combined would only rank fifth on the year’s list of top-grossing films.

The disconnect between Academy members who selected the nominees and the movie-going public looks to do with the age-old conflict between reality and escapism. The five nominees all deal with “real life” situations, while the top five movies by box office take all are sci-fi adventures.

	Top domestic grossing 2005 films
1. Star Wars: Episode III	\$380,270,577
2. Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	\$288,733,970
3. Chronicles of Narnia	\$288,193,914
4. War of the Worlds	\$234,280,354
5. King Kong	\$216,682,440
29. Brokeback Mountain	\$75,383,067
49. Crash	\$53,404,817
64. Munich	\$46,079,435
90. Good Night, and Good Luck	\$30,323,531
104. Capote	\$23,441,493

GROUPS – Young adults and non-whites help boost “Crash,” a film about race relations in Los Angeles, to its first-place position: Non-whites and 18- to 34-year-olds are at least twice as likely as whites and people 35 and older to say it should win the Oscar.

Second-place “Brokeback,” an unusual love story (since it occurs between two cowboys), gets somewhat higher support from women than men, 18 percent vs. 12 percent. Men, for their part, are twice as likely as women to go for “Munich,” which has guns, explosions, geopolitics and angst.

Political divisions are muted: Republicans, Democrats and independents alike are more apt to pick “Crash” than “Brokeback” for the award. “Crash” also gets more votes in all regions, although “Brokeback” comes closer in the West and Northeast.

	Crash	Brokeback	Munich
Age 18-34	36%	12	15
Age 35+	15	17	9
White	17	16	10
Non-white	36	13	14
Men	23	12	15
Women	20	18	8
Democrats	24	18	10
Independents	22	15	11
Republicans	21	13	14

As usual, half of seniors have no preference among the five nominated films. They don't go out as much to the movies, or at least not to these movies.

The Oscars air at 8 p.m. Eastern, Sunday night, March 5, on ABC.

METHODOLOGY - This ABC News poll was conducted by telephone Feb. 22-26, 2006, among a random national sample of 1,001 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS Intersearch of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Jon Cohen.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollvault.html>.

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Full results follow (*= less than 0.5 percent).

1. I'm going to name the movies that have been nominated for the Academy Award for Best Picture this year. Which one do you think should win the Oscar?

	2/26/06
Crash	22
Brokeback Mountain	15
Munich	11
Good Night, and Good Luck	11
Capote	8
No opinion	34

Compare to:

	2/22/04
Lord of the Rings*	42
Seabiscuit	16
Mystic River	10
Lost in Translation	5
Master and Commander	3
No opinion	24

	3/17/02
Lord of the Rings	30
A Beautiful Mind*	28
Moulin Rouge	12
In the Bedroom	5
Gosford Park	2
No opinion	23

	3/18/01
Erin Brockovich	31
Gladiator*	28
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	7
Traffic	7
Chocolat	6
No opinion	21

3/19/00

The Green Mile	25
The Sixth Sense	22
American Beauty*	13
The Cider House Rules	5
The Insider	3
No opinion	32

*actual winner

END