

Comparing Gore and Bush On Exaggeration, Intellect and More

Suggestions that Al Gore exaggerates his accomplishments or George W. Bush isn't sufficiently brilliant don't carry much weight with average Americans. But in two other areas – leadership and personality – Bush has a significantly better public image.

Ask Americans who's smarter, or who's the bigger exaggerator, and the two men run about even. That's despite Gore's claim to have invented the Internet and inspired the novel "Love Story," and despite Bush's college average of a gentleman's C and his failure to pass a pop quiz on world leaders.

But there are two areas in which the two are sharply differentiated, with Gore on the short side of both. Bush has a 15-point lead in this poll on which candidate is a stronger leader, and a 14-point lead for the "more appealing personality."

Which candidate..	Gore	Bush	Gore diff.
Is more likely to exaggerate his accomplishments	39%	42	-3
Is more intelligent	37	34	+3
Is a stronger leader	37	52	-15
Has a more appealing personality	37	51	-14

Weak leadership ratings have dogged Gore as he seeks to emerge from Bill Clinton's shadow after seven years as the loyal No. 2. That's not an uncommon problem for a sitting vice president; while one in the postwar period has gone on to win the presidency (George Bush), two others have lost (Hubert Humphrey and Richard Nixon).

HONESTY and EMPATHY – Bush and Gore also run about even in two more attributes tested in this poll, honesty and empathy. Asked who's more honest and trustworthy, 38 percent pick Gore, 41 percent Bush. On who better understands the problems of average Americans, it's a 44-41 percent split.

All these underscore how average Americans come to their own, independent views of candidate attributes – and also how each election has its own dynamics built around the individual competitors. In 1992 President Bush had strong leadership ratings, but quite poor ratings on empathy. Bill Clinton was rated relatively weak on leadership, stronger on empathy.

ALLEGIANCE – Naturally, allegiance plays a role in these views. Among people who support Gore for president, two-thirds think Bush is the bigger exaggerator; among those who support Bush, nearly two-thirds say it's Gore who's more apt to stretch the truth.

But allegiances are not entirely determinative. Eighty-nine percent of Bush's supporters think their man is the stronger leader, compared to 75 percent of Gore's. And two-thirds of Gore's supporters think their candidate is more intelligent, compared to 58 percent of Bush's.

	Gore Supporters	Bush Supporters	Difference
Stronger leader	Gore, 75%	Bush, 89	14 points
Better personality	Gore, 68	Bush, 80	12
Understands problems	Gore, 86	Bush, 78	8
More intelligent	Gore, 66	Bush, 58	8
Bigger exaggerator	Bush, 67	Gore, 63	4
Honest/trustworthy	Gore, 76	Bush, 77	1

METHODOLOGY –This ABC News 20/20 poll was conducted by telephone June 8-11, 2000, among a random national sample of 1,204 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Field work by TNS Intersearch of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet, at:
<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/politics/PollVault/PollVault.html>

Here are the full results (*= less than 0.5 percent):

11. Which candidate, (Bush) or (Gore) do you think...

6/11/00

	Gore	Bush	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No op.
A. Is more likely to exaggerate his accomplishments	39	42	9	2	8
B. Has a more appealing personality	37	51	3	5	3
C. Is more intelligent	37	34	12	3	14
D. Is more honest and trustworthy	38	41	6	9	5
E. Is a stronger leader	37	52	2	3	6
F. Better understands the problems of people like you	44	41	2	9	4

END