

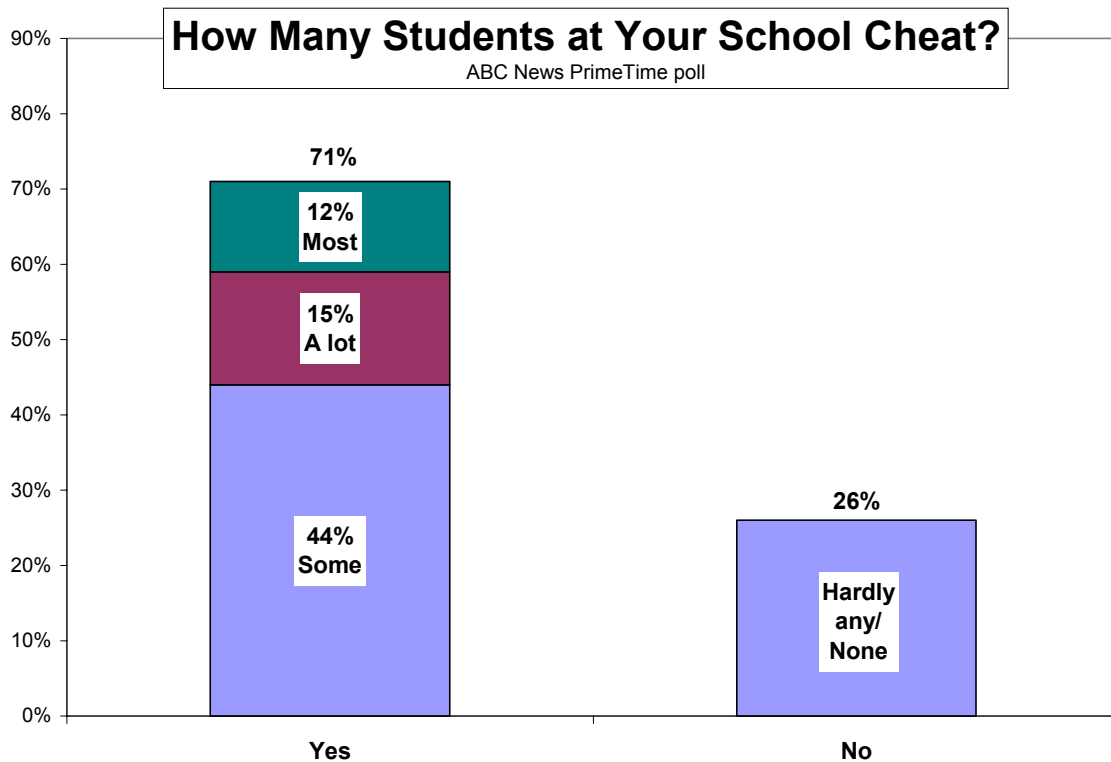
Cheating Among Teens: Widespread, and Often Works

Cheating in American high schools is widespread if not endemic. And it usually works.

That's the report card from American teen-agers. In an exclusive ABC News Primetime poll of 12- to 17-year-olds, seven in 10 say at least some kids in their school cheat on tests. Six in 10 have friends who've cheated. About one in three say they themselves have cheated, rising to 43 percent of older teens. And most say cheaters don't get caught.

That doesn't make it right in most students' eyes: Nearly all teens in this national, random-sample survey say cheating's wrong. Most who admit to cheating say it was a rare thing. And fewer than three in 10 say "most" or "a lot" of kids in their school cheat; 44 percent say it's just "some."

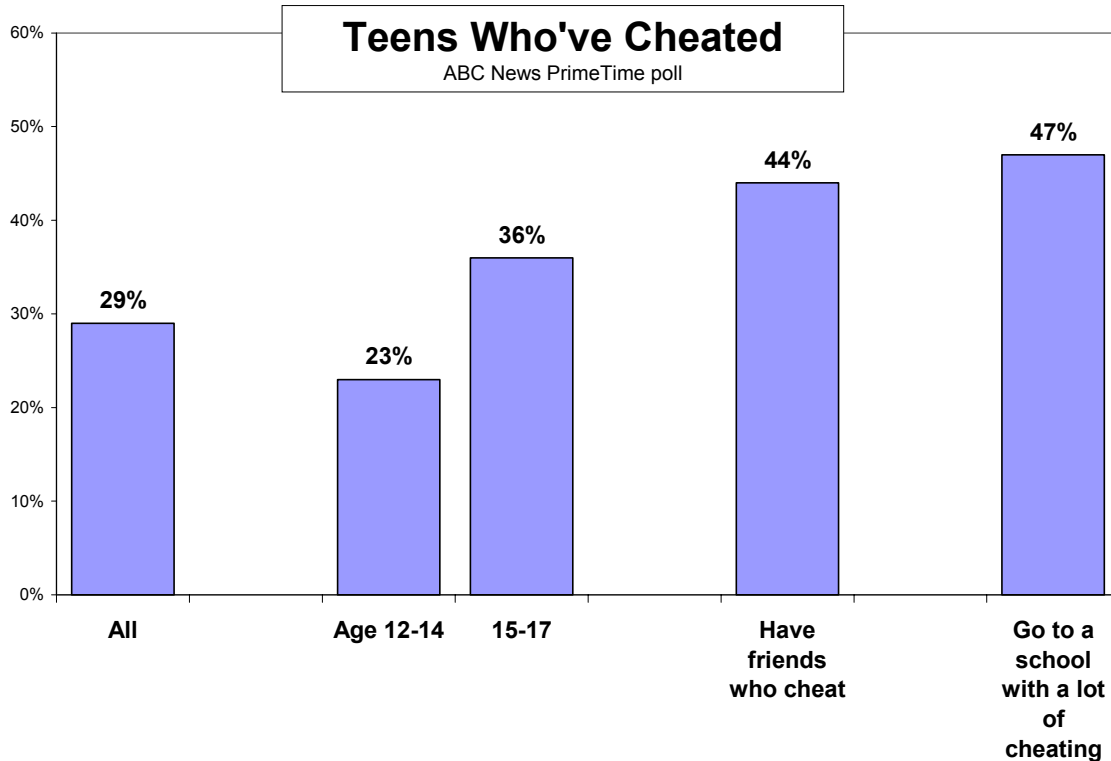
Still, though, 12 percent – nearly one in eight – say "most" kids in their school cheat on tests.



This poll was conducted to support an ABC News Primetime special on cheating in school that airs Thursday, April 29, at 10 p.m. Eastern.

FACTORS – Who's more likely to cheat? The crowd teens hang out with is one factor: Those with friends who've cheated are more apt to be tempted, and actually to cheat, themselves.

Age is another. Older teens are more apt than younger ones to say a lot of kids at their school cheat, to have friends that cheat and to say they've been tempted to cheat. Among 12- to 14-year-olds, 23 percent admit cheating; that rises to 36 percent of kids age 15-17, and, as noted, peaks at 43 percent of those age 16-17.



PARENTS – Communication on the issue is in short supply: Just one-third of kids say they and their parents have had a serious talk about cheating in school. But it's not clear that it helps: Kids who have spoken about it with their parents are no less likely to have cheated, or been tempted to cheat, as those who haven't.

Still, those who are the most likely to say they've cheated – kids age 16-17 – are the least likely to say they've talked about the issue with their parents. Just 27 percent say they've done so, compared with 41 percent of 12- to 13-year-olds.

Kids do know right from wrong on cheating. Only eight percent believe that in order to get ahead in life, you have to cheat from time to time; 90 percent, instead, say cheaters will lose out in the long run. And 96 percent say their parents would rather have them do their own best work, regardless of the grade, than get good grades if it means cheating.

Rather than a talk, greater risk and better teacher involvement could serve as deterrents. A third of kids say they'd be more likely to cheat if they knew they'd never get caught; this suggests that better enforcement could help curb the practice.

In a seemingly related result, almost as many teens, nearly three in 10, say they'd be more likely to cheat if they had a teacher who didn't seem to care about their work. Teachers who develop student loyalty – as well as those who guard against cheating – also may be better-equipped to prevent it.

Grade pressure seems less a consideration. Fewer, 14 percent, say they'd be more apt to cheat if they thought other students were cheating and by being honest they'd get a lower grade. About as many, 16 percent, say they'd be more apt to cheat in a class they thought didn't matter as far as their future.

	More likely to cheat?	
	Yes	No
If you knew you'd never be caught	34%	65
If you had a teacher who didn't seem to care about you and your work	28	71
If it was in a class that didn't matter	16	83
If you knew other students were cheating and by being honest you might get a lower grade	14	85

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News Primetime poll was conducted by telephone Feb. 4-8, 2004, among a random national sample of 504 12- to 17-year-olds. The results have a 4.5-point error margin. Field work by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Dalia Sussman.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet at: [http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/Poll Vault/Poll Vault.html](http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/Poll_Vault/Poll_Vault.html)

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Results follow:

*= less than 0.5 percent

1. As far as you're aware, how many students at your school cheat on tests – most, a lot but not most, some but not a lot or hardly any?

-----Most/Lot/Some-----				--Hardly any/None--			
	A lot but	Some but		Hardly	None	No	
NET	Most	not most	not a lot	NET	any	(vol.)	op.

2/8/04 All	71	12	15	44	26	24	2	3
12-14	62	10	11	41	35	34	1	3
15-17	81	14	20	47	17	14	3	2

2. Separate from tests, how about students who hand in papers or other homework that's not really their own work - maybe downloaded off the internet, copied from a book or copied from another student. As far as you're aware, how many students at your school hand in homework that's not their own work?

		-----Most/Lot/Some-----				--Hardly any/None--			
			A lot but	Some but		Hardly	None	No	
		NET	Most	not most	not a lot	NET	any	(vol.)	op.
2/8/04 All		67	11	18	38	32	30	2	1
12-14		58	9	15	35	40	39	2	2
15-17		75	13	20	42	24	21	3	1

3. Do you personally have any friends who you know have cheated on tests or homework at school, or not?

		Yes	No	No opin.
2/8/04 All		61	38	1
12-14		52	46	1
15-17		70	29	1

3a. (IF YES, Q3) Did they get caught cheating, or not?

		Yes	No	No opin.
2/8/04 All		30	70	*
12-14		36	64	*
15-17		26	74	*

4. Have you yourself ever been tempted to cheat on a test or homework, or not?

		Yes	No	No opin.
2/8/04 All		52	48	1
12-14		43	56	1
15-17		60	39	1

4a. (IF TEMPTED TO CHEAT, Q4) Have you ever done that, or not?

		Yes	No	No opin.
2/8/04 All		57	43	*
12-14		54	46	*
15-17		59	40	1

Q4/4a NET All Respondents

		-----Tempted to cheat-----			Never been	No
		NET	Cheated	Did not cheat	tempted	op.
2/8/04 All		52	29	22	48	1
12-14		43	23	20	56	1
15-17		60	36	24	39	1

4b. (IF YES, Q4a) Have you done that very often, somewhat often, only occasionally, or rarely?

-----Often----- -----Not often-----

	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Occasionally	Rarely	No opin.
2/8/04	7	2	5	93	28	64	*

4c. (IF YES, Q4a) Have you ever been caught at that, or not?

	Yes	No	No opin.
2/8/04	24	76	*

5. Let's talk about some possible circumstances. For each, please tell me if it would make you more likely to cheat, or if it wouldn't make much difference in whether or not you cheated. First is (READ ITEM)? How about (NEXT ITEM), in that case would you be more likely to cheat, or wouldn't it make much difference in whether or not you cheated?

2/8/04 - Summary Table

		More likely	No diff.	No opin.
a. If you knew you'd never be caught	All	34	65	1
	12-14	31	68	1
	15-17	37	62	1
b. If you had a teacher who didn't seem to care about you and your work	All	28	71	1
	12-14	23	75	1
	15-17	32	67	1
c. If you knew other students were cheating and thought that by being honest you might get a lower grade than theirs	All	14	85	1
	12-14	14	85	1
	15-17	13	85	2
d. If it was in a class that you thought didn't matter much as far as your future	All	16	83	1
	12-14	17	82	1
	15-17	16	84	*

6. Which of these do you agree with more: (If you're going to get ahead in life you have to cheat from time to time); Or, (Cheaters eventually will lose out in the long run)?

		You have to cheat from time to time	Cheaters will lose out	No opin.
2/8/04	All	8	90	2
	12-14	7	93	1
	15-17	10	86	4

7. Have you and your parents ever had a serious talk about cheating in school, or not?

		Yes	No	No opin.
2/8/04	All	33	67	*
	12-14	37	63	1
	15-17	29	71	*

8. What do you think is more important to your parents - that you (get good grades, even if it means cheating); or that (you do your own best work, regardless of the grade)?

		Good grades	Own best work	No opin.
2/8/04	All	3	96	1
	12-14	2	97	1
	15-17	4	96	*

END