

Table 2.49

Attitudes toward the penalty for murder

United States, selected years 1985-2004^a

Question: "If you could choose between the following two approaches, which do you think is the better penalty for murder--the death penalty or life imprisonment, with absolutely no possibility of parole?"

	Death penalty	Life imprisonment without possibility of parole	Don't know/ refused ^b
1985	56%	34%	10%
1986	55	35	10
1991	53	35	11
1992	50	37	13
1993	59	29	12
1994	50	32	18
1997 ^c	61	29	10
1999 ^c	56	38	6
2000	52	37	11
2001 ^c	54	42	4
2003	53	44	3
2004 ^c	50	46	4

Note: Sample sizes vary from year to year; the data for 2004 are based on telephone interviews with a randomly selected national sample of 1,000 adults, 18 years of age and older, conducted May 2-4, 2004. For a discussion of public opinion survey sampling procedures, see [Appendix 5](#).

^aPercents may not add to 100 because of rounding.

^bIncludes volunteered responses such as "other," "neither," and "depends."

^cAsked of a half sample.

Source: The Gallup Organization, Inc., *The Gallup Poll* [Online]. Available: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/> [May 19, 2004]. Table adapted by SOURCEBOOK staff. Reprinted by permission.