

DEBATES

Three-in-Four Britons Welcome Decision to Hold Leaders Debates

Almost half of respondents say the televised debates will be important in determining which party they will support in the General Election.

[LONDON – Jan. 15, 2010] – Voters in Great Britain have embraced the decision to hold televised debates featuring the leaders of the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties during the General Election campaign, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample of 2,005 British adults, 75 per cent of respondents believe the announcement is a positive development.

In addition, 28 per cent of respondents say they will do all they can to watch the debates, 45 per cent will watch them if they are in but will not make a special effort, and 26 per cent are unlikely to tune in.

The public is evenly split on the effect the three televised meetings will have on the election, with 49 per cent saying the debates will be "very important" or "moderately important" in determining who they will vote for, and 51 per cent stating that the debates will be "not that important" or "not at all important."

Half of Britons (53%) think the Scottish National Party (SNP) and Plaid Cymru should just be included in Scottish and Wales specific debates. One-in-four respondents (27%) would invite these two parties to all the debates, while 19 per cent believe both parties should be excluded from all debates.

KEY FINDINGS

- **75% believe the three 90-minute debates are a positive development**
- **49% say the debates will be "very important" or "moderately important" in determining who they will vote for**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From January 5 to January 6, 2010, Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among 2,005 randomly selected British adults who are Springboard UK panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 2.2%. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region data to ensure samples representative of the entire adult population of Great Britain. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

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Debates

ITV, Sky and the BBC have announced that the leaders of Labour, the Conservatives, and the Lib Dem's will take part in a series of three head-to-head 90-minute debates during the General Election campaign. Do you regard this as a positive or negative development?

Very positive / Moderately positive	75%
Moderately negative / Very negative	12%
Not sure	13%

Debates

Do you think you are likely to watch these debates?

I will do all I can to watch them	28%
I will watch them if I am in but will not make a special effort	45%
I am unlikely to watch them	26%

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Debates	
How important do you think the debates will be in determining who you vote for?	
Very important / Moderately important	49%
Not that important / Not at all important	51%
Not sure	13%

Debates	
Separate debates will be held in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland among all the main parties but the SNP and Plaid Cymru believe that they also be included in the main debates. Which of the following most closely resembles your view?	
SNP and Plaid Cymru should be included in all the debates	27%
SNP and Plaid Cymru should just be included in Scottish and Wales specific debates	53%
SNP and Plaid Cymru should not be included in any debates	19%

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Angus Reid Public Opinion is a practice of Vision Critical—a global research and technology company specializing in custom online panels, private communities, and innovative online methods. Vision Critical is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Strategies team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995

Vision Critical is now one of the largest market research enterprises in the world. In addition to its five offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices in San Francisco, Chicago, New York, London, Paris and Sydney. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.

Angus Reid Public Opinion polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum (www.angusreidforum.com), Springboard America (www.springboardamerica.com) and Springboard UK (www.springboarduk.com) online panels, which are carefully recruited to ensure representation across all demographic and psychographic segments of these populations. Panel members pass through rigorous screening and a double opt-in process ensuring highly motivated and responsive members. These premier online survey platforms present respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses. Each survey is actively sampled and weighted to model that characteristics of the universe required and employs the latest in quality control techniques to ensure data validity.

Angus Reid, the only public opinion firm to exclusively use online methods to follow the views of the electorate during the 2008 federal campaign, offered the most accurate prediction of the results of Canada's 40th election.

<http://bit.ly/4zxfIS>

Since 2006, Angus Reid has covered eight provincial elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes.

More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at

<http://bit.ly/3zOull>

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**For more information, please contact
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

Copies of this poll are available on our website:

<http://www.visioncritical.com/category/global-opinions-and-trends>

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