

American teens are optimistic about the future and highly value real-world learning.

Majority feel their schools are doing a good job of preparing them for financial success and a world changed by Artificial Intelligence (AI), though many still harbor concerns about how AI will impact their future job prospects.

Topline Findings

July 28, 2026 – A new Junior Achievement survey, with data collection by Ipsos, reveals the majority of American teens 13-17 years old are generally positive about their future, with 68% feeling either “optimistic” (34%) or “hopeful” (34%). As they head back to school, nearly nine in ten (87%) teens aged 13-17 somewhat or strongly agree they learn best when they can apply learning to real-world situations. Furthermore, most teens feel their schools are doing a good job teaching them how to be financially successful (65% strongly/somewhat agree) and preparing them for an AI-driven world (61%). Despite this preparation, over half (55%) remain somewhat or strongly concerned about AI’s impact on their ability to get a job in the future.

Detailed Findings

1. Feelings About the Future

- Over two-thirds of American teens aged 13-17 (68%) feel positively about the future, describing their feelings as either "optimistic" (34%) or "hopeful" (34%).
- Another 14% describe themselves as "curious."
- Less than one in six teens 13-17 years old feel negatively about the future, with 10% feeling "concerned," 5% feeling "unprepared," and 1% feeling "sad."

2. Real-World Learning

- Nearly nine in ten American teens aged 13-17 (87%) agree with the statement “I learn best when I can apply what I’m learning to real-world situations”, with half (50%) strongly agreeing and 37% somewhat agreeing.
- Further, less than one in ten (9%) neither agree nor disagree with this statement, while 2% somewhat disagree, and 0% strongly disagree.

3. Financial Preparation in Schools

- Roughly two-thirds (65%) of teens agree (27% strongly, 38% somewhat) with the statement “my school does a good job teaching things that will help me be financially successful in the future.”
- About one in six teens aged 13-17 (16%) indicate they neither agree nor disagree with this statement, while nearly one in five (18%) disagree (11% somewhat, 7% strongly) that their school is adequately preparing them for financial success.

4. AI Preparation and Job Concerns

- Six in ten teens aged 13-17 (61%) agree (23% strongly, 38% somewhat) with the statement “my school is doing a good job of preparing me for a world being changed by Artificial Intelligence.” About one in five (18%) neither agree nor disagree, while a similar proportion (19%) disagree (13% somewhat, 6% strongly).
- Despite feeling prepared by their schools, more than half of teens 13-17 (55%) agree (21% strongly, 34% somewhat) with the statement “I am concerned about the impact AI will have on my ability to get a job in the future.” Similar proportions of teens 13-17 neither agree nor disagree (20%) as do disagree (22% -- 13% somewhat, 9% strongly) with this concern.

These are findings of a Junior Achievement survey, with data collection provided by Ipsos, conducted between June 29-30, 2026. For this survey, a nationally representative sample of 1,005 U.S. teens aged 13 to 17 were surveyed online in English. The results of this research have a credibility interval of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points for all respondents.

For full results, please refer to the following annotated questionnaire:

Full Annotated Questionnaire

TEEN. Please indicate your age. (Select one)

	Total (n=1,005)
13	20%
14	20%
15	20%
16	21%
17	20%

GENDER. Please indicate your gender. (Select one)

	Total (n=1005)
Male	51%
Female	49%
Another gender	0%
Prefer not to answer	0%

GRADE. What grade in school are you in? (Select one)

	Total (n=1005)
6 th grade	1%
7 th grade	6%
8 th grade	15%
9 th grade	19%
10 th grade	22%
11 th grade	20%
12 th grade	16%

1. As of today, which word most closely describes how you feel about the future?

[RANDOMIZE; SINGLE RESPONSE]	Total (n=1005)
Optimistic	34%
Hopeful	34%
Curious	14%
Concerned	10%
Unprepared	5%
Sad	1%
None of the above [ANCHOR]	1%

2. How much do you agree or disagree with this statement: “My school is doing a good job of preparing me for a world being changed by AI (Artificial Intelligence).”

[SCALE FLIP ROTATED FROM POSITIVE TO NEGATIVE, NEGATIVE TO POSITIVE 50/50]	Total (n=1005)
Strongly Agree	23%
Somewhat Agree	38%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	18%
Somewhat Disagree	13%
Strongly Disagree	6%
Not Sure / Don’t Know [ANCHOR]	2%

3. How much do you agree or disagree with this statement: “I am concerned about the impact AI (Artificial Intelligence) will have on my ability to get a job in the future.”

[SCALE FLIP ROTATED FROM POSITIVE TO NEGATIVE, NEGATIVE TO POSITIVE 50/50]	Total (n=1005)
Strongly Agree	21%
Somewhat Agree	34%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	20%
Somewhat Disagree	13%
Strongly Disagree	9%
Not Sure / Don’t Know [ANCHOR]	2%

4. How much do you agree or agree with this statement: “My school does a good job teaching things that will help me be financially successful in the future.”

[SCALE FLIP ROTATED FROM POSITIVE TO NEGATIVE, NEGATIVE TO POSITIVE 50/50]	Total (n=1005)
Strongly Agree	27%
Somewhat Agree	38%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	16%
Somewhat Disagree	11%
Strongly Disagree	7%
Not Sure / Don’t Know [ANCHOR]	1%

5. How much do you agree or disagree with this statement: "I learn best when I can apply what I'm learning to real-world situations."

[SCALE FLIP ROTATED FROM POSITIVE TO NEGATIVE, NEGATIVE TO POSITIVE 50/50]	Total (n=1005)
Strongly Agree	50%
Somewhat Agree	37%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	9%
Somewhat Disagree	2%
Strongly Disagree	0%
Not Sure / Don’t Know [ANCHOR]	1%

About the Study:

These are findings for research was conducted between June 29 and June 30, 2026, by Ipsos. For this survey, post-hoc weights were made to the population characteristics on age, gender, region of the teenage and parent’s ethnicity and income. Teenage respondents were reached via their adult parents/guardians 18 years of age or older. Surveys were collected as part of a multi-client omnibus program, where questions on various topics are included in one interview and clients share demographic information collected.

The sample was randomly drawn from [Ipsos’ online panel](#), partner online panel sources, and “[river](#)” [sampling](#) and does not rely on a population frame in the traditional sense. After a sample has been obtained from the Ipsos panel, Ipsos calibrates respondent characteristics to be representative of the U.S. Population using standard procedures such as raking-ratio adjustments. The source of these population targets is U.S. Census 2024 American Community Survey data. The sample drawn for this study reflects fixed sample targets on age and gender.



PUBLIC RELEASE SURVEY FINDINGS AND METHODOLOGY

Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online non-probability surveys. Instead, the precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the survey has a credibility interval of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points for all respondents. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding.

