Results from a National Survey of Black Adults

The Lives and Voices of Black Families

FOR IN OUR OWN VOICE: NATIONAL BLACK WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE AGENDA

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National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda

Introduction

National surveys of Black communities are rare. In 2017, seven months into the Trump administration, In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda commissioned PerryUndem to conduct a robust study of Black adults' views toward the political landscape, racism, and reproductive justice. The goal of the research was to provide a resource for policymakers, media, and other parties who want to understand the lives of Black adults in America and the effects of policy decisions on their lives.

Here we are, four years later, at the end of President Trump's term. After many public events related to racial violence, white supremacy, and systemic racism, we went back into the field to listen to Black communities. We wanted to explore their experiences, views, and how their lives have been affected during these years. We also wanted to learn about their policy priorities for making it a better time to raise healthy families if they choose.

This report provides findings from the survey.

Methods

The survey was conducted among n = 1,098 Black adults 18 and older from December 14 to December 29, 2020.

The survey was administered via the University of Chicago's NORC AmeriSpeaks panel.

The margin of sampling error is ± 4 percentage points for total results.

Many other types of error can contribute to overall survey error.

Summary

The mood toward the country is better than in 2017, but not great.

Four in ten respondents (42%) say the country is heading in the right direction, compared to 15% in 2017.

Just 15% of Black women in the survey say it's a good time to be a Black woman in America; 13% of Black men say it's a good time to be a Black man.

While Black adults tend to have positive feelings about Biden winning the election, just half (49%) feel "optimistic."

What one word would you use to describe the past four years of Donald Trump being president?

(Open end)

In 2017, 64% of Black adults predicted that President Trump's policies would harm Black people. In December 2020, 66% say that has happened.



86%

Agree "President Trump has made people feel it's okay to say and do racist things" 77%

Say Black people's lives have been in more danger because of Donald Trump being president 72%

Say that in the past four years, they've felt fear or anxiety about their family's safety because of police violence

Themes of racism, violence, safety, and security emerge throughout the data. 53%

Say that in the past four years, they've felt fear or anxiety about their family's safety because of racism in their community **52%**

Have faced racist comments in the past four years 81%

Say that in the past four years, they've felt fear or anxiety about their family's safety because of COVID-19

43%

Say they know someone who has died because of COVID-19 **54%**

Say that in the past four years, they've felt fear or anxiety about their family's safety because of not having enough money to make ends meet 50%

Have less than \$200 in savings right now





Younger respondents – ages 18 to 29 – are more likely than others to face threats and layers of insecurity. For example, 71% say they've faced racist comments in the past four years compared to 52% of all respondents. Sixty-three percent of 18- to 29-year-olds have less than \$200 in savings right now (v. 50% of all Black respondents).



Voters saw the 2020 election as especially consequential.

Reasons for voting in this election include:

- "The stakes were too high in this election to sit out" (84%)
- "I felt my life depended on it" (72%)
- "I felt my children's lives depended on it" (80% of parents)

Half of respondents and 62% of Biden voters said the events around George Floyd's murder made them more motivated to vote in 2020.

COVID-19 and systemic racism top the list of priorities for the Biden-Harris administration.

Other urgent priorities include job opportunities that pay a livable wage, an unfair justice system, police reform, and expanding health care.

A majority of Black adults affirms their power as a voting bloc.

76%

Feel the Black community has the power to change the outcomes of elections

73%

Think President-elect Biden won because of the Black community's vote

79%

Agree that **Black** communities have the power to lead the country to a more free and just society

15%

Of Black women say it's a good time to be a Black woman in America. Many policy priorities are seen as "extremely" important to make it a better time to be a Black woman in America who is free to raise healthy children if she chooses.

Among the top priorities for Black women are:

- Increasing job opportunities that pay a livable wage (75% extremely important)
- Making sure everyone has access to clean water (74%)
 - 37% of Black women have had to boil water at home before drinking it
- Equal pay in the workplace (70%)
- Dismantling systemic racism (70%)
- Equal opportunities to move up in the workplace (69%)
- Quality, affordable health care (69%)
- Paid medical and family leave (69%)

Black adults weigh many factors in deciding whether or not to raise families.

Among the most common factors are:

- Having job opportunities with a livable wage (65% say has been part of decision-making about whether or not to have a child)
- Amount of money in savings (64%)
- Being safe from police violence (61%)
- Access to affordable housing (58%)
- Access to affordable higher education (57%)
- Access to affordable health care (57%)
- Equal opportunities to move up in the workplace (56%)
- Access to quality public schools (56%)
- Systemic racism (59%)

"

If I'm not able to go to work and get paid a fair wage, then my children are less likely to get everything they need and want that I want for them.

- Survey respondent

Percent has been part of their decision-making

	Women, 18 to 44	Women, 45+
Having job opportunities that pay a livable wage	77	56
The amount of money in your savings	73	53
Being safe from police violence	72	50
Systemic racism	71	48
Having access to affordable housing	68	53
Having access to affordable higher education	68	48
Having access to quality public schools	67	46
Having access to quality, affordable health care	67	52
Having access to healthy and affordable food options	67	48
Black maternal health	67	40
Being married	66	38
Having access to affordable child care	64	44

Younger women are more likely than older women to have considered many factors in their decisionmaking about having children.



Black communities continue to support abortion access.

Seven in ten respondents (71%) say abortion should be legal in all or most cases, including 64% of respondents who attend religious services weekly. Just 16% say they want state politicians to restrict or ban access to abortion.

More than four in five participants say they want abortion care to be affordable, accessible, and respectful of the person's decision.

Detailed findings

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Feelings toward the political environment

Would you say things in the country are:

Heading in the right direction On the wrong track



Younger adults (ages 18 to 44) are more likely than their counterparts to say the country is on the wrong track.



Wrong track: Ages 18 to 44 (65%) 45+ (48%)

Would you say things in the country are:





Black men and women feel similarly about the direction of the country.

PERRY UNDEM



PERRY UNDEM Younger respondents are most likely to consider it a bad time to be Black in America.





Feelings around presidential election outcomes shifted from worry to hope.



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Black adults express positive feelings about Harris being Vice President.

About one in three (31%) respondents thinks Harris has "a lot" of power as vice president to get things done (51% some power).

How are you feeling about Kamala Harris becoming the Vice President?





How are you feeling about Kamala Harris becoming the Vice President?

Women are more likely than men to be "happy" about Harris.

Older and college-educated respondents are more likely than others to feel "optimistic" about Harris being vice president.



Experiences in past four LGT years

In 2017, 64% of Black adults predicted that President Trump's policies would harm Black people. Roughly the same proportion says that has happened.

July 2017

64%

Thought President Trump's policies would negatively affect Black people

5% said positively affect Black people

24% said both positively and negatively December 2020

66%

Think President Trump's policies have negatively affected Black people

6% say positively affected Black people

26% say both positively and negatively



What one word would you use to describe the past four years of Donald Trump being president?

Respondents use strong language to characterize the past four years of Trump being president.

86%

Agree "President Trump has made people feel it's okay to say and do racist things" 77%

Say Black people's lives have been in more danger because of Donald Trump being president

72%

Say that in the past four years, they've felt fear or anxiety about their family's safety because of **police violence**

Themes of racism, violence, safety, and security emerge throughout the data. 53%

Say that in the past four years, they've felt fear or anxiety about their family's safety because of racism in their community **52%**

Have faced racist comments in the past four years

81%

Say that in the past four years, they've felt fear or anxiety about their family's safety because of COVID-19

50%

Have less than \$200 in savings right now



43%

Say they know someone who has died because of COVID-19 **54%**

Say that in the past four years, they've felt fear or anxiety about their family's safety because of not having enough money to make ends meet

41%

Say that in the past four years, they've felt fear or anxiety about their family's safety because health care wasn't accessible

41%

Say that in the past four years, they've felt fear or anxiety about their family's safety because of racism in the workplace

36%

Have lost hours, a job, or pay because of COVID-19 – or a partner / spouse has

60%

Say racism has had a negative effect on their mental or emotional health

(Note: This was a general question and did not specify in the past four years)



Say racism has had a negative effect on their physical health

(Note: This was a general question and did not specify in the past four years)

Among Black women N = 635



Agree "President Trump has made people feel it's okay to say and do racist things"

80%

Say Black people's lives have been in more danger because of Donald Trump being president **75%** Say that in the past four years, they've felt fear or

anxiety about their family's

safety because of police

violence

Say that in the past four years, they've felt fear or anxiety about their family's safety because of COVID-19

84%



Say they know someone who has died because of COVID-19

55%

Say that in the past four years, they've felt fear or anxiety about their family's safety because of racism in their community 48%

Have faced racist comments in the past four years **61%**

Say racism has had a negative effect on their mental or emotional health **46%**

Say racism has had a negative effect on their physical health **41%**

Say that in the past four years, they've felt fear or anxiety about their family's safety because of racism in the workplace

58%

Say that in the past four years, they've felt fear or anxiety about their family's safety because of not having enough money to make ends meet 51%

Have less than \$200 in savings right now

44%

Say that in the past four years, they've felt fear or anxiety about their family's safety because health care wasn't accessible 37%

Have lost hours, a job, or pay because of COVID-19 – or a partner / spouse has



Younger adults are most likely to face layers of insecurity.





Voting in the 2020 election

Perceptions of power.

76%

Feel the Black community has the power to change the outcomes of elections

> 18 to 44: 70% 45+: 83%

< College: 73% College+: 84%

Northeast: 68% Midwest: 66% South: 81% West: 82%

Women: 77% Men: 76% 73%

Think President-elect Biden won because of the Black community's vote

> 18 to 44: 70% 45+: 75%

< College: 70% College+: 79%

Northeast: 73% Midwest: 65% South: 75% West: 73%

Women: 70% Men: 75% 79%

Agree that **Black** communities have the power to lead the country to a more free and just society

> 18 to 44: 82% 45+: 76%

< College: 78% College+: 82%

Northeast: 78% Midwest: 72% South: 81% West: 82%

Women: 79% Men: 79%



Voting method varies by age, education, and geography.

Voters most likely to vote in-person on election day are:

- 18 to 44-year-olds
- Less educated respondents
- Non-metro residents
- Respondents in the Northeast

In-person at my polling place on election day 35

In-person during early voting - before election day 27

Sent my ballot in by U.S. postal service / mail 20

Dropped off my ballot at a drop box 10

Total

Dropped off my ballot at my polling place 8

How did you vote:

Base n = 972 voters

	18 to 44	45+	HS or less	Some college	Bachelor's degree	Post-grad	
	42	28	43	36	25	13	
	27	26	23	25	29	41	
	17	22	20	19	18	26	
)	6	13	6	11	15	13	
	7	9	6	9	11	5	

How did you vote: Base n = 972 voters

Non-metro	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
58	51	38	34	10
22	5	20	37	8
14	23	23	17	30
3	9	12	6	32
3	9	6	6	20

Metro

In-person at my polling place on election day 32 In-person during early voting - before election day 27

Sent my ballot in by U.S. postal service / mail 20

Dropped off my ballot at a drop box 11

Dropped off my ballot at my polling place 8

Voters in the West are much more likely to	
have access to / used alternatives to in-	
person voting.	

Did any of these things happen to you around voting?

Percent "yes"





Of respondents say they faced a barrier to voting.
Younger and lowerincome voters are among the most likely to say they've faced barriers. Percent that have faced any voting barrier in 2020



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Did you have to wait in line to vote, or not?

Base n = 972 voters

"Percent "yes"



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Younger voters are also more likely to report waiting in lines.

How long did you wait to vote?

Base n = 336 voters who waited in line to vote

Three in ten voters who waited in line to vote waited for 30 minutes or more.



Reasons behind voting

Was this a reason why you voted in the election, or not?

Base n = 972 voters in the 2020 elections

Percent "yes"

92%

It's my duty to vote after so many people fought for the right to vote



The stakes were too high in this election to sit out 72%

I felt like my life depended on it



I felt like my children's lives depended on it (Among n = 692 parents)



Was this a reason why you voted in the election, or not?



Percent "yes"

Women are slightly more likely than men to feel their life depended on voting in the 2020 election.





Say more about feeling your life depended on the election.

(Open end)

Blacks in this country are underrepresented, degraded, cast aside, and are being murdered... too many feelings to list...

After Trump, I feel democracy in America could easily crumble. GOP politicians join Trump in advancing white supremacy, erosion of civil rights and weaponizing his Dept of Justice. Black people including myself could literally die at the hands of the government if the GOP wins.

Donald Trump has not spoken against white supremacy and has given power to violent white supremacist groups. I needed to vote to show my actions toward choosing a candidate that would protect my safety as an African American. I felt like there was a war on black people with the police departments of America and the KKK was coming back into existence.

It feels like African Americans have targets on.

We had nobody looking out for the African-American interest or health care.

Social security dependent. Family depends on government help. Trump was cutting off funds.

Say more about feeling your children's lives depended on the election.

(Open end)

My boys are adult Black men.

My three young Black sons don't deserve Trump's hatred.

My children would not have any opportunities & could very well possibly die in a racist world.

Well, the country is in an uproar and I want to make sure they have a little protection.

I don't want this racial or political aggression pointed towards them.

If Trump stayed in office the racism would have been worse for children because he made it ok.

If I'm not able to go to work and get paid a fair wage then my children are less likely to get everything they need and want that I want for them.

My children's ability to earn a living wage.

My children (four) all have college degrees and are not more well off than my husband and I, or even my parents. They should be. College loans, company lay-offs, downsizing, having to work two or more jobs to manage. It's affected them as it has others of their generation (three are Gen-Y, and one Gen-Z).

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Did George Floyd's murder and the events around it make you feel _____ to vote in the 2020 elections?



Data suggest George Floyd's murder and related events had a mobilizing effect on half of respondents.

Biden voters, women, and parents felt more mobilized by George Floyd's murder and related events than others.

What would you want the Biden-Harris administration to work on first?



The coronavirus and systemic racism top respondents' priorities for the Biden-Harris administration.

What would you want the Biden-Harris administration to work on first?



Women and men have similar priorities for the Biden-Harris administration.

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What would you want the Biden-Harris administration to work on first?

Younger respondents are slightly more likely than seniors to prioritize jobs with a livable wage.

Seniors are more likely to prioritize expanding health care.







Think about the systems in our society, such as school systems, health care, housing, food, banking, and the government. In general, do you think these systems are set up to:

Two in three respondents say society gives white people more opportunities than Black people.

64%

Give White people more opportunities than Black people 30%

Give Black and White people equal opportunities 4%

Give Black people more opportunities than White people Black participants with higher incomes and collegedegrees are most likely to perceive systemic racism. Think about the systems in our society, such as school systems, health care, housing, food, banking, and the government. In general, do you think these systems are set up to give _____ opportunities:



PERRY UNDEM Our 2017 survey of Black adults explored people's connections between racism and a number of systemic issues...



80%

Have equal opportunities to move up in the workplace Feel safe in our neighborhoods

74%

78%

78%

Have job opportunities that pay a livable wage

Do you think racism affects the Black community's ability to...

76% Have equal pay in the

equal pay in the Have access to higher workplace education

74%

Have access to quality, affordable health care

73%

73% ave access to affordate 73%

Keep children safe from incarceration

Have access to affordable housing

Have access to quality public schools

National survey of n = 1,003 Black adults 18 and older conducted July 18 to August 7, 2017 using NORC



Do you think racism affects the Black community's ability to... (2017 data)

Percent "yes"



Have enough neighborhood services like trash cleanup, streets and sidewalks fixed, and parks taken care of

70%

Keep children safe from over-policing

70%

Have access to affordable mental health



Have access to healthy and affordable food options



Vote in future elections without barriers **68%**

Get treatment for drug and alcohol addiction

68%

Have access to affordable childcare

66% Get help in situations

of domestic violence

63%

Raise children

63%

Have access to affordable, legal abortion care

62%

Have access to affordable birth control

57%

Have access to clean water

50%

Plan for whether or when to become a parent



Intersections of policy issues and having children

Do you want your children to have a life similar to yours?

Base n = 772 parents



Two-thirds of parents do <u>not</u> want their children to have a life similar to theirs.

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At any time in the past, have any of these things been part of your thinking or decision-making about whether or not to have a child?

Percent "yes"

65%

Having job opportunities that pay a livable wage

The amount of money in your savings

64%

61%

Being safe from police violence

factors in deciding whether

Black adults weigh many

or not to raise families.

59%

Systemic racism

58% Having access to

affordable housing

57%

Having access to quality, affordable health care

57%

Having access to affordable higher education

56%

Having access to quality public schools

56%

Equal opportunities to move up in the workplace

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56

At any time in the past, have any of these things been <u>part of your thinking</u> <u>or decision-making</u> about whether or not to have a child?

Percent "yes"

Having access to

healthy and

affordable food options



Equal pay in the workplace



Over-policing of Black communities **54% 53%**

Having access to affordable childcare



Being married



Black maternal health



Mass incarceration of Black people **46%**

Not having paid time off to care for children or family 44%

The state of your physical neighborhood like trash cleanup, etc.



The right to vote in future elections without barriers 43%

Having access to affordable mental health care

42%

Having access to clean water



Being safe from domestic violence in relationships 36%

Risks of drug and alcohol use for the child or a parent

31%

Having access to affordable birth control 27% Having access to affordable, legal abortion care



At any time in the past, have any of these things been <u>part of your</u> thinking or decision-making about whether or not to have a child?



Percent "yes"

PERRY UNDEM

At any time in the past, have any of these things been <u>part of your</u> thinking or decision-making about whether or not to have a child?



Percent "yes"

(Cont.)

More than half (54%) of respondents say they faced at least one of these issues related to air or water quality.

27%

Has had brown water come out of the tap in their home 36%

Has had to boil water at home before drinking it

30%

Felt the air in their neighborhood was unhealthy to breathe

Have had unsafe water or air quality



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Participants with lower incomes face more issues with air and water quality.

Making it a better time to be a Black woman in America

15%

Of Black women say it's a good time to be a Black woman in America.



What do Black women say can make it a better time to be a Black woman in America – who is free to raise healthy children if she chooses? In your opinion, how important is each of these things to making it a better time to be a Black woman in America, who is free to raise healthy children if she chooses?

75%

Increasing job opportunities that pay a livable wage (19% very important) 74%

Percent "extremely important" Among n = 635 Black women

> Making sure everyone has access to clean water (19% very important)

70%

Dismantling systemic racism (19% very important) **69%**

Having equal opportunities to move up in the workplace (24% very important)

69%

Having paid medical and family leave (20% very important) **68%**

Improving access to quality public schools (21% very important)

70%

Having equal pay in the workplace (22% very important)

69%

Improving access to quality affordable health care (21% very important)

67%

Improving access to healthy and affordable food options (27% very important)

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Percent "extremely important" Among n = 635 Black women



Improving access to affordable higher education (28% very important)

65%

Increasing affordable housing (25% very important)

65%

Protecting the right to vote in future elections, without barriers (24% very important)

65%

Improving access to affordable childcare (23% very important)



Increasing support for women who face domestic violence (28% very important) **64%**

Improving Black maternal health (26% very important) **63%**

Decreasing the risk of drug and alcohol abuse in Black communities (26% very important) **61%**

Improving access to affordable mental healthcare (26% very important) **60%**

Police reform (26% very important)



Percent "extremely important" Among n = 635 Black women

57%

Getting rid of mass incarceration of Black people (25% very important)

54%

Making sure neighborhoods have enough services like trash clean up and sidewalks fixed and parks taken care of (31% very important)



Getting more Black women elected to political office (26% very important)



Getting rid of overpolicing in our communities (27% very important)



Improving access to affordable birth control (28% very important) 37%

Improving access to affordable, legal abortion care (22% very important) 30%

Moving forward on equality for transgender people (24% very important)

> PERRY UNDEM

Views toward reproductive-related policies

Do you agree or disagree: A woman should be able to get birth control through her health insurance, even if her boss disagrees with the idea of birth control.

Nine in ten respondents say a woman should be able to get an abortion through her health insurance regardless of her boss's opinion.

91%

Agree

75% strongly agree 16% somewhat agree 9%

Disagree

4% strongly disagree 5% somewhat disagree

Do you agree or disagree: A woman should be able to get birth control through her health insurance, even if her boss disagrees with the idea of birth control.



Large majorities of adults who attend religious services every week agree.

Respondents agree a woman should have full coverage for pregnancyrelated care regardless of her health coverage. Do you agree or disagree: Whether she has private or government funded health coverage, every woman should have coverage for the full range of pregnancy-related care, including prenatal care and abortion.



Agree

62% strongly agree 23% somewhat agree

13%

Disagree

9% strongly disagree 4% somewhat disagree



Which comes closest to your view. Abortion should be:

Seven in ten Black respondents say abortion should be legal in all or most cases.



Legal

Illegal

35% legal in <u>all</u> cases 36% legal in most cases

18% illegal in all cases 8% illegal in most cases



Which comes closest to your view. Abortion should be _____ cases:

		Legal in all	Eegal in n	nost 📃 Illeg	al in most	Illeç	jal in al
	\$100K +	45		36		8	8
jorities across mographic groups think ortion should be legal in or most cases.	\$50K to \$100K	44		35		18	
	Women	41		34		15	7
	Democrats	41		37		13	8
	Infrequently attends religious services	41		36		15	7
	45 to 64	40		37		14	6
	College +	40		40		16	
	30 to 44	39	3	32	21		7
	Total	35	36		18		8
	< College	34	34		19		10
	65+	30	42		16		8
	Less than \$25K	30	35		22		12
	\$25K to \$50K	30	38		18	Ē	10
	Men	29	38		23		10
	18 to 29	28	34		24		12
	Attends religious services weekly	28	36		20		2
	Republicans / independents	26	33		29		10

Maj dem abor all o

What is your impression: Is the right to have an abortion in our country:





Six in ten have the sense that the right to abortion is at risk.

In the future, access to abortion may depend more on the laws in your state than on the Supreme Court.

Large majorities want state politicians to keep or expand legal and accessible abortion.

I want state politicians to restrict or ban access to abortion

16%

24% I want state politicians to protect or expand access to abortion **57%**

I want state politicians to keep it legal and accessible and then stay out of this issue altogether



75

Two-thirds of respondents say abortion is <u>not</u> a religious issue for them personally. For you personally, is abortion a religious issue, or not?



Yes

53% among respondents who attend religious services <u>weekly</u>



44% among respondents who attend religious services weekly

Are you more likely to vote for a candidate for state legislature who _____ access to abortion:

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Black adults are more likely to support a candidate who supports access to abortion (42%) than one who opposes it (13%).

The issue is more important for voters who support legal abortion than those who lean against it.

4 in 5 participants say they'd want abortion care to be affordable, accessible, and respectful of decisions.

Let's say a woman has decided to have an abortion. Would you want the care to...





Large majorities trust women to make decisions on the issue.

91%

A woman's ability to control whether or when she has children is an important part of financial stability for herself and her family

68% very important 23% somewhat important

> Women: 94% Men: 88%

1s and 2s: 96% 3s and 4s: 81%

89%

Agree: Each woman should have the right to make her own decision on abortion, even if I may disagree with her decision.

> 70% very important 19% somewhat important

> > Women: 90% Men: 87%

1s and 2s: 96% 3s and 4s: 71% 85%

Agree: When it comes to abortion, I trust Black women to make the personal decision that's best for themselves.

85%

Agree: When it comes to abortion, I trust Black women to make the personal decision that's best for themselves and their family.

63% very important 22% somewhat important

> Women: 85% Men: 85%

1s and 2s: 93% 3s and 4s: 66% 57% very important 27% somewhat important

> Women: 89% Men: 80%

1s and 2s: 94% 3s and 4s: 60%



