

AMERICANS' VIEWS OF U.S. AUTOMOBILES: JAPANESE CARS ARE BETTER
January 5-8, 2006

American-made cars have now decisively lost the auto race to Japan - at least when it comes to American perceptions about cars. The gap between views of the two has grown enormous today: just under half of Americans think that Japanese cars are a better value, while only 14% give that honor to American-made cars. The percentage that views American cars as superior has declined from 35% nine years ago to less than half of what it was then.

| | WHICH IS A BETTER VALUE? | | | | |
|---------------|---------------------------------|--------|--------|---------|--------|
| | Now | 8/1997 | 7/1995 | 12/1994 | 5/1987 |
| Japanese cars | 47% | 23% | 28% | 27% | 33% |
| American cars | 14 | 35 | 30 | 28 | 30 |
| Both equally | 30 | 33 | 36 | 39 | 28 |

Once before, in mid-1985, Japanese cars held a clear lead over American-made cars in perceived quality. But even in that poll, conducted during a trade war with Japan, Japan's advantage was less than half the lead it holds today.

Another measure also underscores America's perceived lack of automotive competitiveness with Japan. Only 18% of Americans describe the quality and reliability of American cars today as excellent, but 41% say that is how they would describe Japanese cars. In fact, 33% say that American cars are only fair or poor in terms of quality and reliability. Just 13% say that about Japanese cars.

| | QUALITY AND RELIABILITY OF CARS | |
|-----------|--|----------|
| | American | Japanese |
| Excellent | 18% | 41% |
| Good | 47 | 37 |
| Fair | 28 | 11 |
| Poor | 5 | 2 |

Americans still express their patriotism in purchasing decisions, although even that is declining. 51% say that if they were to buy a new car today, they would choose an American-made one, and only 30% would buy a Japanese car. However, previous polls showed a far greater share of Americans claiming they would purchase an American car in the past than would do so now.

WHAT TYPE OF NEW CAR WOULD YOU BUY?

| | Now | 6/1995 | 5/1988 |
|---------------|-----|--------|--------|
| American | 51% | 77% | 71% |
| Japanese | 30 | 12 | 16 |
| German | 8 | 5 | 7 |
| South Korea | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Other country | 2 | 1 | 2 |

62% of Americans say they now have an American car, and 23% have a Japanese make. While 76% of those who own a Japanese car say that make of car is the better value, only 17% of those who own an American car cite U.S. cars as the better value.

WHICH IS A BETTER VALUE?

| | Own American car | Own Japanese car |
|----------|------------------|------------------|
| Japanese | 36% | 76% |
| American | 17 | 3 |
| Both | 36 | 17 |

Those at the upper end of the income scale (annual incomes of \$75,000 or more) have a very favorable view of Japanese cars. While they would be equally as likely to purchase a Japanese car (41%) as an American one (41%), 60% think Japanese cars are a better value. 59% also rate Japanese cars as excellent in terms of quality and reliability, but only 16% say the same for American cars.

WHICH IS A BETTER VALUE?

Among \$75,000+ income

| | |
|---------------|-----|
| Japanese cars | 60% |
| American cars | 11 |
| Both equally | 25 |

American cars are most popular among those with the lowest incomes, but even this group sees Japanese cars as the better value.

WHICH IS A BETTER VALUE?

Among <\$30,000 income

| | |
|---------------|-----|
| Japanese cars | 34% |
| American cars | 17 |
| Both equally | 35 |

In the Midwest, where many U.S. automakers' headquarters are located, 34% choose Japanese cars as the better value, while 20% choose American cars and 36% say both are equal.

WHICH IS A BETTER VALUE?

Among those in the Midwest

| | |
|---------------|-----|
| Japanese cars | 34% |
| American cars | 20 |
| Both equally | 36 |

This poll was conducted among a nationwide random sample of 1,151 adults, interviewed by telephone January 5-8, 2006. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus three percentage points.

CBS NEWS POLL

**Americans' Views of U.S. Automobiles: Japanese Cars are Better
January 5-8, 2006**

q66 Dollar for dollar, whose cars are a better value -- Japan's or the United States', or are both about equal?

| | ** TOTAL RESPONDENTS ** | | | | Aug97b |
|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-------|-------|--------|
| | Total | ***** Party ID ***** | | | |
| | % | Rep % | Dem % | Ind % | % |
| Japan | 47 | 44 | 47 | 49 | 23 |
| United States | 14 | 17 | 11 | 13 | 35 |
| Both equal | 30 | 29 | 33 | 29 | 33 |
| Don't know/No answer | 9 | 10 | 9 | 9 | 9 |

q67 If you were going to buy a new car today, which country's car would you buy -- the United States', Japan's, South Korea's, Germany's, or some other country's?

| | | | | | Jun95a |
|----------------------|----|----|----|----|--------|
| U.S. | 51 | 63 | 46 | 46 | 77 |
| Japan | 30 | 21 | 35 | 32 | 12 |
| So. Korea | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Germany | 8 | 7 | 7 | 9 | 5 |
| Other country | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Don't know/No answer | 8 | 7 | 7 | 9 | 5 |

q68 From what you know, in general, would you describe the quality and reliability of American cars today as excellent, good, fair, or poor?

| | | | | |
|-----------|----|----|----|----|
| Excellent | 18 | 22 | 17 | 17 |
| Good | 47 | 55 | 42 | 45 |
| Fair | 28 | 20 | 29 | 32 |
| Poor | 5 | 2 | 8 | 4 |
| DK/NA | 2 | 1 | 4 | 2 |

q69 From what you know, in general, would you describe the quality and reliability of Japanese cars today as excellent, good, fair, or poor?

| | | | | |
|-----------|----|----|----|----|
| Excellent | 41 | 42 | 39 | 43 |
| Good | 37 | 38 | 38 | 36 |
| Fair | 11 | 10 | 11 | 10 |
| Poor | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| DK/NA | 9 | 9 | 11 | 8 |

q73 Do you have a car, or don't you?

| | | | | |
|-----|----|----|----|----|
| Yes | 89 | 97 | 85 | 88 |
| No | 11 | 3 | 15 | 12 |

q74 What kind of car do you have -- American, Japanese or some other foreign car?

| | ** TOTAL RESPONDENTS ** | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-----|-----|-------|
| | Total | ***** Party ID ***** | | | Dec94 |
| | | Rep | Dem | Ind | |
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| American | 54 | 63 | 50 | 50 | 69 |
| Japanese | 17 | 17 | 20 | 14 | 14 |
| Other foreign | 7 | 5 | 6 | 10 | 3 |
| U.S. and Japanese | 5 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 6 |
| U.S. and other foreign | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| Japanese and other foreign | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | -- |
| No car | 11 | 3 | 15 | 12 | 5 |
| DK/NA | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 |

| | <u>UNWEIGHTED</u> | <u>WEIGHTED</u> |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Total Respondents | 1151 | |
| Total Republicans | 342 | 316 |
| Total Democrats | 372 | 382 |
| Total Independents | 437 | 453 |