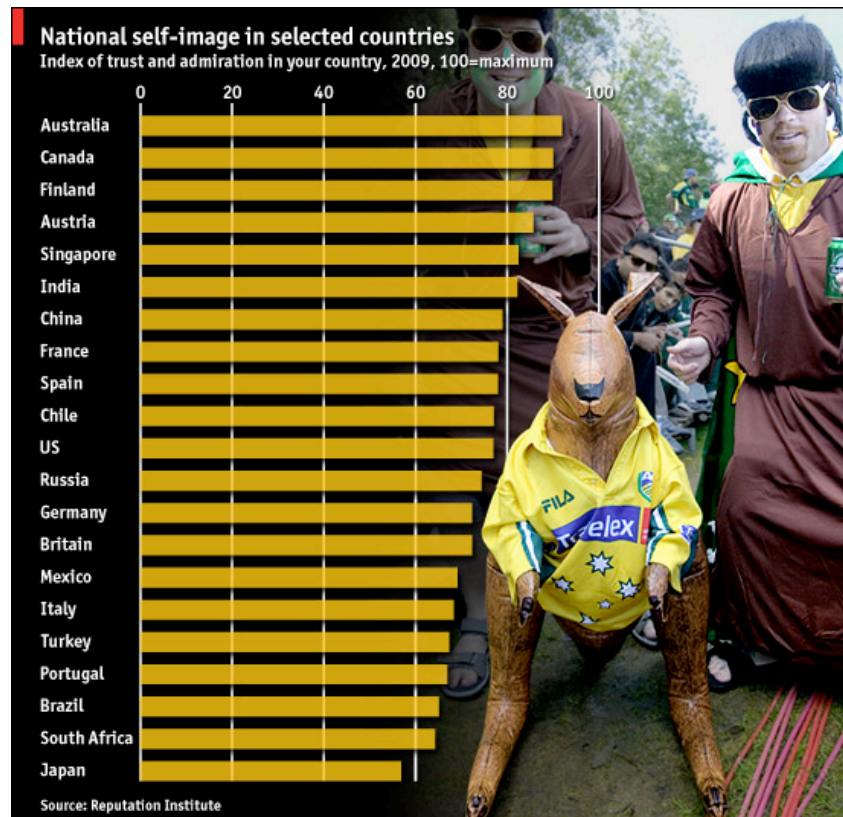


## Extend Your Listening What's for English

### Do you Trust Your Country?



Do you trust your country? Do you admire your country? How much do you trust or how high is your admiration for your country?

I know.... those are difficult questions. Maybe even silly or ridiculous questions. What does it mean to trust your country? Am I asking whether you trust your government? Or trust your fellow citizens? Regarding admiration - does it mean do you admire your history, your culture, your institutions, your heros?

Nevertheless, trust and admiration that people have for their countries - whatever that means - is what we are going to talk about today.

Today I'm looking at a graph, published in the Economist. It's called an Index of Trust and Admiration in your Country. It lists 21 countries and, as the title says, it ranks countries in terms of the amount of trust and admiration citizens have for their own country. These countries are mainly in Europe, but we also see Australia, Canada, the US, Mexico and Brazil in the "new world." We see Singapore, India, China and Japan in Asia. And South Africa is included as well.

Let's look at some of the findings in this graph. We can see that Australia, Canada and Finland have the highest scores. Trust and admiration must be high there, because they score around 90 out of a total of 100. In Singapore and India (India?) the score is quite high - over 80. Toward the bottom we have countries like Brazil and South Africa, with scores of around 65, while Japan (Japan?) scores under 60. Japan has the lowest score on this index of trust and admiration. The United States is in the middle - around 78 or so. Russia, Germany, Britain, Mexico score less than the United States, while Chile, Spain, France and China (China??) score somewhat higher than the US.

Notice that this is an index. The information (whatever information they collected) has been compiled into scores. This is not a simple poll or survey result. We don't see that 90% of Australians trust their country while only 65% of Japanese trust their country. If you are interested in seeing the results of such a survey, you can [click here](#). That survey looked at the percentage of people who have pride in their country. 77% of the Irish are proud of their country, while only 20% of Germans were proud of their country.

But the graph we are looking at in the Economist is a little different.

*The Economist* says the information came from The Reputation Institute, which is a consulting firm. And that "people were asked to rate their trust, admiration, respect and pride in their country. The results are presented as an index." So the research might have been as simple as giving people four simple tasks - asking people to rate their own trust, admiration, respect and pride on a scale. Or they may have asked a series of questions in order to determine the sorts of **attitudes** people have. I think you could find out a lot about trust or admiration if you ask people questions about their attitudes toward government or institutions such as education or policies such as health care. But I just don't know.

Now I'd like to offer some of my opinions or my guesses as to why different countries scored the way they did. These are only my guesses. If you have other opinions, please leave a comment.

Admire (v) - Admiration (n) - Admirable (adj)

*They **admire** Australia for the quality of its institutions.*

*I have high **admiration** for Australia.*

*Australia is an **admirable** country?*

Trust (v) - Trust (n) - Trustworthy (adj)

*Do you **trust** your country?*

*How much **trust** do you have in your country?*

*Do you feel your politicians are **trustworthy**?*

Pride (n) - Proud (adj)

*I have **pride**...*

*I am **proud**...*

*I have very little **pride** in my country.*

*He isn't **proud** of his country.*

**Attitude:** a feeling or position that you have toward something or someone; a mindset.

So... let me talk a bit about Australia - the country that scored the highest score. When I visited - over 20 years ago - I learned that Australians are quite proud and **patriotic** people. They called Australia the lucky country. At that time during the cold war it seemed Australia would be lucky if the US and the Soviet Union started a nuclear war. Western Europe would be destroyed in a nuclear war, but down in Australia, people might have survived and continued to live a good life. I think Australians also felt they were lucky to live on such a big continent that's so rich in natural resources - and with a small population. In Australia, the population is **diverse** - people come from so many different backgrounds - but it's not very crowded. Australians believe it's a place where everybody can have a fair go - or an equal chance to succeed. Australians tend to live in tidy suburbs with nice parks, sports facilities, good schools. Most Australian cities offer great lifestyle, nice environment.... And Australians do participate in their institutions. Voting is **mandatory**. So perhaps these are some of the reasons that Australians trust and admire their country.

I guess the Canadians trust and admire their country for much the same reason as the Australians do. Canada also has a small population and the land is rich in natural resources. Canada has also been able **to absorb** large numbers of immigrants and yet racial or cultural conflict seems quite low. People get along with each other. Violence is low. Certainly Canada does not have the kind of violence or other social problems we have in the US.

Turning now to Asia. Singapore is also high on the list with a score of over 80. Perhaps Singaporeans admire their country because of its very high **GDP**. When Singapore became independent most people believed it had almost no chance of survival. But by following clearly defined plans for development, by accepting free trade, by **investing in** good education, it became one of the richest countries in Southeast Asia - and perhaps the cleanest, too. Crime is a lot lower than in many of the neighboring countries.

As an American, it would seem to me that the government is a bit too forceful on its citizens. I don't want to say **authoritarian** - but that's a word that some people might use. It's been difficult for Singaporeans to develop a multiparty democracy or have different political parties represented. Nevertheless, the people obviously trust their government to do the right thing, and there must be a lot of attitudes that show this high level of trust.

**Patriot (n) - Patriotic (adj)**  
*Who is a great Australian **patriot**?*  
*The people of Ireland are **patriotic**.*

**Diversity (n) - Diverse (adj)**  
*The population of Singapore is **diverse**.*  
*There is only a little **diversity** in Japan.*

**Mandatory:** required.  
*Voting is not **mandatory** in the United States.*

**to absorb:** to soak up or suck up.  
*This new sponge **absorbs** so much more liquid.*  
*Some European countries believe they are **absorbing** too many immigrants.*

**GDP:** Gross domestic product  
*How high is Brazil's **GDP**? It's 1.5 trillion dollars.*

**to invest in:** to spend money for the purpose of earning a return.  
*We must invest more money in education and health care.*

**Authoritarian:** system of government in which individuals have very little freedom - a government with a very strong leader.

Let's talk about the USA. It's interesting, isn't it - that the US scores lower in trust and admiration than India and China. I've been to India, but I haven't been to China. I know that the Chinese have a great deal of pride; and both countries have enjoyed high rates of growth - finally becoming rather more successful and developed. But from what I've heard, I wouldn't think there would be a huge amount of admiration for institutions or government or the political system.... But I don't really know enough to make a comment.

But back to the United States. The United States has a score in the middle. We can call it a **middling** score. The USA probably has a middling score because people are **divided** in what, exactly, they might admire. I know Americans are divided in how they admire or what they admire. There are some Americans who support the military - but they don't trust politicians. There are other Americans who support business and believe strongly in a free market, and they believe that in America capitalism should be completely free. But these same Americans might not trust the big government institutions - such as the Education Department or the Treasury (that's what we call our finance ministry.)

Then there are other Americans who do not trust big business, and they support the idea that government should **regulate** the businesses - or if necessary **break up** the big companies. So maybe that's why the USA scores in the middle. And in fact, if you go to that other survey about pride, you'll see that Americans score very high on pride. Well over 70% of Americans have pride in their country.

If the **data were** compiled recently, the graph may show the way that many Americans are increasingly confused or uncomfortable. They do support the capitalist system, but they are uncomfortable with the way the so much wealth has become concentrated in a tiny part of the super rich. And they may be confused or concerned about a lot of other facts - the fact that so many Americans do poorly in the education system. Or that public health is even worse than in many third world countries.

**Middling:** medium, moderate, average.

**to be divided:** when groups of people disagree with each other (opposite of **united**.)

**to regulate:** to make rules or regulations for businesses.

*This new sponge **absorbs** so much more liquid.*

*Some European countries believe they are **absorbing** too many immigrants.*

**to break up (companies):** to divide large companies into smaller ones.

**Data:** a plural noun for information. (**Datum** is the singular but is rarely used.)

*The data show us that global warming is occurring.*

*That's a great piece of data!*

I don't know why Brazil and South Africa are low in trust and admiration. I would think that South Africans have much to admire about themselves. It's a quite advanced country for the southern part of Africa. And it successfully and relatively peacefully transformed itself by giving the black citizens the right to majority rule. Then again violence and crime and perhaps corruption are high in both countries. So perhaps in Brazil and South Africa the problem is that it is difficult to admire politicians, government institutions that are ineffective and a system in which the greedy and corrupt get rewarded.

Finally, I'd like to talk about Japan. What's wrong with Japan? You would think trust and admiration could be as high as that in Singapore. After all, Japan developed into one of the most successful countries in the world. It has an efficient (more or less) bureaucratic system. Education and health care are pretty good. (Not as good as you might expect... but pretty good). The Japanese are proud of and confident in their culture.... But perhaps the data show that the Japanese are concerned about their future. You might say the Japanese are in a funk.

To be in a funk means to be somewhat depressed or unhappy with the way things are. There was a recession that lasted over 10 years - and after just a couple years of decent growth, Japan is in another recession. And Japan didn't really have anything to do with the kinds of practices that caused the financial breakdown, but it suffered anyway. The Japanese might be confused or concerned about what's going on around them - with the rise of China and the bad behavior of North Korea. The data may also have caught the people's feelings about the government. Until just recently (when the LDP party was voted out of office), people had probably been depressed with the way that the government was so ineffective and indecisive (not able to make decisions).

Ok. So you have been listening to me talk about this graph in the Economist that showed the levels of trust and admiration people have for their countries. And you've been listening to me consider why some countries got those scores.