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## Half of Youth Say Barack Obama's Election Makes Them Feel Hopeful

*Two-thirds of teens say his election is more important than both the last Harry Potter book and the intro of the iPod*

**New York, N.Y. – January 15, 2009** – Hope and change were the themes of Barack Obama's campaign, and as we head into his inauguration, half of youth aged 8-18 (49%) say his election makes them feel hopeful. Two in five youth (43%) say the election of Obama makes them feel happy and 41% say they feel excited about it.

These are some of the results from a Harris Interactive Youth Center of Excellence YouthQuery survey conducted online in the United States among 1,392 youth ages 8-18 between November 20 and December 1, 2008.

### The Importance of Barack Obama's Election

Before the election, almost two-thirds of youth aged 8-17 (63%) said that they thought this election would be more important than recent presidential elections (see release [If Kids Could Vote, Half Would Support Obama](#)). Now that Barack Obama has been elected the first African American president, youth aged 13-18 see this as more important than some other recent pop events, but just as or less important than some historical events. Specifically:

- Two-thirds of teens say Obama's election is more important than the release of the 7th Harry Potter book (65%) and the introduction of the iPod (64%);
- Over half of teens (56%) say his election is more important than Michael Phelps winning 8 gold medals in the 2008 Summer Olympics in China;
- When compared with women gaining the right to vote, just under half of teens (48%) say Obama's election as the first African American president is just as important while 37% say it is less important;
- In comparing Obama's election with sending the first man to the moon, teens are split – 39% say the election is less important while 38% say it is just as important but one-quarter (23%) say the election is more important; and,
- Just under half of teens (46%) say that the election of Obama is less important than the end of the Second World War, while 37% say it is just as important and 17% believe it is more important.

“One thing youth are picking up on is a sense of the historical perspective of Barack Obama's inauguration,” stated Regina Corso, Director of the Youth Center of Excellence. “When compared to some of the more exciting things that have happened in recent memory, they realize that, while they may consider their iPod the most important thing they own, the outcome of this election is definitely something much more important for the history books. But, when it comes to other historical events, the comparisons are less clear. For example, when looking at putting the first man on the moon, for teens

who have seen a second space station being built and are used to shuttles taking off and landing without a great deal of fanfare, it is something that just happens, it isn't history any longer. This is most likely why that historical event is not clearly ahead or behind this upcoming one."

**TABLE 1****FEELINGS ON ELECTION OF BARACK OBAMA**

"How does the recent election of Barack Obama make you feel?"

Base: All Youth, 8-18

	Total	8-12 year olds	13-18 year olds
	%	%	%
Hopeful	49	41	55
Happy	43	43	43
Excited	41	38	43
Proud	39	38	41
Thankful	33	29	35
Nervous	32	28	36
Patriotic	25	21	27
Energized	22	18	26
Lucky	20	21	20
Frustrated	18	16	19
Sad	16	19	14
Angry	14	16	13
Depressed	12	14	11
None of these	12	13	10

Note: Multiple Responses Question

**TABLE 2****IMPORTANCE OF OBAMA ELECTION**

"Is the election of Barack Obama, the first African American president, more, less or just as important than each of the following events?"

Base: Youth, 13-18

		More Important	Just as Important	Less Important
Sending the first man to the moon	%	23	38	39
Release of Harry Potter book 7 "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows"	%	65	7	28
End of the Second World War (WWII)	%	17	37	46
Michael Phelps winning 8 gold medals in the 2008 Summer Olympics	%	56	16	28
The introduction of the iPod	%	64	9	27
Women gaining the right to vote	%	15	48	37

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

**Methodology**

This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on November 20 – December 1, 2008 among 1,392 U.S. 8-18 year olds (563 8-12 year olds; 829 13-18 year olds). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, parental education, and region were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words “margin of error” as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

***These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.***

**About the Harris Interactive Youth Center of Excellence**

The Youth Center of Excellence conducts research among children, teens, parents, educators, administrators and policy makers that assists in understanding the lives of children, teens and college students. The team specializes in research related to marketing geared toward the young consumer, to public policy related to youth and education, to family and parenting issues, and satisfaction studies and research that measures the standards of K-12 and higher education in districts across the nation. The practice conducts custom and syndicated studies both for non-profit and for-profit organizations.

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