

## Ghosts, UFOs, and Other Paranormal Beliefs

We usually think of fairly ‘traditional’ beliefs when considering religion, such as belief in God or Heaven. However, many individuals in the United States hold supernatural or paranormal beliefs that do not fit into those traditional categories. This learning module will walk you through survey data examining some of these beliefs to see how many people hold them and who they are.

If you find yourself lost at any point, look to the instructions on the right.

Open your web browser and go to the homepage for the Association of Religion Data Archives.

Let us begin by looking at belief in ghosts. Search for “ghosts” in the search box in the upper right-hand corner. The results will be organized by the area of the ARDA’s website in which they were found.

1. In what areas of the ARDA’s website were results for “ghosts” found?  
Hint: Look for the green icons that mark each area of results. The name of area will be to the right of these icons.

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You should have found some results in the “ARDA Data Archives-Questions/Variables on Surveys” section. Look through these results and find the question from the Baylor Religion Survey (2005) that asks whether a person believes ghosts exist.

2. What is the label for this question? Hint: It will be hyperlinked and to the left of the survey’s name. While they seem strange, these labels are simply short-hand names for survey questions.

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**Open your web browser.**

**Go to [www.thearda.com](http://www.thearda.com)**

**Type “ghosts” in the search box.**

3. If you had to guess, what **percent** of the U.S. population do you think “absolutely” believes that ghosts exist?

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Click on the name of the question. This will take you to the overall responses that people gave to this question.

**Click on the hyperlinked name of the question, NOT the name of the survey.**

4. What **percent** of the U.S. population say that they “absolutely” believe ghosts exists?

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Let us explore this in more detail. Click on the “Analyze Results” hyperlink below the responses to the question.

**Click on “Analyze Results.”**

You will see a page with a pie chart and the same results you looked at on the previous page. Below this, though, are several tables looking at people’s responses broken down by various social and demographic categories.

5. Do you think men or women are more likely to believe in ghosts? Why do you think there might be a difference?

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Find the table for the gender of the individual and fill in the following table with the **percentages**.

	Male	Female
Absolutely Not		
Probably Not		
Probably		
Absolutely		

6. How does a person's church attendance relate to their belief in ghosts? Fill in the following table with the percentages and discuss the findings.

	Never	< 1 Month	<1 a Week	Weekly+
Absolutely Not				
Probably Not				
Probably				
Absolutely				

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7. Look at the other tables and describe some of the patterns you see in belief in ghosts.

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Alright, let us move on to another supernatural belief. As you did earlier, search for “UFO” in the upper right-hand corner. (Note: UFO stands for “unidentified flying object” and is usually associated with visitors from space).

Find the question that asks whether the person has “ever read a book, consulted a Web site, or researched the following topics...UFO sightings, abductions, or conspiracies.”

After you find it, click on the name of the question.

8. What **percent** of people have done research on UFO-related issues?

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9. Do responses differ by gender? How does this compare to what you found earlier concerning ghosts? If there is a difference, why do you think this is?

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10. How does a person’s church attendance relate to their interest in UFO-related topics?

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**Search for “UFO” in the search box in the upper right-hand corner.**

**Click on the hyperlinked question name.**

**Click on “Analyze Results.”**

**Scroll down to find the gender table.**

**Find the church attendance table.**



