



2017 solar eclipse was one of most-viewed events in American history



MARK LENNIHAN/ASSOCIATED PRESS/FILE 2017

A study estimated that 154 million American adults watched the eclipse directly.

By [Matt Rocheleau](#)

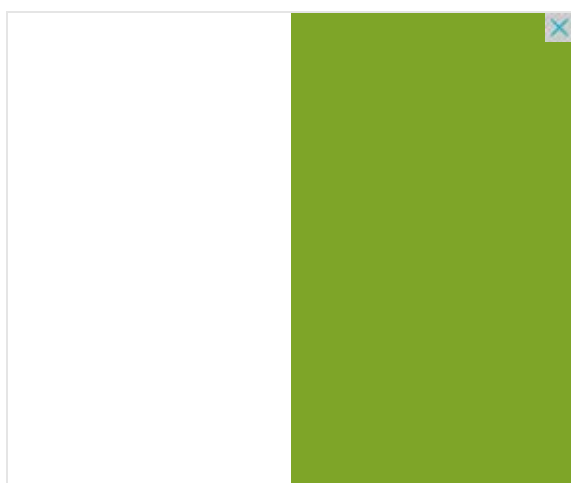
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The solar eclipse of 2017 was one of the most-viewed events in American history, its viewership dramatically overshadowing the number of people who have tuned in to the most-watched Super Bowls, presidential debates, and TV episodes of all time.

A staggering 215 million adults nationwide, or 88 percent of the population 18 and older, viewed the eclipse either directly or via television, computer, tablet, or smartphone, according to a cooperative [study](#) by the University of Michigan and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

“This level of public interest and engagement with a science-oriented event is unparalleled,” Jon Miller, a researcher at the university and the leader of the study, said in a statement.

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The study estimated that 154 million American adults watched the eclipse directly, using special solar glasses or other devices, such as pinhole viewers, to allow them to look at it safely. That included about 20 million adults who traveled to an area away from their home to view the event, often in search of a higher degree of eclipse totality.

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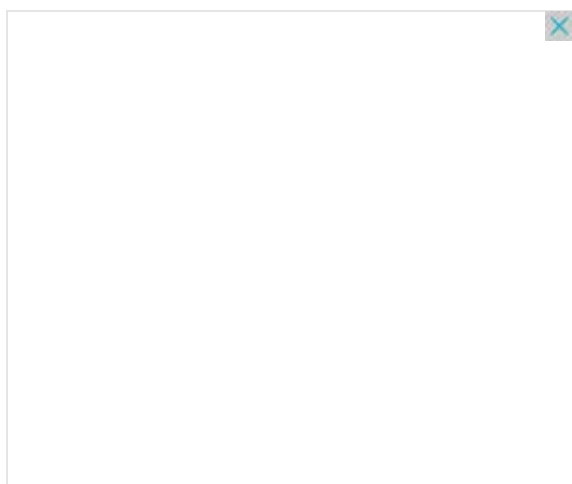
An estimated 61 million American adults viewed the eclipse electronically.

By comparison, the most-watched Super Bowl (in 2015 when the New England Patriots defeated the Seattle Seahawks) drew an estimated 114 million viewers.

Other findings from the eclipse study:

■ **One in three viewers took pictures or a video of the eclipse, and about half of them said that they shared their pictures with others via social media, e-mail, and other electronic means.**

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■ **Most adults watched the eclipse with family, friends, or co-workers. Only 3 percent viewed the eclipse as a part of an organized group. Researchers said this made sense, given that the eclipse occurred in the midst of a workday.**

■ **Most adults who viewed the eclipse found it to be both enjoyable and educational. On a 0-to-10 scale, adults gave the viewing experience average scores of 7.6 for being enjoyable and 7.0 for being educational.**

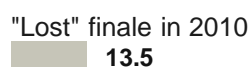
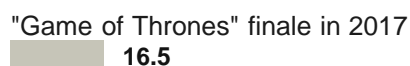
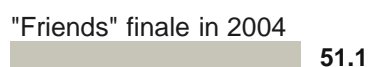
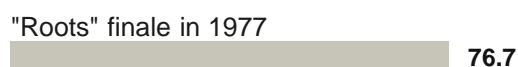
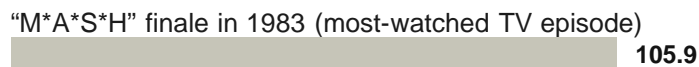
The [study](#) was based on online surveys and telephone interviews of more than 2,000 American adults conducted in the hours and days following the eclipse.

Researchers said they plan to do a follow-up survey in the coming months to assess how watching the eclipse might have prompted viewers to seek more information about eclipses and other astronomical topics.

Viewership of eclipse vs. popular TV shows

Figures below are in millions of viewers.

Eclipse, 2017



SOURCE: University of Michigan/NASA; Nielsen & media reports citing the TV ratings company

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