

As a famous biologist once [said](#), “without evolution nothing in biology makes sense.” And biological science is obviously basic to a lot of environmental policy.

Thus, it is dismaying to learn that only four out of ten Americans believe in evolution. Trying to understand environmental policy without believing in evolution is like trying to understand nuclear energy without believing in atoms.

According to the [Gallop Poll](#),

On the eve of the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth, a new Gallup Poll shows that only 39% of Americans say they “believe in the theory of evolution,” while a quarter say they do not believe in the theory, and another 36% don't have an opinion either way. These attitudes are strongly related to education and, to an even greater degree, religiosity.

The data is quite striking.



Among high school graduates, only 21% believe in evolution, while 74% of those with post-grad

uate education do. Barely half of college graduates believe in evolution. There's also a relationship with political party. According to a previous poll, the majority

of Republicans do not believe in evolution. Similarly, for religion. Only 24% of those who attend church weekly believe in evolution, while over 55% of those who seldom or never attend do believe in evolution. Thus, vast numbers of Americans lack the basic intellectual tools to understand the world they live in or to reach intelligent decisions about important areas of public policy.

Alas, the chances are that, for those who don't understand science, it **won't** be (in the immortal words of Sam Cooke) a “a wonderful world.”

[youtube=http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sprC7dEci3Y]