

METHODOLOGICAL EXPLANATIONS

for the chart illustrating approval of the actions of the prime minister of Russia

1. The goal of the chart is to demonstrate the changes of declared approval of the actions of Russia's prime minister by the residents of the Russian Federation older than 18 years of age in a more than 20-year period.
2. The approval level in all studies was measured via a dual-position scale comprising the responses, "approve" and "do not approve." A respondent could select one of the two responses or decline to answer (at the result processing stage, this was considered "no response").
3. The chart illustrates the results of national representative surveys conducted by the Levada Center team from January 1997 to now (for more information on sample building techniques see: <https://www.levada.ru/en/methods/omnibus/>). The question concerning approval of the prime minister's actions was asked prior to 1997 as well, but irregularly (not every month), thus, the results from that previous period are not included in the final chart.
4. Over the reporting period, the approval survey was administered every month annually with the exception of (no data):
 - July 1997;
 - January 1999;
 - March 2008;
 - April 2008.
5. Depending on whoever was holding the office of Russia's prime minister, the question included the name of the specific prime minister at the time of survey. The table below provides a chronological list of the politicians in question:

Politician's full name	Survey interval (in chronological order)
Viktor Chernomyrdin	January 1997 – March 1998
Sergey Kiriyenko	April 1998 – August 1998
Yevgeny Primakov	October 1998 – April 1999
Sergey Stepashin	May 1999 – July 1999
Vladimir Putin	August 1999 – May 2000*
Mikhail Kasyanov	June 2000 – February 2004
Mikhail Fradkov	March 2004 – September 2007
Viktor Zubkov	October 2007 – February 2008
Vladimir Putin	May 2008 – May 2012
Dmitry Medvedev	June 2012 – December 2019
Mikhail Mishustin	January 2020 – present

**The question was presented in the following (combined) form: "Overall, do you approve or disapprove of Vladimir Putin's actions as prime minister and acting president of Russia?"*

6. Until March 2020, the survey was conducted via personal interviews in the respondents' homes (face-to-face). In April – June 2020, the survey was conducted via phone interviews (CATI).

7. The highest approval value in the reporting (accessible) period was recorded in September 2008 (Vladimir Putin's premiership) – 88%. The lowest approval value (24%) was recorded in June 1997 (Viktor Chernomyrdin's premiership). It is important to note, however, that it would be incorrect to interpret these figures as the "historical maximum" or the "historical minimum," as any survey is subject to statistical error, which means that deviations between 1 to 3 percentage points do not allow for changes to be considered significant. In this case, for example, the value of 88% does not differ from 86%.

8. Note that this measurement of politicians' approval ratings is only one of the possible options. Sometimes, the question concerning the approval of the prime minister's/president's actions is administered with a four-position scale including the responses, "absolutely yes," "mostly yes," "mostly not," or "absolutely not". Additionally, approval is often mistakenly juxtaposed with another important indicator of assessing the actions of political institutions and figures – trust in politicians. Usually, questions about approval and trust are administered differently (and aimed at understanding different attitudes of the population), which should be taken into account. Thus, approval and trust figures should not be compared directly; instead, they should be considered as related indicators demonstrating changes (trends) in the public opinion.