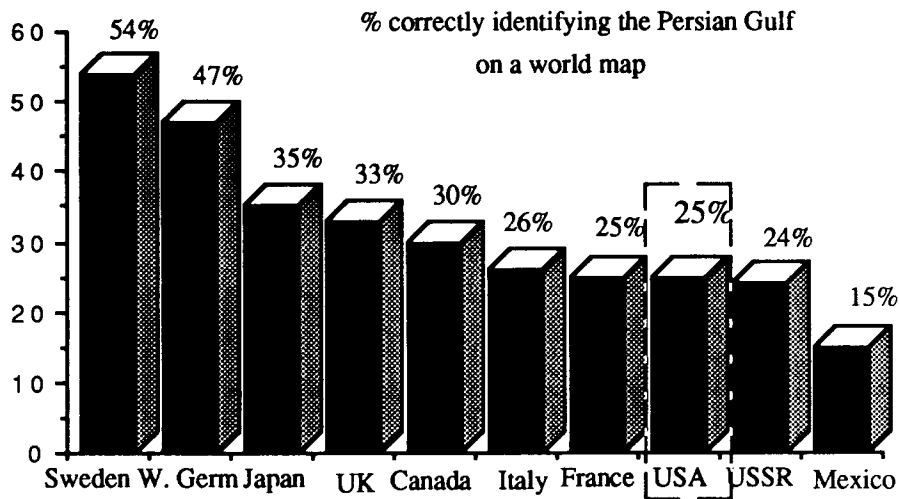
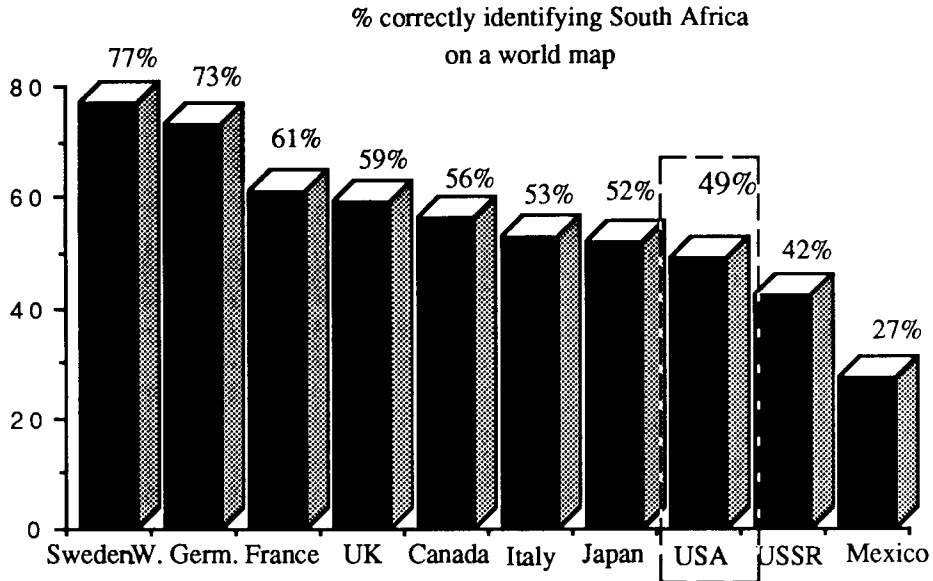


WHY DON'T AMERICANS KNOW THEIR WAY AROUND?

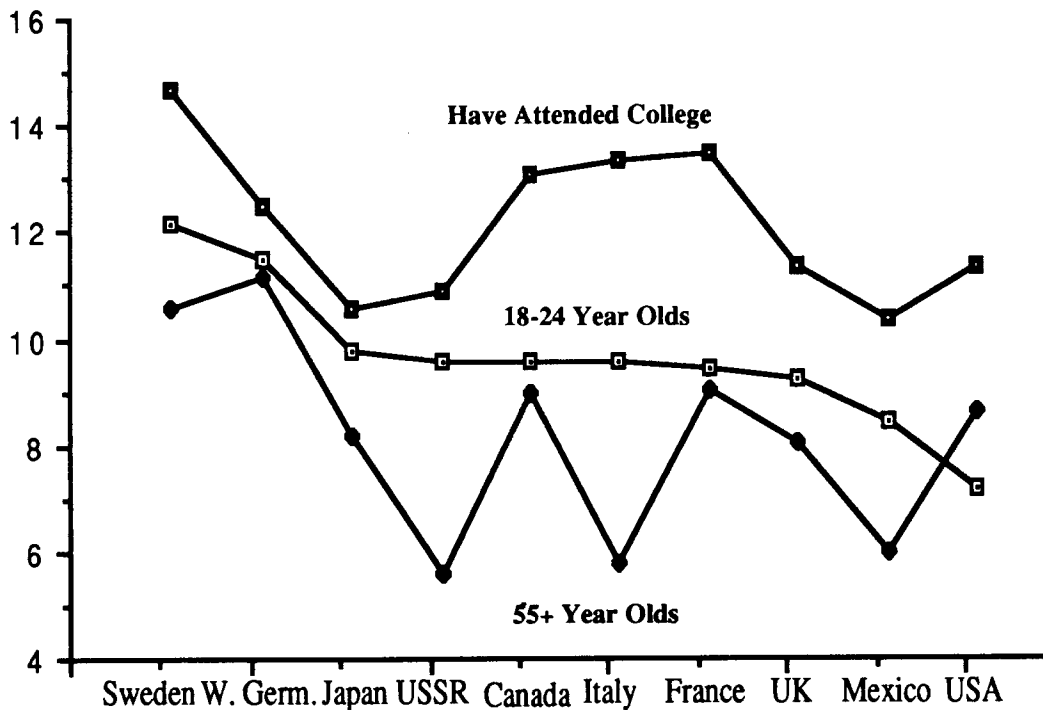
Data From Recent National Geographic Surveys in 10 Countries



FAILURE OF AN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM?

Much has been written about why the US public schools aren't doing a better job. Money isn't the reason: The US spends more per pupil than any other industrial country, with the possible exception of Sweden. Nonetheless, a number of studies, with varying methodologies, all show young Americans ranking below their counterparts in other developed countries in what might be called "core knowledge" -- e.g., basic mathematics and geographical information. Surveys taken by the Gallup Organization in the US, and by various survey firms in 9 other nations, in 1988, sponsored by NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC and just recently released, show Americans lagging in most areas of geography -- including the ability to locate the Persian Gulf and the Union of South Africa on a world map (left page). Especially striking is the finding (below) that Americans 55 years and older do about as well as their counterparts elsewhere -- while those 18-24 years old trail their age mates in every other nation. These findings support those from other studies that show the US educational failure to be of recent origins. We are the only nation of the 10 where 18-24 year olds ranked *below* the 55+ cohort in basic geographic knowledge.

Composite Geographic Knowledge Scores, by Age and Education



Note: The US survey was done April 30-May 8, 1988 by the Gallup Organization.