

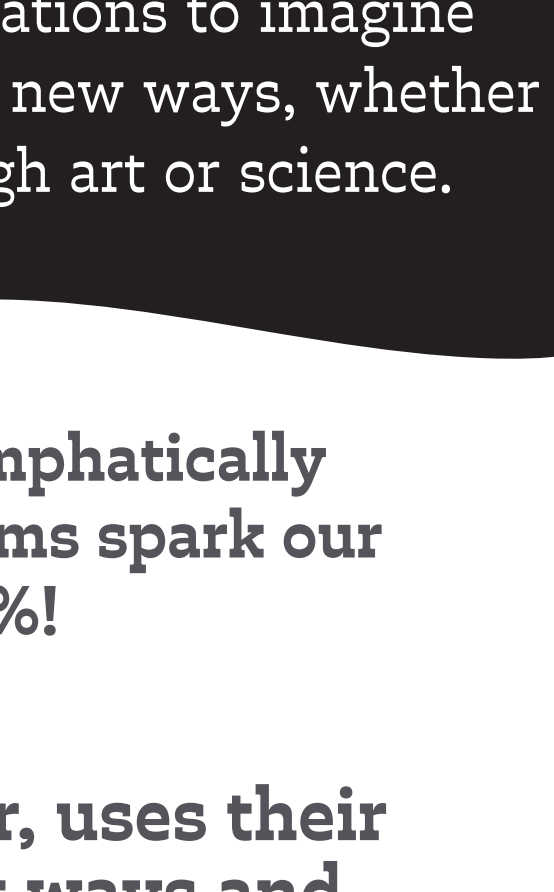
# IMAGINATIVE LEARNING IN MUSEUMS, PART 1: AN INTRODUCTION

A 2024 ANNUAL SURVEY OF MUSEUM-GOERS DATA STORY



*"I think it's important to my well-being to continually be learning and growing in my mind, and imagination helps that. If I don't have imagination or growth, I think I would be bored and depressed with this life."*

Visiting a museum is an act of imagination. We use our imaginations to imagine what the past was like, how animals live, the experiences of others, and to explore different places.

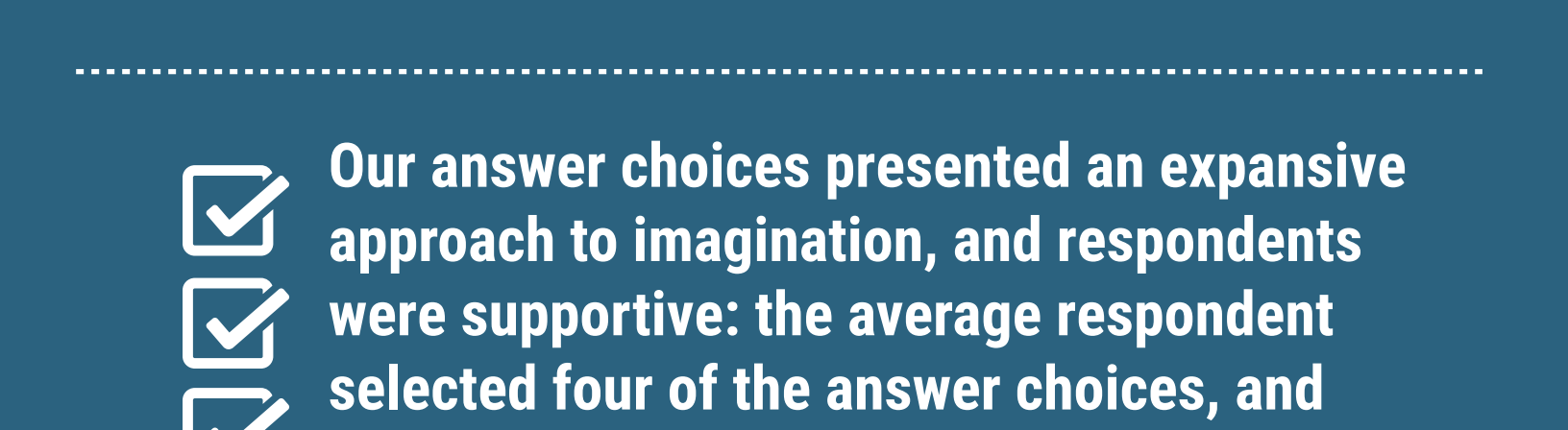


We also use our imaginations to imagine things in new ways, whether through art or science.



Museum-goers emphatically agree that museums spark our imaginations: 97%!

Each individual, however, uses their imagination in different ways and attributes different outcomes to those imaginative experiences.



In the 2024 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers, as well as a broader population sample of U.S. Adults, we wanted to learn more about the role and impact of imaginative learning in museums, and asked respondents a series of questions on the topic. In this Data Story, we'll share these overall results, and explore more deeply in follow-up infographics.

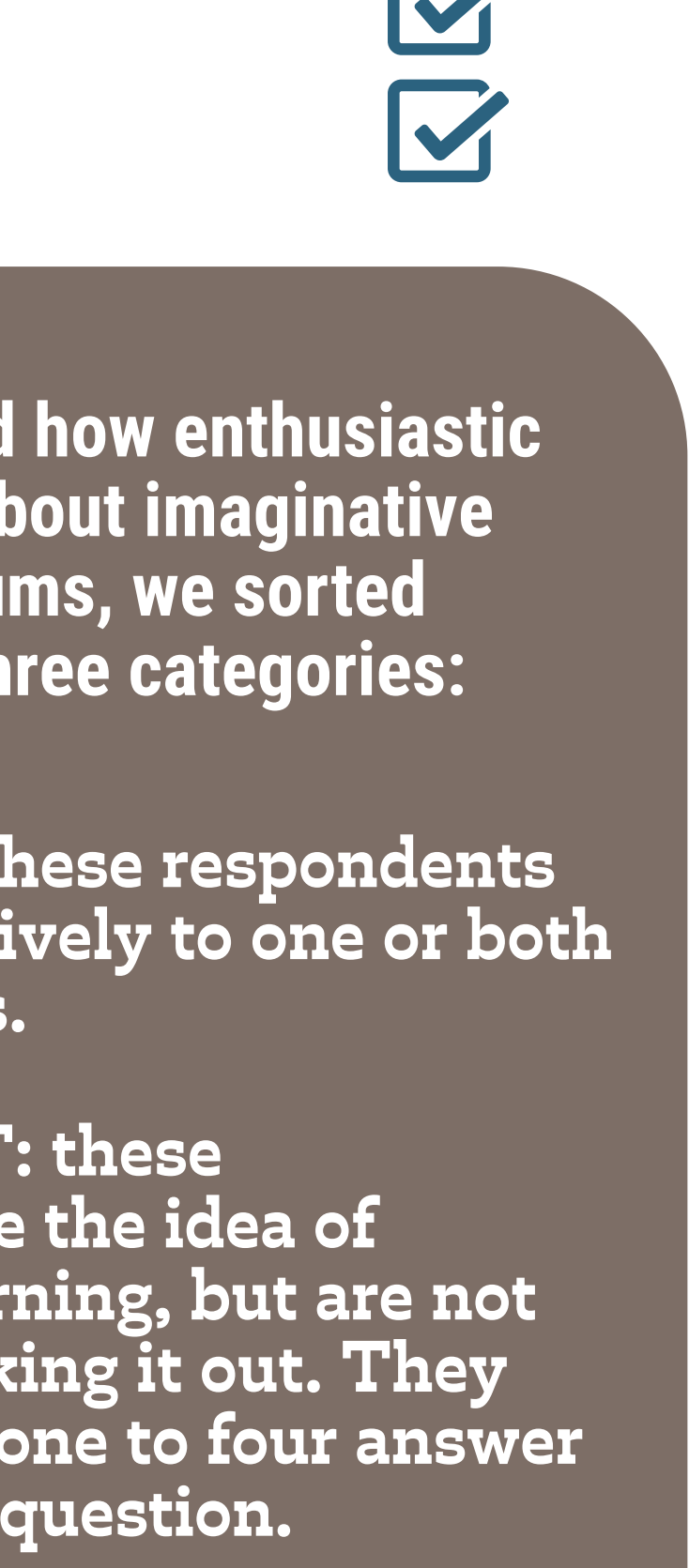
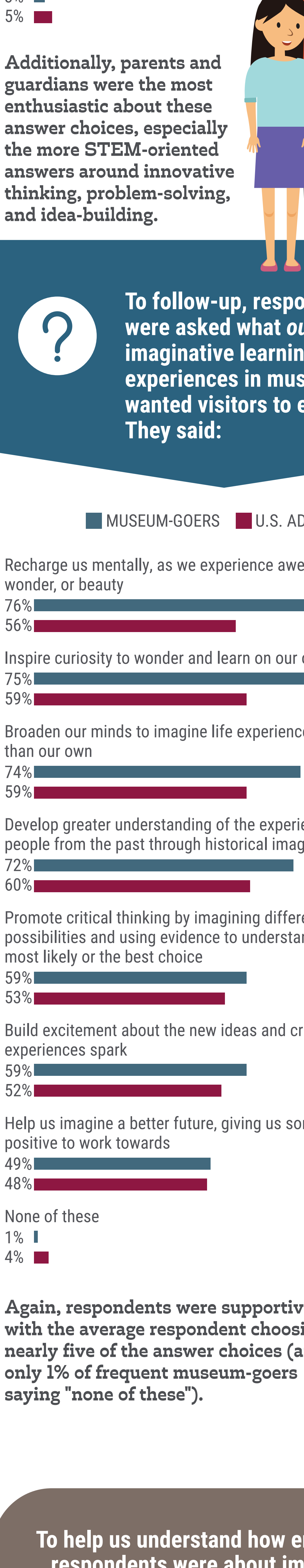


**We first asked respondents: How would you like to use your imagination while learning in museums?**

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Our answer choices presented an expansive approach to imagination, and respondents were supportive: the average respondent selected four of the answer choices, and only 3% of frequent museum-goers admitted "I don't really want to use my imagination when visiting museums."

■ MUSEUM-GOERS ■ U.S. ADULTS

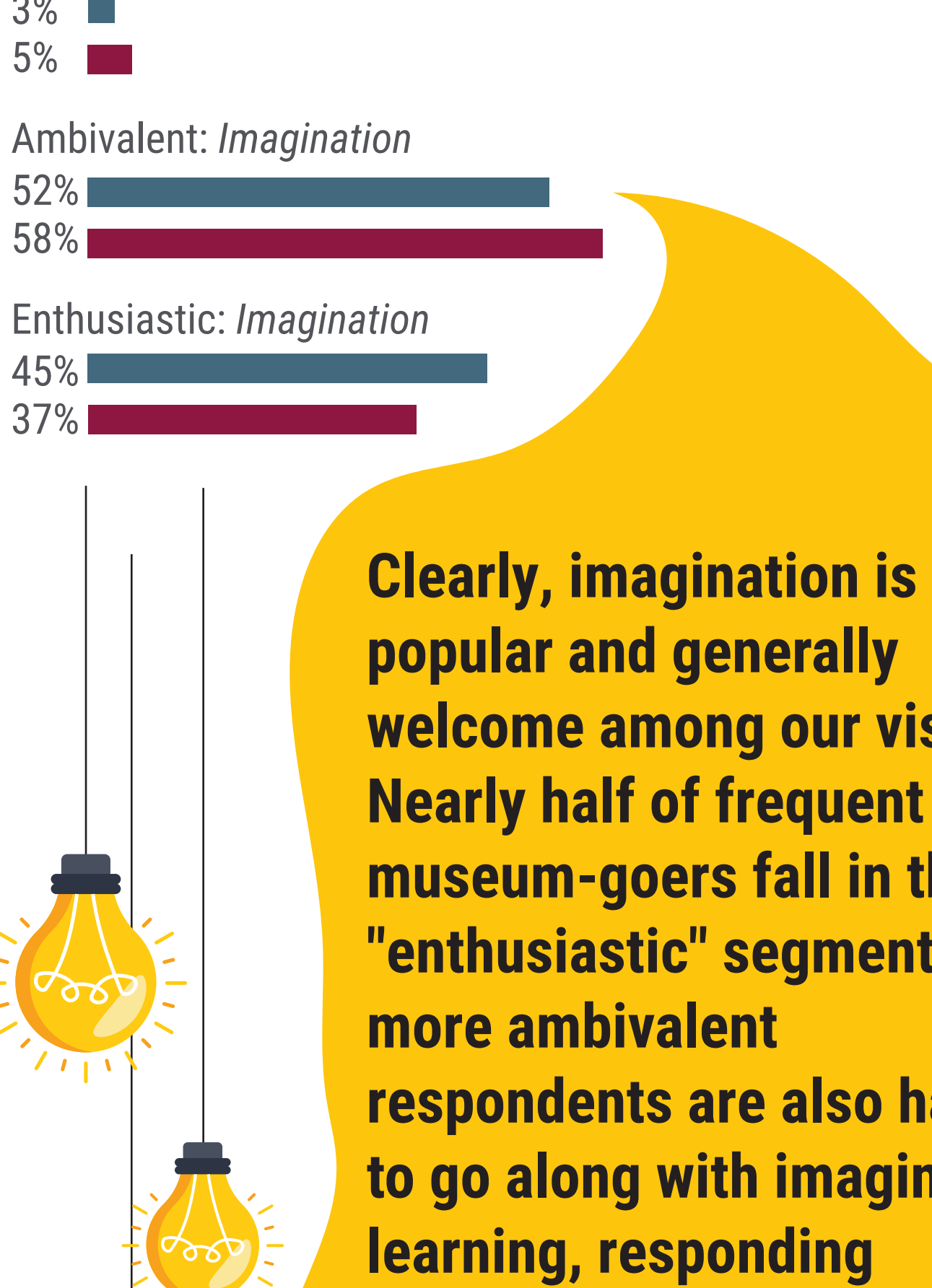


Additionally, parents and guardians were the most enthusiastic about these answer choices, especially the more STEM-oriented answers around innovative thinking, problem-solving, and idea-building.



**To follow-up, respondents were asked what outcomes of imaginative learning experiences in museums they wanted visitors to experience. They said:**

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Again, respondents were supportive, with the average respondent choosing nearly five of the answer choices (and only 1% of frequent museum-goers saying "none of these").

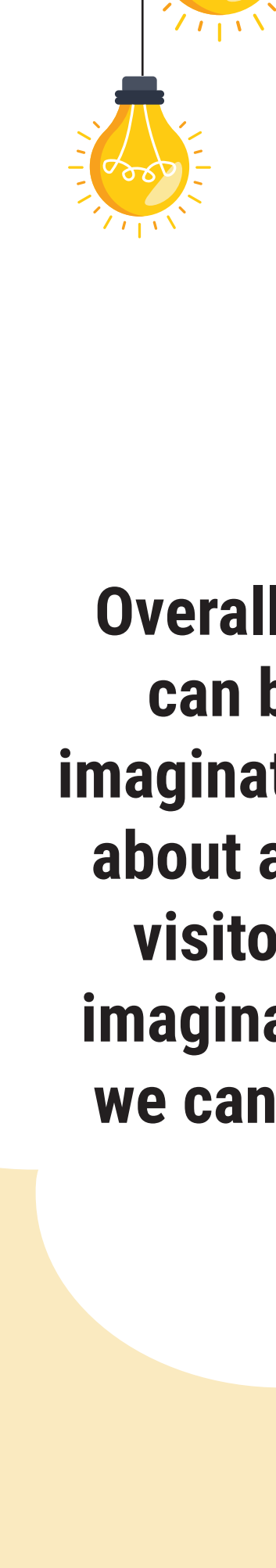
To help us understand how enthusiastic respondents were about imaginative learning in museums, we sorted respondents into three categories:

**RESISTANT:** these respondents answered negatively to one or both of the questions.

**AMBIVALENT:** these respondents like the idea of imaginative learning, but are not necessarily seeking it out. They typically chose one to four answer choices to each question.

**ENTHUSIASTIC:** these respondents loved the idea of imaginative learning, and chose five or more answer choices to both questions; in fact, 85% of this segment chose ALL of the answer choices in one or both of the questions.

■ MUSEUM-GOERS ■ U.S. ADULTS



Clearly, imagination is popular and generally welcome among our visitors. Nearly half of frequent museum-goers fall in the "enthusiastic" segment. The more ambivalent respondents are also happy to go along with imaginative learning, responding positively (just less enthusiastically). We'll explore these three segments more in our next Data Story.

Overall, however, this suggests that we can be very proactive talking about imagination in museum. The more we talk about and support imagination, helping visitors to feel good about their own imaginative learning, the more effective we can be in their learning experiences and outcomes.



*"Imagination is very important to me...it keeps me interested in the many layers of life's complexity and quality, opportunities. It inspires me beyond 'what is' to 'what could be.' It is soul food for my right brain."*

