

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
SEPTEMBER 12-15, 2008 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY
TOPLINE
N=1,006

Q.1 Apart from who you support, which presidential candidate have you heard the most about in the news in the last week or so? [OPEN-END. RECORD FIRST MENTION ONLY]

	Barack <u>Obama</u>	John <u>McCain</u>	Sarah <u>Palin</u> ¹	<u>Other</u> ²	Don't know/ <u>Refused</u>
September 12-15, 2008	32	41	17	2	8=100
September 5-8, 2008	28	54	10	2	6=100
August 29-31, 2008	81	11		2	6=100
August 22-25, 2008	77	11		3	9=100
August 15-18, 2008	62	19		4	15=100
August 8-11, 2008	69	15		5	11=100
August 1-4, 2008	76	11		4	9=100
July 25-28, 2008	77	9		3	11=100
July 18-21, 2008	76	10		2	12=100
July 11-14, 2008	72	10		5	13=100
July 3-7, 2008	71	11		3	15=100
June 27-30, 2008	75	10		5	10=100
June 20-23, 2008	74	12		4	10=100
June 13-16, 2008	69	12		7	12=100
June 6-9, 2008	67	2		23	8=100
May 30-June 2, 2008	54	5		28	13=100
May 22-25, 2008	51	8		29	12=100
May 16-19, 2008	59	4		27	10=100
May 9-12, 2008	52	2		38	8=100
May 2-5, 2008	57	2		31	10=100
April 25-28, 2008	46	3		39	12=100
April 18-21, 2008	55	4		29	12=100
April 11-14, 2008	51	8		26	15=100
April 4-7, 2008	45	6		35	14=100
March 28-31, 2008	53	4		32	11=100
March 20-24, 2008	70	3		16	11=100
March 14-17, 2008	57	4		28	11=100
March 7-10, 2008	38	6		41	15=100

Q.2 Please think about each of the following candidates [INSERT NAME]. In the past few days, have you come to have a MORE favorable opinion of (him/her), a LESS favorable opinion, or hasn't your opinion of (him/her) changed lately?³ [ROTATE IN BLOCKS: A/B FIRST, FOLLOWED BY C/D]

	More <u>Favorable</u>	Less <u>Favorable</u>	Opinion has <u>Not changed</u>	Don't <u>know</u>
a. Barack Obama	20	20	58	2=100
September 5-8, 2008	20	20	59	1=100
August 29-31, 2008	29	19	50	2=100
August 22-25, 2008	22	21	54	3=100
August 15-18, 2008	16	21	60	3=100
August 8-11, 2008	15	18	64	3=100

¹ Although the question specifically asks respondents to name a "presidential" candidate, Sarah Palin was accepted, as all responses were volunteered.

² "Other" includes responses for Hillary Clinton.

³ Prior to September 12-15, the question was worded, "Please think about each of the following *presidential* candidates..."

Q.2 CONTINUED...

	<u>More Favorable</u>	<u>Less Favorable</u>	<u>Opinion has Not change</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
August 1-4, 2008	16	22	60	2=100
July 25-28, 2008	17	21	59	3=100
July 18-21, 2008	16	22	60	2=100
July 11-14, 2008	15	17	64	4=100
July 3-7, 2008	17	17	62	4=100
June 27-30, 2008	21	19	56	4=100
June 20-23, 2008	16	16	66	2=100
June 13-16, 2008	17	15	64	4=100
June 6-9, 2008	19	17	61	3=100
May 30-June 2, 2008	17	21	58	4=100
May 22-25, 2008	18	20	60	2=100
May 16-19, 2008	19	19	59	3=100
May 9-12, 2008	20	23	55	2=100
May 2-5, 2008	11	25	59	5=100
April 25-28, 2008	16	24	58	2=100
April 18-21, 2008	18	24	54	4=100
March 28-31, 2008	18	27	52	3=100
March 20-24, 2008	22	30	46	2=100
b. John McCain	28	25	45	2=100
September 5-8, 2008	35	24	40	1=100
August 29-31, 2008	28	22	47	3=100
August 22-25, 2008	17	20	60	3=100
August 15-18, 2008	17	21	59	3=100
August 8-11, 2008	14	20	63	3=100
August 1-4, 2008	18	23	57	2=100
July 25-28, 2008	16	19	62	3=100
July 18-21, 2008	17	15	65	3=100
July 11-14, 2008	14	15	66	5=100
July 3-7, 2008	15	16	64	5=100
June 27-30, 2008	17	21	58	4=100
June 20-23, 2008	15	18	65	2=100
June 13-16, 2008	13	18	66	3=100
June 6-9, 2008	14	15	65	6=100
May 30-June 2, 2008	11	20	64	5=100
May 22-25, 2008	15	18	63	4=100
May 16-19, 2008	14	21	62	3=100
May 9-12, 2008	12	18	67	3=100
May 2-5, 2008	10	13	71	6=100
April 25-28, 2008	14	16	65	5=100
April 18-21, 2008	18	15	61	6=100
March 28-31, 2008	18	20	57	5=100
March 20-24, 2008	18	18	61	3=100
c. Joe Biden	14	18	58	10=100
d. Sarah Palin	31	27	37	5=100

Q.3 As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, please tell me if you happened to follow each news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. First, [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE ITEMS] [IF NECESSARY “Did you follow [ITEM] very closely, fairly closely, not too closely or not at all closely?”]

	Very Closely	Fairly Closely	Not too Closely	Not at all Closely	DK/ Refused
a. Hurrican Ike	50	32	13	5	*=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
September 5-8: <i>Hanna (Southeast U.S.)</i>	34	37	19	10	0=100
September 5-8, 2008: <i>Gustav (Gulf coast)</i>	42	35	17	6	*=100
August 29-31, 2008: <i>Gustav(Gulf coast)</i>	33	30	23	14	*=100
July 25-28, 2008: <i>Dolly (Texas coast)</i>	19	29	29	23	*=100
November 2-5, 2007: <i>Noel (Bahamas and Cuba)</i>	11	22	31	35	1=100
September 7-10, 2007: <i>Felix and Henriette (Mexico and Central America)</i>	14	29	29	27	1=100
August 24-27, 2007: <i>Dean (Mexico and Caribbean)</i>	18	39	24	18	1=100
November, 2005: <i>Wilma (Mexico and Florida)</i>	34	37	21	8	*=100
September, 2005: <i>Katrina (New Orleans and Gulf Coast)</i>	70	21	7	2	*=100
July, 2005: <i>Recent hurricanes (Gulf coast)</i>	38	37	17	8	*=100
September, 2003: <i>Isabel</i>	47	28	15	10	*=100
Early October, 2002: <i>Recent hurricanes (Gulf of Mexico and Louisiana)</i>	38	34	18	10	*=100
b. News about the first test of the world’s largest supercollider in Geneva, Switzerland	12	17	23	45	3=100
c. The military effort in Afghanistan against Taliban fighters	21	34	25	19	1=100
August 29-31, 2008	18	27	32	23	*=100
July 18-21, 2008	27	33	24	16	*=100
July 11-14, 2008	19	28	29	23	1=100
July 3-7, 2008	19	28	32	21	*=100
June 20-23, 2008	20	30	30	20	*=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
Late July, 2002 ⁴	41	38	13	7	1=100
June, 2002	38	32	20	9	1=100
April, 2002	39	39	13	8	1=100
Early April, 2002	45	37	12	5	1=100
February, 2002	47	39	8	5	1=100
January, 2002	51	35	9	4	1=100
December, 2001	44	38	12	5	1=100
Mid-November, 2001	49	36	11	3	1=100
Early November, 2001	45	36	12	6	1=100
Mid-October, 2001	51	35	10	3	1=100

⁴ From Mid-October, 2001 to Late July, 2002 the story was listed as “the U.S. military effort in Afghanistan.”

Q.3 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not too Closely</u>	<u>Not at all Closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
d. The federal government taking control of the mortgage companies Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac	28	35	19	17	1=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:⁵					
March 20-24, 2008: Bear Stearns buyout	21	26	21	32	*=100
August, 1989: <i>Savings and loan bailout</i>	26	30	20	23	1=100
e. The seventh anniversary of the September 11 th terrorist attacks	32	33	22	12	1=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
September 14-17, 2007: Sixth Anniversary	26	33	23	18	*=100
September, 2006 <i>Fifth Anniversary</i>	27	35	25	12	1=100
September, 2002 <i>First Anniversary</i>	39	35	18	7	1=100
f. News about candidates for the 2008 presidential election	40	38	14	7	1=100
September 5-8, 2008	45	39	12	4	*=100
August 29-31, 2008	45	32	15	8	*=100
August 22-25, 2008	31	36	22	11	*=100
August 15-18, 2008	25	41	19	14	1=100
August 8-11, 2008	27	38	22	13	*=100
August 1-4, 2008	30	42	19	9	*=100
July 25-28, 2008	30	34	21	15	*=100
July 18-21, 2008	30	35	21	14	*=100
July 11-14, 2008	28	34	22	15	1=100
July 3-7, 2008	25	35	23	17	*=100
June 27-30, 2008	39	33	18	10	*=100
June 20-23, 2008	28	38	22	12	*=100
June 13-16, 2008	35	35	20	10	*=100
June 6-9, 2008	38	35	17	10	*=100
May 30-June 2, 2008	30	35	21	14	*=100
May 22-25, 2008	32	37	20	11	*=100
May 16-19, 2008	33	37	19	10	1=100
May 9-12, 2008	35	36	18	11	*=100
May 2-5, 2008	27	35	23	14	1=100
April 25-28, 2008	34	37	18	11	*=100
April 18-21, 2008	29	41	19	10	1=100
April 11-14, 2008	31	37	22	10	*=100
April 4-7, 2008	33	36	17	14	*=100
March 28-31, 2008	31	41	18	10	*=100
March 20-24, 2008	34	37	18	11	*=100
March 14-17, 2008	40	37	16	7	*=100
March 7-10, 2008	39	36	15	9	1=100
February 29-March 3, 2008	43	34	14	9	*=100
February 22-25, 2008	42	37	13	8	*=100
February 15-18, 2008	44	36	10	10	*=100
February 8-11, 2008	39	37	15	9	0=100
February 1-4, 2008	37	35	16	12	*=100
January 25-28, 2008	36	37	14	12	1=100

⁵ March 20-24, 2008 asked about: "The buyout of Wall Street investment bank Bear Stearns." August, 1989 asked about: "Passage in Congress of a bill to bailout ailing savings and loan institutions."

Q.3 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>Closely</u>	Fairly <u>Closely</u>	Not too <u>Closely</u>	Not at all <u>Closely</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
January 18-21, 2008	36	34	18	12	*=100
January 11-14, 2008 ⁶	32	31	19	17	1=100
January 4-7, 2008	33	36	19	11	1=100
December 14-17, 2007	25	34	22	19	*=100
December 7-10, 2007	24	35	22	19	*=100
November 30 – December 3, 2007	23	35	23	19	*=100
November 23-26, 2007	20	33	26	20	1=100
November 16-19, 2007	26	33	21	19	1=100
November 9-12, 2007	21	33	25	21	*=100
November 2-5, 2007	27	30	21	21	1=100
October 26-29, 2007	21	34	26	19	*=100
October 19-22, 2007	23	32	22	23	*=100
October 12-15, 2007	13	31	26	30	*=100
October 5-8, 2007	22	30	24	24	*=100
September 28 – October 1, 2007	21	34	25	20	*=100
September 21-24, 2007	24	31	22	23	*=100
September 14-17, 2007	22	31	24	23	*=100
September 7-10, 2007	18	34	26	22	*=100
August 30-September 2, 2007	19	35	21	25	*=100
August 24-27, 2007	22	28	24	26	*=100
August 17-20, 2007	19	27	24	30	*=100
August 10-13, 2007	23	32	21	24	*=100
August 3-6, 2007	19	31	25	25	*=100
July 27-30, 2007	19	32	22	26	1=100
July 20-23, 2007	16	26	30	27	1=100
July 13-16, 2007	17	29	27	27	*=100
July 6-9, 2007	24	29	24	22	1=100
June 29-July 2, 2007	20	32	25	23	*=100
June 22-25, 2007	18	31	21	30	*=100
June 15-18, 2007	17	32	26	25	*=100
June 8-11, 2007	19	30	24	26	1=100
June 1-4, 2007	16	27	32	24	1=100
May 24-27, 2007	22	33	23	22	*=100
May 18-21, 2007	18	31	24	27	*=100
May 11-14, 2007	18	30	23	28	1=100
May 4-7, 2007	23	34	21	21	1=100
April 27-30, 2007	14	30	29	26	1=100
April 20-23, 2007	18	28	27	27	*=100
April 12-16, 2007	18	28	27	27	*=100
April 5-9, 2007	25	30	26	19	*=100
March 30-April 2, 2007	20	29	27	23	1=100
March 23-26, 2007	20	32	22	26	*=100
March 16-19, 2007	15	28	29	27	1=100
March 9-12, 2007	24	30	23	23	*=100
March 2-5, 2007	19	31	26	23	1=100
February 23-26, 2007	22	33	24	21	*=100
February 16-19, 2007	18	32	22	27	1=100
February 9-12, 2007	24	30	24	21	1=100
February 2-5, 2007	24	36	22	18	*=100
January 26-29, 2007	24	33	23	20	*=100
January 19-22, 2007 ⁷	24	27	22	26	1=100

⁶ January 11-14, 2008 asked about: “News about the New Hampshire primaries and the presidential campaign.”

Q.3 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not too Closely</u>	<u>Not at all Closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
2004 Presidential Election					
November, 2004 (RVs)	52	36	8	4	*=100
Mid-October, 2004	46	30	12	11	1=100
August, 2004	32	38	16	14	*=100
July, 2004	29	37	18	15	1=100
April, 2004	31	33	19	16	1=100
Mid-March, 2004	35	34	18	13	*=100
Late February, 2004	24	40	23	12	1=100
Early February, 2004 ⁸	29	37	20	13	1=100
Mid-January, 2004	16	30	27	26	1=100
Early January, 2004	14	32	30	23	1=100
December, 2003	16	26	27	30	1=100
November, 2003	11	26	34	28	1=100
October, 2003	12	27	28	32	1=100
September, 2003	17	25	30	27	1=100
Mid-August, 2003	12	27	27	33	1=100
May, 2003	8	19	31	41	1=100
January, 2003	14	28	29	28	1=100
2000 Presidential Election					
Early November, 2000 (RVs)	39	44	12	5	*=100
Mid-October, 2000 (RVs)	40	37	15	8	*=100
Early October, 2000 (RVs)	42	36	15	6	1=100
September, 2000	22	42	21	15	*=100
July, 2000	21	38	20	20	1=100
June, 2000	23	32	23	21	1=100
May, 2000	18	33	26	23	*=100
April, 2000	18	39	22	20	1=100
March, 2000	26	41	19	13	1=100
February, 2000	26	36	21	17	*=100
January, 2000	19	34	28	18	1=100
December, 1999	16	36	24	23	1=100
October, 1999	17	32	28	22	1=100
September, 1999	15	31	33	20	1=100
July, 1999	15	38	24	22	1=100
June, 1999	11	25	29	34	1=100
1996 Presidential Election					
November, 1996 (RVs)	34	45	15	6	*=100
October, 1996	31	39	18	12	*=100
Early September, 1996	24	36	23	17	*=100
July, 1996	22	40	23	14	1=100
March, 1996	26	41	20	13	*=100
January, 1996	10	34	31	24	1=100
September, 1995	12	36	30	22	*=100
August, 1995	13	34	28	25	*=100

⁷ January 19-22, 2007 asked about: "Recent announcements by prominent Democrats about plans to run for president in 2008."

⁸ From May 2003 to Early February 2004 and in March 1992, the story was listed as "The race for the Democratic nomination." In January 2003, the story was listed as "Recent announcements by prominent Democrats about plans to run for president in 2004." In September 2000, Early September and July 1996, and May 1992, the question asked about "the presidential election campaign." In January, March and April 1996, the story was listed as "News about the Republican presidential candidates." In August 1992, the story was listed as "News about the presidential election." In July 1992, the story was listed as "News about the presidential campaign." In January 1992, the story was listed as "News about the Democratic candidates for the presidential nomination." In 1988, the story was introduced as being from "this past year" and was listed as "News about the presidential campaign in 1988."

Q.3 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>Closely</u>	Fairly <u>Closely</u>	Not too <u>Closely</u>	Not at all <u>Closely</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
June, 1995	11	31	31	26	1=100
1992 Presidential Election					
October, 1992 (RVs)	55	36	7	2	0=100
September, 1992 (RVs)	47	36	11	6	*=100
August, 1992 (RVs)	36	51	11	2	0=100
July, 1992	20	45	26	9	*=100
May, 1992	32	44	16	8	*=100
March, 1992	35	40	16	9	*=100
January, 1992	11	25	36	27	1=100
December, 1991	10	28	32	30	*=100
October, 1991	12	26	31	29	2=100
1988 Presidential Election					
October, 1988 (RVs)	43	44	11	2	*=100
August, 1988 (RVs)	39	45	13	3	*=100
May, 1988	22	46	23	6	3=100
November, 1987	15	28	35	21	1=100
September, 1987	14	34	37	14	1=100

Q.4 Which ONE of the stories I just mentioned have you followed most closely, or is there another story you've been following MORE closely? **[DO NOT READ LIST. ACCEPT ONLY ONE RESPONSE.]**

- 38 Hurricane Ike
 - 32 News about the candidates for the 2008 presidential election
 - 6 The federal government taking control of the mortgage companies Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac
 - 5 The military effort in Afghanistan against Taliban fighters
 - 4 The seventh anniversary of the September 11th terrorist attacks
 - 4 News about the first test of the world's largest supercollider in Geneva, Switzerland
 - 5 Some other story (SPECIFY)
 - 6 Don't know/Refused
- 100

Thinking about the presidential campaign...

Q.5 How would you describe the presidential election campaign so far – is it **[READ ITEM a. FIRST, THEN ROTATE ITEMS b. AND c.]**

		Apr 18-21, <u>2008</u>	Feb 15-18, <u>2008</u>	Oct 12-15, <u>2007</u>	April <u>2007</u>	—RVs— Mid-Oct <u>2004</u>	—RVs— Early Sept <u>2004</u>	June <u>2004</u>	June <u>2000</u>	July <u>1996</u>
a.	68	59	70	37	34	66	50	33	28	21
	26	35	25	55	52	28	42	57	65	73
	5	5	4	5	6	5	6	4	4	3
	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
		Apr 18-21, <u>2008</u>	Feb 15-18, <u>2008</u>			—RVs— Mid-Oct <u>2004</u>	—RVs— Early Sept <u>2004</u>	June <u>2004</u>	Mid- March <u>2004</u>	
b.	43	50	28			57	62	45	47	
	51	44	66			38	32	46	47	
	4	4	3			3	1	2	2	
	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>			<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>	
	100	100	100			100	100	100	100	

Q.5 CONTINUED...

		Feb 15-18, <u>2008</u>	—RVs— Mid-Oct <u>2004</u>	—RVs— Early Sept <u>2004</u>	June <u>2004</u>	Mid- March <u>2004</u>	
c.	54	Informative OR	65	73	63	48	53
	41	Not informative	31	22	33	46	42
	3	Neither applies (VOL.)	2	3	1	2	2
	<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>
	100		100	100	100	100	100

Q.6 In the way they have been covering the presidential election so far, do you think that news organizations are biased in favor of [Barack Obama], biased in favor of [John McCain], or don't you think news organizations have shown any bias one way or the other? **[ROTATE BRACKETED ITEMS]**

		July 25-28, <u>2008</u>
36	Biased in favor of Barack Obama	42
14	Biased in favor of John McCain	6
40	No bias	42
<u>10</u>	Other biases/Don't know (VOL.)	<u>10</u>
100		100

ROTATE Q.7 AND Q.8

Q.7 In the past few days have you seen any television commercials on behalf of Barack Obama's candidacy, or not? **[IF YES, ASK: Were these ads mostly a positive message about Barack Obama or mostly a negative message about John McCain?]**

		Aug 1-4, <u>2008</u>
24	Yes have seen, mostly a positive message about Obama	38
25	Yes have seen, mostly a negative message about McCain	13
5	Yes have seen, neither/don't know	7
44	No haven't seen	40
<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>2</u>
100		100

Q.8 In the past few days have you seen any television commercials on behalf of John McCain's candidacy, or not? **IF YES, ASK: Were these ads mostly a positive message about John McCain or mostly a negative message about Barack Obama?**

		Aug 1-4, <u>2008</u>
25	Yes have seen, mostly a positive message about McCain	19
27	Yes have seen, mostly a negative message about Obama	31
6	Yes have seen, neither/don't know	5
40	No haven't seen	44
<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>1</u>
100		100

Q.9 How much if anything have you heard about each of the following? Have you heard a lot, a little or nothing at all? **[READ ITEMS; ROTATE ITEMS]**

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Nothing at all</u>	<u>DK/Refused</u>
a. Barack Obama's comment that you can put lipstick on a pig, but it's still a pig	55	25	19	1=100
b. Sarah Palin's TV interview with Charles Gibson of ABC News	35	32	32	1=100

IF HEARD ABOUT OBAMA'S COMMENT (Q.9a=1,2) ASK: [N=851]

Q.10 Thinking about Barack Obama's comment about putting lipstick on a pig, do you think he intended this as an insult to Sarah Palin, or do you think he was just making a joke about John McCain's policies?

21	Intended it as an insult to Sarah Palin
66	Just making a joke about John McCain's policies
<u>13</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

IF HEARD ABOUT PALIN INTERVIEW (Q.9b=1,2) ASK: [N=742]

Q.11 In her interview with Charles Gibson do you think Sarah Palin's performance was... **[READ IN ORDER]**

12	Excellent
40	Good
22	Only fair
15	Poor
<u>11</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	