

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
JANUARY 2-4, 2009 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY
TOPLINE
N=1,017

Q.1 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?”]

	<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not too Closely</u>	<u>Not at all Closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
a. Conflict between the Israeli military and Hamas forces in Gaza	28	32	22	18	*=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:¹					
March 7-10, 2008	20	33	26	21	*=100
August, 2006	40	34	14	10	2=100
September, 2003	31	36	20	13	*=100
Early June, 2003	26	40	20	13	1=100
December, 2002	29	36	22	12	1=100
Early October, 2002	32	39	20	8	1=100
June, 2002	38	33	18	10	1=100
April, 2002	38	37	14	10	1=100
Early April, 2002	44	33	13	9	1=100
December, 2001	31	40	19	9	1=100
Early September, 2001	21	33	25	20	1=100
April, 2001	22	34	24	19	1=100
Mid-October, 2000	30	38	18	13	1=100
Early October, 2000	21	30	27	21	1=100
January, 1997	12	23	29	35	1=100
October, 1996	17	34	26	23	*=100
May, 1988	18	37	34	9	2=100
b. Reports about President Bush’s last days in the White House	12	22	25	40	1=100
December 5-8, 2008	13	25	26	35	1=100
c. The Governor of Illinois appointing someone to fill Obama’s Senate seat while under investigation for corruption	25	34	23	17	1=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:²					
December 12-15, 2008	29	35	19	16	1=100
d. Barack Obama’s appointments and plans for his administration	32	35	16	17	*=100
December 12-15, 2008	30	34	20	16	*=100
December 5-8, 2008	36	38	15	11	*=100

¹ In Early September 2001 through September, 2003 and for Mid-October 2000 and March 7-10, 2008 the item was listed as “Continued violence in the Middle East between the Palestinians and the Israelis.” In August 2006 the item was listed as “The military conflict between Israel and Hezbollah forces in Lebanon.” In April 2001 the item was listed as “Continued violence in the Middle East.” In Early October 2000 the item was listed as “Renewed violence in the Middle East between the Palestinians and the Israelis.” In January 1997 the item was listed as “Renewed tensions between Israelis and Palestinians over Hebron.” In October 1996 the item was listed as “Renewed violence between Israelis & Palestinians on the West Bank and in Jerusalem.” In May 1988 the item was listed as “The conflict in the Middle East between the Palestinians and the Israelis in the occupied territories.”

² For December 12-15, 2008 the item was listed as “The arrest of the Illinois Governor on corruption charges associated with Barack Obama’s vacant Senate seat.”

Q.1 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>Closely</u>	Fairly <u>Closely</u>	Not too <u>Closely</u>	Not at all <u>Closely</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
November 21-24, 2008 ³	49	24	15	12	*=100
November 14-17, 2008	32	37	16	15	*=100
November 7-10, 2008	39	30	17	14	*=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:⁴					
January, 2001: <i>G.W. Bush's appointments</i>	26	32	24	17	1=100
January, 1993: <i>Clinton's appointments</i>	24	42	22	11	1=100
e. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy	42	36	15	7	*=100
December 12-15, 2008	51	33	9	7	*=100
December 5-8, 2008	42	38	13	7	*=100
November 21-24, 2008	59	24	9	8	*=100
November 14-17, 2008	56	29	9	6	*=100
November 7-10, 2008	54	31	8	7	*=100
October 31-November 3, 2008	63	27	6	4	*=100
October 24-27, 2008	52	35	7	5	1=100
October 17-20, 2008	62	29	6	3	*=100
October 10-13, 2008	65	25	7	3	*=100
October 3-6, 2008	69	23	5	3	*=100
September 26-29, 2008	70	22	5	3	*=100
September 19-22, 2008	56	27	12	5	*=100
September 5-8, 2008	44	33	16	7	*=100
August 29-31, 2008	41	34	13	11	1=100
August 15-18, 2008	39	36	15	10	*=100
August 8-11, 2008	39	35	16	10	*=100
August 1-4, 2008	47	34	11	8	0=100
July 25-28, 2008	46	32	10	12	*=100
July 18-21, 2008	45	33	13	9	*=100
July 11-14, 2008	44	33	12	10	1=100
June 27-30, 2008	49	31	12	7	1=100
June 13-16, 2008	42	33	14	11	*=100
May 9-12, 2008	45	31	13	11	*=100
May 2-5, 2008	43	31	15	10	1=100
April 18-21, 2008	41	35	13	10	1=100
April 4-7, 2008	39	37	12	12	*=100
March 28-31, 2008	42	36	14	8	*=100
March 20-24, 2008	45	33	13	9	*=100
February 29-March 3, 2008	38	35	15	11	1=100
February 15-18, 2008	37	36	11	16	8=100
February 1-4, 2008	40	37	14	8	1=100
January 18-21, 2008	42	31	16	11	*=100
January 11-14, 2008	36	32	15	16	1=100
November 2-5, 2007	27	37	16	19	1=100
October 19-22, 2007	25	34	20	21	*=100
August 10-13, 2007	28	36	18	18	*=100
Mid-November, 2006	31	40	17	11	1=100
December, 2005	35	35	18	11	1=100
Early November, 2005	35	39	17	9	*=100
Mid-May, 2005	30	39	19	11	1=100
January, 2005	35	41	17	7	*=100

³ For November 7-10, 2008 through November 21-24, 2008 the item was listed as: "Plans for the new Obama administration."

⁴ January, 2001 asked about: "George W. Bush's cabinet choices and other high level appointments." January, 1993 asked about "Bill Clinton's cabinet choices and other high level appointments."

Q.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not too Closely</u>	<u>Not at all Closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
Mid-October, 2004	30	43	16	10	1=100
Early September, 2004	39	34	15	11	1=100
Mid-January, 2004	37	41	15	7	*=100
December, 2003	35	38	14	11	2=100
November, 2003	40	34	15	10	1=100
October, 2003	32	39	16	12	1=100
September, 2003	39	30	18	12	1=100
March, 2003	40	35	16	8	1=100
February, 2003	42	33	15	10	*=100
January, 2003	40	35	13	11	1=100
December, 2002	38	34	17	10	1=100
February, 2002	35	40	15	9	1=100
January, 2002	30	44	16	9	1=100
December, 2001	37	40	13	8	2=100
Mid-November, 2001	41	36	15	7	1=100
June, 2001	24	41	18	16	1=100
May, 2001	34	36	15	15	0=100
April, 2001	36	34	16	13	1=100
February, 2001	30	39	18	12	1=100
January, 2001	32	38	17	11	2=100
June, 1995	26	41	22	11	*=100
March, 1995	27	45	19	9	*=100
February, 1995	23	41	22	13	1=100
December, 1994	28	43	20	9	*=100
October, 1994	27	40	20	12	1=100
June, 1994	25	42	23	10	*=100
May, 1994	33	40	16	10	1=100
January, 1994	34	39	16	10	1=100
Early January, 1994	36	44	13	7	*=100
December, 1993	35	41	15	8	1=100
October, 1993	33	38	20	9	*=100
September, 1993	37	40	14	8	1=100
Early September, 1993	39	39	14	9	*=100
August, 1993	41	36	14	9	*=100
May, 1993	37	38	18	6	1=100
February, 1993	49	36	10	5	*=100
January, 1993	42	39	12	7	*=100
September, 1992	43	37	13	6	1=100
May, 1992	39	39	15	6	1=100
March, 1992	47	38	11	4	*=100
February, 1992	47	37	10	6	*=100
January, 1992	44	40	11	5	*=100
October, 1991	36	38	16	9	1=100
f. The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan	22	33	23	21	1=100
October 24-27, 2008	28	32	22	17	1=100
October 10-13, 2008⁵	19	34	29	18	*=100
September 12-15, 2008	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

⁵ From June 20-23, 2008 to October 10-13, 2008 the story was listed as “The military effort in Afghanistan against Taliban fighters.”

Q.1 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>Closely</u>	Fairly <u>Closely</u>	Not too <u>Closely</u>	Not at all <u>Closely</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
July 3-7, 2008	19	28	32	21	*=100
June 20-23, 2008	20	30	30	20	*=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
Late July, 2002	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

Q.2 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.]**

- 26 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy
- 24 Barack Obama's appointments and plans for his administration
- 18 Conflict between the Israeli military and Hamas forces in Gaza
- 10 The Governor of Illinois appointing someone to fill Obama's Senate seat while under investigation for corruption
- 5 The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan
- 1 Reports about President Bush's last days in the White House
- 6 Some other story (VOL. SPECIFY)
- 10 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
- 100

Q.3 Do you think the press has been too critical, not critical enough or fair in the way it has covered **[INSERT ITEM; ROTATE]**?

		Too <u>critical</u>	Not critical <u>enough</u>	Fair	Don't know/ <u>Refused</u>
a.	Barack Obama	11	23	61	5=100
b.	George W. Bush	29	26	41	4=100

Q.4 Thinking about the current Middle East conflict, do you think the press has been too critical, not critical enough or fair in the way it has covered **[INSERT ITEM; ROTATE]**?

		Too <u>critical</u>	Not critical <u>enough</u>	Fair	Don't know/ <u>Refused</u>
a.	The actions of Israel	16	25	43	16=100
b.	The actions of Hamas	8	30	42	20=100