

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS**  
**JANUARY 16-19, 2009 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY**  
**TOPLINE**  
**N=1,004**

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; ROTATE ITEMS IN BLOCKS A-C FIRST, FOLLOWED BY D-F] [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	<b>24</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>January 9-12, 2009</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0=100</b>
<b>January 2-4, 2009</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:<sup>1</sup></b>					
<b>March 7-10, 2008</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>*=100</b>
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 the condition of the U.S. economy	<b>43</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>January 2-4, 2009</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>December 12-15, 2008</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>December 5-8, 2008</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>November 21-24, 2008</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>November 14-17, 2008</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>November 7-10, 2008</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>October 31-November 3, 2008</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>October 24-27, 2008</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>October 17-20, 2008</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>October 10-13, 2008</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>October 3-6, 2008</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>September 26-29, 2008</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>*=100</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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."

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>
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
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

**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>
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
<b>c. News about a US Airways flight crashing into the Hudson River</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:</b>					
November, 2001: <i>Crash of an American Airlines plane near JFK Airport in New York</i>	48	34	13	4	1=100
February, 2000: <i>Crash of an Alaskan Airlines jet near Los Angeles</i>	35	40	17	8	*=100
December 1999: <i>Crash of EgyptAir plane off the coast of New England and its investigation</i>	30	44	15	10	1=100
June, 1999: <i>Crash of an American Airlines flight in Arkansas</i>	19	38	25	17	1=100
March, 1999: <i>The derailment of an Amtrak train in Illinois</i>	29	39	19	12	1=100
July 1996: <i>Crash of a Paris-bound TWA plane off the coast of New York</i>	69	23	6	2	*=100
February 1996: <i>Recent train crashes in Maryland, Colorado and New Jersey</i>	24	40	24	11	1=100
September, 1993: <i>Amtrak train wreck in Alabama</i>	40	37	15	7	1=100
February, 1990: <i>Crash of Columbian airliner near JFK airport in New York</i>	33	39	18	10	0=100

**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>
d. The debate in Washington over what the government should do about the nation's economic problems	35	33	17	15	*=100
<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:<sup>2</sup></b>					
<b>October 3-6, 2008: Washington debates plan to stabilize markets</b>	62	26	7	5	*=100
<b>September 26-29, 2008</b>	60	22	10	8	*=100
<b>September 19-22, 2008: Wall Street turmoil</b>	49	28	14	9	*=100
<b>September 12-15, 2008: Government takeover of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac</b>	28	35	19	17	1=100
<b>February 8-11, 2008: Bush and Congress agreeing on an economic stimulus plan</b>	22	33	23	21	1=100
<b>January 25-28, 2008</b>	24	36	19	21	*=100
<b>March 20-24, 2008: Bear Stearns buyout</b>	21	26	21	32	*=100
August, 1989: <i>Savings and loan bailout</i>	26	30	20	23	1=100
e. Cold winter weather in much of the country	33	31	21	15	*=100
<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:<sup>3</sup></b>					
<b>December 14-17, 2007</b>	30	31	21	18	*=100
<b>February 16-19, 2007</b>	30	33	18	18	1=100
<b>February 9-12, 2007</b>	36	36	15	13	*=100
<b>January 19-22, 2007</b>	31	32	22	14	1=100
<b>January 5-8, 2007</b>	24	30	25	21	*=100
January, 2001	42	31	15	11	1=100
January, 1999	37	34	17	12	*=100
Early December, 1998	39	35	13	12	1=100
January, 1994	51	30	12	7	*=100
f. Preparations for Barack Obama's inauguration	24	26	26	24	*=100
<b>Jan 9-12, 2009</b>	16	23	27	33	1=100

<sup>2</sup> September 26-29, 2008 and October 3-6, 2008 asked about: "The debate in Washington over a plan to use government funds to stabilize financial markets." September 19-22, 2008 asked about: "Turmoil among major financial institutions on Wall Street." September 12-15, 2008 asked about: "The federal government taking control of the mortgage companies Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac." March 20-24, 2008 asked about: "The buyout of Wall Street investment bank Bear Stearns." January 25-28, 2008 and February 8-11, 2008 asked about: "President Bush and Congress agreeing on an economic stimulus plan." August, 1989 asked about: "Passage in Congress of a bill to bailout ailing savings and loan institutions."

<sup>3</sup> For December 14-17, 2007 the story was listed as "Snow and ice storms in the Midwest and Northeast." For February 16-19, 2007 the story was listed as "Cold winter weather and snowstorms in the Northeast and Midwest." For February 9-12, 2007 the story was listed as "Cold winter weather." For January 19-22, 2007 the story was listed as "Snow and ice storms in some parts of the country." For January 5-8, 2007 the story was listed as "Winter snowstorms in the western U.S." In January 2001 the story was listed as "Cold winter weather and storms in the Northeast and Midwest." In January 1999 the story was listed as "Cold winter weather and storms in the Midwest." In December, 1998 the story was listed as "Unseasonable weather patterns." In January 1994 the story was listed as "News about cold weather conditions in the Northeast and Midwest."

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. RECORD ONE ANSWER. IF RESPONDENT MENTIONS "ECONOMY" UNSPECIFIED, PROBE WITH: "Do you mean the condition of the economy, or the debate in Washington about what to do?"**]

25	News about a U.S. Airways flight crashing into the Hudson River
23	Reports about the conditions of the US economy
13	Preparations for Barack Obama's inauguration
12	Conflict between the Israeli military and Hamas forces in Gaza
9	Cold winter weather in much of the country
	The debate in Washington over what the government should do about the nation's
6	economic problems
5	Some other story (VOL.)
<u>7</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

On another topic...

Q.3 Are you hearing mostly good news about the economy these days, mostly bad news about the economy or a mix of both good and bad news?

		Dec 5-8,
		<u>2008</u>
2	Hearing mostly good news about the economy	1
67	Hearing mostly bad news about the economy [ <b>OR</b> ]	80
30	A mix of good and bad	19
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)	*
100		100

Q.4 All in all, do you think the government is on the right track or the wrong track in the way it is handling economic problems facing the nation?

31	Right track
48	Wrong track
<u>21</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	