

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
MAY 15-18, 2009 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY
TOPLINE¹
N=1004

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] [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. Debate over Barack Obama’s health care plans TREND FOR COMPARISON: March 6-9, 2009: Barack Obama proposing a \$630 billion fund for overhauling the U.S. health care system	25	30	20	24	*
b. A U.S. soldier in Iraq who killed five fellow soldiers	21	31	22	25	1
c. The investigation into a February plane crash in Buffalo, New York TREND FOR COMPARISON: February 13-16, 2009: A plane crashing into a house near Buffalo, New York, killing 50 people	17	26	25	33	*
d. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy	44	35	12	8	*
May 8-11, 2009	42	34	12	12	*
May 1-4, 2009	47	36	11	5	1
April 17-20, 2009	52	30	10	7	1
April 9-13, 2009	48	29	13	10	0
March 27-30, 2009	48	32	10	10	*
March 20-23, 2009	52	34	8	6	*
March 13-16, 2009	48	33	9	10	*
February 27-March 2, 2009	56	30	8	6	*
February 13-16, 2009	55	29	10	6	*
January 30-February 2, 2009	52	31	12	5	*
January 23-26, 2009	57	30	8	5	0
January 16-19, 2009	43	35	13	9	*
January 2-4, 2009	42	36	15	7	*
December 12-15, 2008	51	33	9	7	*
December 5-8, 2008	42	38	13	7	*
November 21-24, 2008	59	24	9	8	*
November 14-17, 2008	56	29	9	6	*
November 7-10, 2008	54	31	8	7	*
October 31-November 3, 2008	63	27	6	4	*
October 24-27, 2008	52	35	7	5	1
October 17-20, 2008	62	29	6	3	*
October 10-13, 2008	65	25	7	3	*
October 3-6, 2008	69	23	5	3	*
September 26-29, 2008	70	22	5	3	*

¹ Prior to January, 2007 results are from monthly surveys. Beginning in January, 2007 the News Interest Index study has been conducted weekly.

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>
September 19-22, 2008	56	27	12	5	*
September 5-8, 2008	44	33	16	7	*
August 29-31, 2008	41	34	13	11	1
August 15-18, 2008	39	36	15	10	*
August 8-11, 2008	39	35	16	10	*
August 1-4, 2008	47	34	11	8	0
July 25-28, 2008	46	32	10	12	*
July 18-21, 2008	45	33	13	9	*
July 11-14, 2008	44	33	12	10	1
June 27-30, 2008	49	31	12	7	1
June 13-16, 2008	42	33	14	11	*
May 9-12, 2008	45	31	13	11	*
May 2-5, 2008	43	31	15	10	1
April 18-21, 2008	41	35	13	10	1
April 4-7, 2008	39	37	12	12	*
March 28-31, 2008	42	36	14	8	*
March 20-24, 2008	45	33	13	9	*
February 29-March 3, 2008	38	35	15	11	1
February 15-18, 2008	37	36	11	16	8
February 1-4, 2008	40	37	14	8	1
January 18-21, 2008	42	31	16	11	*
January 11-14, 2008	36	32	15	16	1
November 2-5, 2007	27	37	16	19	1
October 19-22, 2007	25	34	20	21	*
August 10-13, 2007	28	36	18	18	*
Mid-November, 2006	31	40	17	11	1
December, 2005	35	35	18	11	1
Early November, 2005	35	39	17	9	*
Mid-May, 2005	30	39	19	11	1
January, 2005	35	41	17	7	*
Mid-October, 2004	30	43	16	10	1
Early September, 2004	39	34	15	11	1
Mid-January, 2004	37	41	15	7	*
December, 2003	35	38	14	11	2
November, 2003	40	34	15	10	1
October, 2003	32	39	16	12	1
September, 2003	39	30	18	12	1
March, 2003	40	35	16	8	1
February, 2003	42	33	15	10	*
January, 2003	40	35	13	11	1
December, 2002	38	34	17	10	1
February, 2002	35	40	15	9	1
January, 2002	30	44	16	9	1
December, 2001	37	40	13	8	2
Mid-November, 2001	41	36	15	7	1
June, 2001	24	41	18	16	1
May, 2001	34	36	15	15	0
April, 2001	36	34	16	13	1
February, 2001	30	39	18	12	1
January, 2001	32	38	17	11	2
June, 1995	26	41	22	11	*
March, 1995	27	45	19	9	*
February, 1995	23	41	22	13	1

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>
December, 1994	28	43	20	9	*
October, 1994	27	40	20	12	1
June, 1994	25	42	23	10	*
May, 1994	33	40	16	10	1
January, 1994	34	39	16	10	1
Early January, 1994	36	44	13	7	*
December, 1993	35	41	15	8	1
October, 1993	33	38	20	9	*
September, 1993	37	40	14	8	1
Early September, 1993	39	39	14	9	*
August, 1993	41	36	14	9	*
May, 1993	37	38	18	6	1
February, 1993	49	36	10	5	*
January, 1993	42	39	12	7	*
September, 1992	43	37	13	6	1
May, 1992	39	39	15	6	1
March, 1992	47	38	11	4	*
February, 1992	47	37	10	6	*
January, 1992	44	40	11	5	*
October, 1991	36	38	16	9	1
e. Controversy over Barack Obama speaking at Notre Dame's commencement ceremony	16	24	22	37	1
f. Barack Obama's decision to block the release of photos showing abuse of detainees in Iraq and Afghanistan	25	30	21	24	1

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.]**

28	Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy
13	Debate over Barack Obama's health care plans
10	A U.S. soldier in Iraq who killed five fellow soldiers
7	The investigation into a February plane crash in Buffalo, New York
7	Barack Obama's decision to block the release of photos showing abuse of detainees in Iraq and Afghanistan
6	Controversy over Barack Obama speaking at Notre Dame's commencement ceremony
12	Some other story
16	Don't know/Refused

Now thinking about some other things...

Q.3 How closely have you been following what's happening on American Idol? **[READ]**

		<u>May 9-12, 2008</u>	<u>May 11-14, 2007</u>
9	Very closely	12	13
9	Fairly closely	7	9
11	Not too closely	12	11
71	Not at all closely	69	66
*	Don't know/Refused [VOL. DO NOT READ]	*	1

Q.4 Still thinking about American Idol, how often, if ever, would you say the show comes up in your conversations with family, friends or co-workers? **[READ]**

		May 11-14, <u>2007</u>
9	Frequently	9
18	Occasionally	20
27	Hardly ever	31
47	Never	39
*	Don't know/Refused [VOL. DO NOT READ]	1

Q.5 How much if anything, have you heard about each of the following? Have you heard a lot, a little or nothing at all? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

		<u>A lot</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Nothing at all</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
a.	Iran releasing a U.S. journalism from prison who was convicted of spying	34	39	26	*
	TREND FOR COMPARISON:				
	April 23-27, 2009: Three American journalists prosecuted in North Korea and Iran	13	46	41	*
b.	A mission by astronauts to repair the Hubble Space Telescope	35	45	20	*
c.	Dick Cheney's criticisms of Barack Obama's terrorism policies	32	37	30	*
	TREND FOR COMPARISON:				
	February 27-March 2, 2009: The criticism of Barack Obama's housing plan by a CNBC correspondent	21	33	46	*
d.	The controversy about when Nancy Pelosi knew about waterboarding and other harsh interrogation techniques	38	34	28	*
e.	GM and Chrysler announcing plans to close many dealerships around the country	67	27	6	*
	TREND FOR COMPARISON:				
	February 22-March 2, 2009: General Motors posting \$30 billion in losses for 2008	44	40	16	*
	October 10-13, 2008: General Motors stock falling to its lowest level in 58 years	48	38	14	*
	October 3-6, 2008: Major U.S. automakers announcing steep drops in auto sales	32	52	16	*
	July 3-7, 2008: Ford and General Motors announcing steep drops in auto sales	34	44	22	*