

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
October 23-26, 2009 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1001

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. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy	44	30	15	10	1
October 9-12, 2009	41	29	16	13	*
October 2-5, 2009	44	30	15	11	0
September 25-28, 2009	44	37	10	10	*
September 18-21, 2009	44	34	15	7	*
September 11-14, 2009	45	32	14	9	*
September 3-6, 2009	41	31	15	13	*
August 28-31, 2009	45	30	13	12	1
August 21-24, 2009	50	27	13	10	1
August 14-17, 2009	41	37	11	12	*
August 7-10, 2009	42	34	13	10	*
July 31-August 3, 2009	46	34	11	8	*
July 24-27, 2009	45	35	12	8	*
July 17-20, 2009	43	35	11	11	1
July 10-13, 2009	37	38	13	11	*
July 2-5, 2009	38	35	15	12	*
June 19-22, 2009	42	33	15	10	*
June 12-15, 2009	41	35	12	12	*
June 5-8, 2009	41	34	11	14	*
May 29-June 1, 2009	43	37	11	8	*
May 21-24, 2009	44	35	13	9	*
May 15-18, 2009	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	*

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 3-6, 2008	69	23	5	3	*
September 26-29, 2008	70	22	5	3	*
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	*

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>
March, 1995	27	45	19	9	*
February, 1995	23	41	22	13	1
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
b. Debate over health care reform	40	27	16	17	1
October 16-19, 2009	36	28	15	21	*
October 9-12, 2009	37	29	14	19	1
October 2-5, 2009	39	29	16	16	*
September 25-28, 2009	45	31	12	12	0
September 18-21, 2009	44	26	19	11	*
September 11-14, 2009	44	27	14	15	*
September 3-6, 2009	40	26	16	17	0
August 28-31, 2009	40	28	17	14	1
August 21-24, 2009	49	24	12	15	1
August 14-17, 2009	39	31	15	15	1
TREND FOR COMPARISON:¹					
<i>August 7-10, 2009: Debate in Washington over health care reform</i>	40	27	17	15	1
July 31-August 3, 2009	47	26	14	13	1
July 24-27, 2009	44	28	15	13	*
July 17-20, 2009	33	31	13	21	2
July 10-13, 2009	24	29	20	27	*
June 26-29, 2009	29	26	20	25	1
June 19-22, 2009	28	28	20	23	*
June 12-15, 2009	29	26	18	26	*
May 15-18, 2009	25	30	20	24	*

¹ June 12-15, 2009 through August 7-10, 2009 asked about: "Debate in Washington over health care reform." May 15-18, 2009 asked about: "Debate over Barack Obama's health care plans." March 6-9, 2009 asked about: "Barack Obama proposing a \$630 billion fund for overhauling the U.S. health care system." September, 1993 through September, 1994 asked about: "The Clinton Administration's health care reform proposals." May, 1993 through August, 1993 asked about: "Reports about the White House task force on health care reform headed by Hillary Clinton."

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>
March 6-9, 2009: <i>Obama proposing a \$630 billion fund for overhauling health care</i>	41	32	13	14	*
September, 1994: <i>The Clinton administration's health care reform proposals</i>	32	41	18	9	*
June, 1994	34	40	19	7	*
May, 1994	37	37	16	9	1
January, 1994	38	38	15	9	*
Early January, 1994	40	40	14	6	*
December, 1993	45	35	12	7	1
October, 1993	44	32	17	6	1
September, 1993	49	34	11	6	*
August, 1993: <i>Reports about the White House task force on health care reform headed by Hillary Clinton</i>	27	32	25	15	1
June, 1993	28	38	19	15	*
May, 1993	30	30	25	14	1
c. The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan	32	29	21	18	*
October 16-19, 2009	25	31	20	24	*
October 9-12, 2009	31	31	21	17	0
September 25-28, 2009 ²	27	40	17	16	*
September 18-21, 2009	26	33	25	16	*
September 11-14, 2009	25	35	22	18	1
September 3-6, 2009	23	33	23	21	0
August 7-10, 2009	24	32	23	21	1
March 20-23, 2009	24	32	22	22	*
February 20-23, 2009	27	29	24	19	1
January 30-February 2, 2009	26	34	24	16	*
January 2-4, 2009	22	33	23	21	1
October 24-27, 2008	28	32	22	17	1
October 10-13, 2008	19	34	29	18	*
September 12-15, 2008	21	34	25	19	1
August 29-31, 2008	18	27	32	23	*
July 18-21, 2008	27	33	24	16	*
July 11-14, 2008	19	28	29	23	1
July 3-7, 2008	19	28	32	21	*
June 20-23, 2008	20	30	30	20	*
Late July, 2002	41	38	13	7	1
June, 2002	38	32	20	9	1
April, 2002	39	39	13	8	1
Early April, 2002	45	37	12	5	1
February, 2002	47	39	8	5	1
January, 2002	51	35	9	4	1
December, 2001	44	38	12	5	1
Mid-November, 2001	49	36	11	3	1
Early November, 2001	45	36	12	6	1
Mid-October, 2001	51	35	10	3	1

² September 25-28 asked about "The debate over whether to send more troops to Afghanistan." February 20-23, 2009 asked about "The Obama administration's decision to send 17,000 additional U.S. troops to Afghanistan." From June 20-23, 2008 to October 10-13, 2008 the story was listed as "The military effort in Afghanistan against Taliban fighters." All other dates asked about "The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan."

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. Reports about swine flu and the vaccine	43	30	17	9	*
October 16-19, 2009	32	35	18	14	0
October 9-12, 2009	38	35	16	11	*
September 18-21, 2009 ³	34	31	25	9	*
September 11-14, 2009	30	36	21	12	*
September 3-6, 2009	26	32	25	17	0
August 28-31, 2009	26	33	22	18	*
May 21-24, 2009	30	39	21	11	*
May 8-11, 2009	34	36	19	11	*
May 1-4, 2009	43	37	15	4	1
April 25-27, 2009	25	30	19	26	*
e. News about political instability in Pakistan	17	22	29	31	1
May 8-11, 2009	18	23	23	36	*
April 24-27, 2009	15	27	27	31	*
March 13-16, 2009	14	20	26	40	0
August 15-18, 2008	10	25	29	35	1
January 11-14, 2008	19	33	20	27	1
November 30-December 3, 2007	16	28	26	30	*
November 23-26, 2007	13	27	31	28	1
November 16-19, 2007	20	30	21	28	1
November 9-12, 2007	20	29	23	28	*
TREND FOR COMPARISON:⁴					
May 29-June 1, 2009: <i>Conflict with Taliban</i>	23	30	23	23	1
September 26-29, 2008: <i>Hotel bombing</i>	16	32	23	28	1
February 22-25, 2008: <i>Parliamentary elections</i>	9	24	28	39	*
January 4-7, 2008: <i>Bhutto assassination</i>	32	36	15	16	1
October 19-22, 2007: <i>Pakistan bombing aimed at Bhutto</i>	21	28	21	30	*
July 13-16, 2007: <i>Raid on Pakistani mosque</i>	10	19	23	47	1
f. The federal government's plans to cut the pay of top executives at financial companies that received bailout money	32	30	19	18	1
TREND FOR COMPARISON:⁵					
June 19-22, 2009: <i>Plans to expand regulations of financial institutions</i>	27	28	26	19	*
March 27-30, 2009	36	29	19	16	*

³ From August 28-31 through September 18-21 question was worded "Reports about swine flu and the availability of a vaccine." May 21-24, 2009 and May 8-11, 2009 asked about: "Reports about swine flu in the U.S. and elsewhere." For May 1-4, 2009 the story was listed as: "The outbreak of swine flu in different parts of the world." For April 25-27, 2009 the story was listed as: "Reports of swine flu in Mexico and the U.S."

⁴ May 29-June 1, 2009 asked about "The military conflict between the Taliban and the Pakistani government." September 26-29, 2008 asked about "A bombing at a Marriott Hotel in Pakistan that killed over 50 people." February 22-25, 2008 asked about "Parliamentary elections and changes in party control in Pakistan." January 4-7, 2008 asked about "The assassination of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and resulting instability in Pakistan." October 19-22, 2007 asked about "A bombing in Pakistan aimed at former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto that killed over 120 people." July 13-16, 2007 asked about "The Pakistani government's raid on a mosque held by Islamic radicals."

⁵ June 19-22, 2009 asked about "The Obama administration's plans to expand regulations of financial institutions." March 27-30, 2009 asked about "The Obama administration's plans to expand regulations over financial institutions." April 4-7, 2008 asked about "A government proposal to overhaul the way the nation's financial system is regulated."

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>
April 4-7, 2008: <i>Proposal to overhaul the way financial system is regulated</i>	17	24	27	32	*

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.]**

- 32 Reports about swine flu and the vaccine
- 27 Debate over health care reform
- 15 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy
- 9 The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan
- The federal government's plans to cut the pay of top executives at financial companies that received bailout money
- 4 News about political instability in Pakistan
- 6 Some other story (VOL.)
- 8 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

Q.3 Do you think the press has been too critical, not critical enough or fair in the way it has covered Barack Obama?

		<u>August 14-17</u>	<u>June 5-8</u>	<u>Apr 24-27</u>	<u>Mar 27-30</u>	<u>Jan 23-26</u>	<u>Jan 2-4</u>
		<u>2009</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2009⁶</u>	<u>2009</u>
26	Too critical	23	16	15	18	12	11
31	Not critical enough	28	26	26	24	18	23
37	Fair	43	53	55	52	64	61
6	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	7	5	4	6	6	5

NO QUESTION 4

⁶ For Jan. 23-26, 2009, question wording was: "Do you think the press has been too critical, not critical enough or fair in the way it has covered Barack Obama during his first few days in office?" For Jan. 2-4, 2009, question was asked about George W. Bush and Barack Obama. Question wording was: "Do you think the press has been too critical, not critical enough or fair in the way it has covered [INSERT ITEM; ROTATE]?"

Q.5 Now I'd like to ask you about where you get most of your news these days. For each item that I read, please tell me if it is something you do regularly, or not. (First,) **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]** **[IF NECESSARY: Do you [ITEM] regularly, or not?]**

	<u>Yes, regularly</u>	<u>No, not regularly</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
a. Watch local TV news	74	26	1
b. Watch the Fox News cable channel	40	59	1
c. Watch MSNBC cable news	22	77	1
d. Watch CNN cable news	36	63	1
e. Watch the national nightly network news on CBS, ABC and NBC	48	51	1
f. Read the newspaper	53	46	1
g. Listen to radio news	49	50	1
h. Get news from the internet	53	47	1

Q.6 As I read a list of news networks, please tell me if you think each is mostly liberal, mostly conservative, or neither in particular. (First,) **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]?**
[IF NECESSARY: Do you think [ITEM] is mostly liberal, mostly conservative, or neither in particular?]

	<u>Mostly liberal</u>	<u>Mostly conservative</u>	<u>Neither in particular</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
a. NBC news	36	11	36	17
b. ABC news	32	14	36	18
c. CBS news	31	14	37	19
d. CNN cable news	37	11	33	19
e. The Fox News cable channel	14	47	24	15
f. MSNBC cable news	36	11	27	26

Q.7 All in all, do you think hosts of cable news shows having strong opinions about politics is a good thing or a bad thing?

	<u>July⁷ 2003</u>	<u>July 2002</u>
42 Good thing	47	50
42 Bad thing	40	38
10 Neither (VOL.)	5	6
6 Don't know/Refused	8	6

⁷ In July 2003 and July 2002 item was asked as part of a list and worded: "I'm going to mention some issues about television news reporting for each tell me if you think it is a good thing or a bad thing. First [hosts of cable news shows having strong opinions about politics] is that a good thing or a bad thing in your opinion?"

Q.8 Thinking now about the issue of health care, from what you've seen and heard, do you think a health care reform bill will pass over the next year or not?

		Oct 16-19 <u>2009</u>	Oct 9-12 <u>2009</u>
53	Yes, will	57	45
40	No, will not	38	46
7	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	5	9

Q.9 In the past few weeks, have you seen or heard any ads on the subject of health care reform? **[IF YES: Were these ads mostly a positive message about efforts to reform the health care system or mostly a negative message about efforts to reform health care?]**
[DO NOT READ LIST. RECORD ONE ANSWER.]

		September 3-6 <u>2009</u>	August 7-10 <u>2009</u>	July 17-20 <u>2009</u>
66	Yes [NET]	63	62	50
18	Yes, have seen, mostly a positive message	12	16	16
23	Yes, have seen, mostly a negative message	28	22	18
23	Yes have seen, mix of positive and negative (VOL.)	21	22	14
2	Yes, have seen, don't remember whether positive or negative (VOL.)	2	2	2
33	No haven't seen	36	35	47
2	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	1	3	2

Q.10 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.	Obama administration officials saying that the Fox News Channel is not really a news organization	30	24	45	1
b.	The Justice Department announcing it will not pursue cases against people who use medical marijuana if state laws allow it	19	46	35	1
	TREND FOR COMPARISON June 19-22, 2009: <i>Rhode Island legalizing the sale of medical marijuana</i>	7	25	67	1
c.	A Northwest Airlines flight that flew 150 miles past its destination before turning around	44	30	26	*
	TREND FOR COMPARISON June 19-22, 2009: <i>A Continental Airlines pilot dying mid-flight</i>	36	38	26	*