

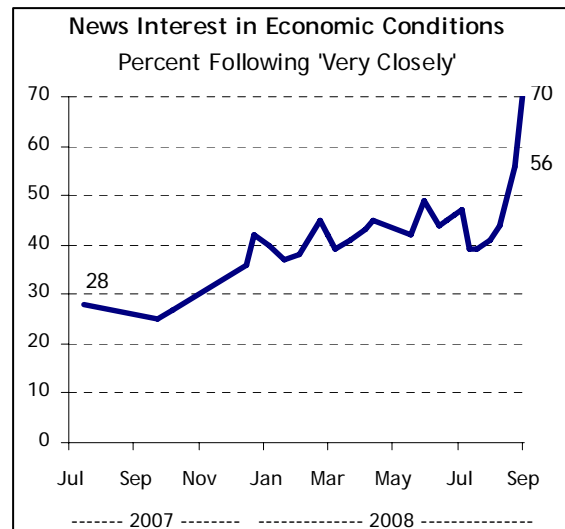


**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**Wednesday October 1, 2008**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**  
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**VP Debate Highly Anticipated**  
**INTEREST IN ECONOMIC NEWS SURGES**

Interest in news about the U.S. economy skyrocketed last week, with 70% of Americans following economic developments very closely, up from 56% the previous week. Interest in economic news is broadly bipartisan with equal proportions of Republicans, Democrats and independents following news about current economic conditions very closely.



The public also paid close attention to the battle in Washington over a plan to use government funds to stabilize financial markets. That debate melded economic news with closely-followed presidential election coverage, as John McCain briefly suspended his campaign to return to Washington to play a role. As lawmakers and administration officials worked on an ill-fated compromise last weekend, 60% of the public was following developments very closely.

From a historical perspective, interest in news about the economic crisis, while not as high as interest in the Challenger disaster or 9/11, rivals interest in other major news stories of the past 20 years. With 70% of the public now following news about it very closely, the current economic crisis becomes one of the top ten most closely followed news stories in two decades of Pew Research Center news interest surveys.

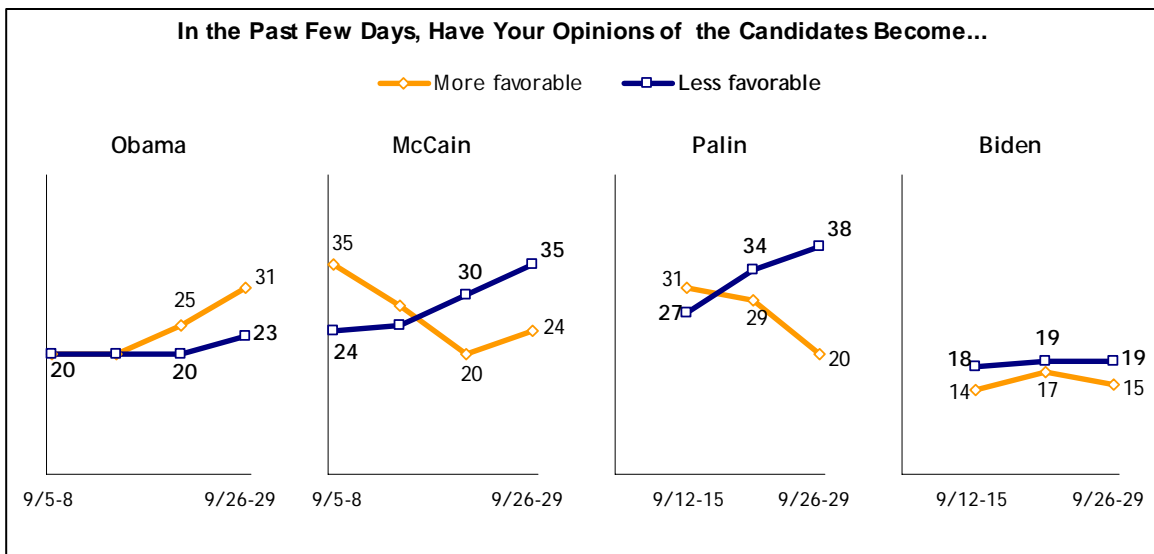
Interest in Economy Rivals other Historic Events	
	Following very closely %
Challenger disaster (1986)	80
9/11 Terrorist attacks (10/01)	78
San Francisco earthquake (11/89)	73
Impact of Hurricane Katrina (10/05)	73
High gasoline prices (9/05)	71
<i>Economic news (9/08)</i>	<b>70</b>
Rodney King verdict/riots (5/92)	70
Crash of TWA flight 800 (7/96)	69
Little girl in the well, Texas (10/87)	69
Columbine High School shooting (4/99)	68

Interest in the current economic situation is considerably higher than the previous peak when the economy was struggling in the early 1990s. In February, 1993, 49% of the public was following reports about conditions in the U.S. economy very closely.

### Views of McCain Becoming More Negative

The nation’s economic situation took center stage in the presidential campaign last week as McCain and Obama reacted to the crisis, attended a White House meeting on proposed legislation and addressed the subject in their first debate. A poll conducted Sept. 26-29 shows that opinions of the candidates continue to fluctuate. Majorities of the public say their opinions of both have changed in the past few days.

Views of Obama have become, on balance, more positive. Fully 31% say their opinion of the Democratic nominee has become more favorable in recent days, while 23% say their opinion has become less favorable. Views of Obama’s vice presidential running mate Joe Biden remain stable.



More than a third (35%) say their opinion of McCain has become less favorable in recent days, while only 24% say their opinion has become more favorable. The percentage of people saying their view of McCain has become less favorable in the past few days has increased in recent weeks. Just the opposite is true of Obama – the percentage saying their view of the Illinois senator has become *more* favorable recently has increased over the past two weeks.

Views of Sarah Palin, McCain's running mate, remain very much in flux, and the changing views of Palin are more negative than positive. Fully 38% say their opinion of the Alaska governor has become less favorable in recent days, while only 20% say their opinion of her has become more favorable. A much smaller percentage of Republicans say their view of Palin has become more favorable (45%) in recent days, compared with the previous week, when 64% said their impression had become more favorable in recent days.

	Sept 19-22		Sept 26-29		Change in % More
	More Fav %	Less Fav %	More Fav %	Less Fav %	
Total	29	34	20	38	-9
Republicans	64	4	45	9	-19
Democrats	6	59	3	62	-3
Independents	26	33	18	35	-8

Question: In the past few days, have you come to have a MORE favorable opinion of \_\_\_\_\_, a LESS favorable opinion, or hasn't your opinion of him/her changed lately?

### Public Widely Aware of McCain's Brief Campaign Suspension

The McCain campaign made headlines last week when the GOP nominee announced that he would suspend his campaign to focus on the economic crisis and called for postponement of the first debate. Fully 65% of the public heard a lot about McCain's announcement, making it one of the most widely heard about events of the campaign.

Sarah Palin's TV interview last week with Katie Couric of CBS news attracted considerable news coverage. Even so, only 31% of the public heard a lot about the interview. This is comparable to the percent who heard a lot about Palin's first televised interview with ABC's Charlie Gibson. Another 37% heard a little about the Palin-Couric interview, and 32% heard nothing at all about it.

How much have you heard about...	A lot %	A little %	Nothing at all %	DK %
McCain suspending campaign and calling for debate postponement	65	21	14	*=100
Palin's interview on CBS	31	37	32	*=100
Palin's NYC visit	26	43	30	1=100

Even fewer heard a lot about Palin's visit to New York City. Only a quarter (26%) heard a lot about Palin visiting the United Nations and meeting with several foreign leaders; 43% heard a little about this and 30% heard nothing at all.

## VP Debate Highly Anticipated

The public is extremely interested in watching the upcoming vice presidential debate between Palin and Biden. Fully 64% say they are very likely to watch the debate. This is higher than the percentage who said they were very likely to watch last week's presidential debate (58% of the public). Among registered voters, 69% say they are very likely to watch the debate. By comparison, in 2004 only 41% of voters said they were very likely to watch the vice presidential debate between Dick Cheney and John Edwards.

<i>How likely are you to watch Thursday's VP debate?</i>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>	<u>Ind</u>
	%	%	%	%
Very likely	69	71	69	70
Somewhat likely	14	17	13	13
Not likely	16	11	17	16
Don't know/Refused	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
	100	100	100	100
<i>Who will do a better job?</i>				
Palin	34	64	10	32
Biden	53	20	79	54
Neither/Both	4	4	4	6
Don't know/Refused	<u>9</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>
	100	100	100	100

Most voters (53%) think Biden will do a better job than Palin in the debate. Only 34% say Palin will put in the better performance. Democratic voters overwhelmingly say Biden will perform better (79%); most Republicans say Palin will prevail (64%). Independents choose Biden over Palin by a margin of 54%-32%.

A majority of Americans watched at least some of the first presidential debate, which took place last Friday. Roughly half of voters (49%) say, in covering the debate, news organizations treated both candidates equally. Most of those who saw an imbalance in the coverage say the media favored Obama. More than a third (35%) say news organizations have been more favorable to Obama in coverage of the debate, while only 7% say news organizations have been more favorable to McCain.

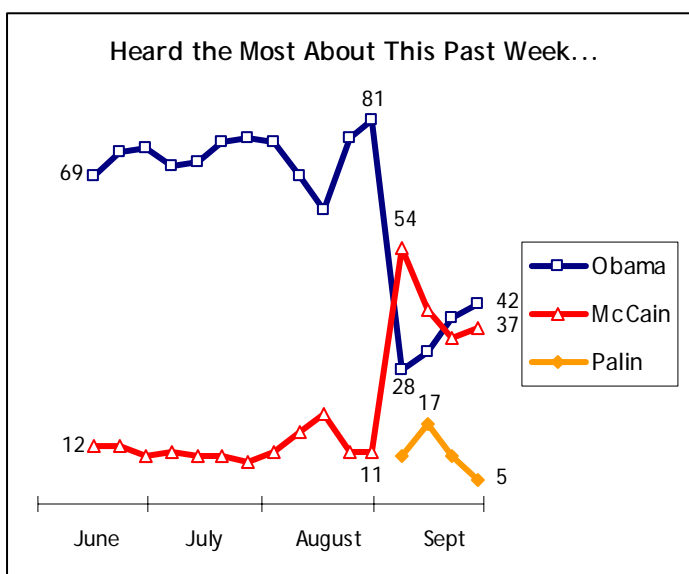
Republican voters are much more likely than Democratic voters to see bias in media coverage of the debate: 61% of GOP voters say the media coverage favored Obama, while 64% of Democrats say news organizations treated both candidates about equally.

When asked whether the coverage of the debate focused more on the qualities of the candidates or the candidates' issue positions, most voters (55%) say the focus was on qualities. Only 30% say news organizations focused more on issues and policy plans. In 2004, voters made a similar assessment following the first debate between George W. Bush and John Kerry: 56% said the press focused on the qualities of the candidates and 24% said the focus was on the issues.

These findings are based on the most recent installment of the weekly News Interest Index, an ongoing project of the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. The index, building on the Center’s longstanding research into public attentiveness to major news stories, examines news interest as it relates to the news media’s agenda. The weekly survey is conducted in conjunction with The Project for Excellence in Journalism’s News Coverage Index, which monitors the news reported by major newspaper, television, radio and online news outlets on an ongoing basis. In the most recent week, data relating to news coverage were collected from September 22-28 and survey data measuring public interest in the top news stories of the week were collected September 26-29 from a nationally representative sample of 1,005 adults.

### No Great Disparity in Visibility

For the past two weeks, Obama and McCain have been about equally visible from the public’s perspective. In the current survey, 42% say they have heard the most about Obama in the news in the last week or so, while 37% say McCain. This balance stands in stark contrast to the week of the GOP convention, when McCain was far more visible (54% vs. 28%). It is also quite different from the pre-convention period, when Obama was routinely the more visible of the candidates.



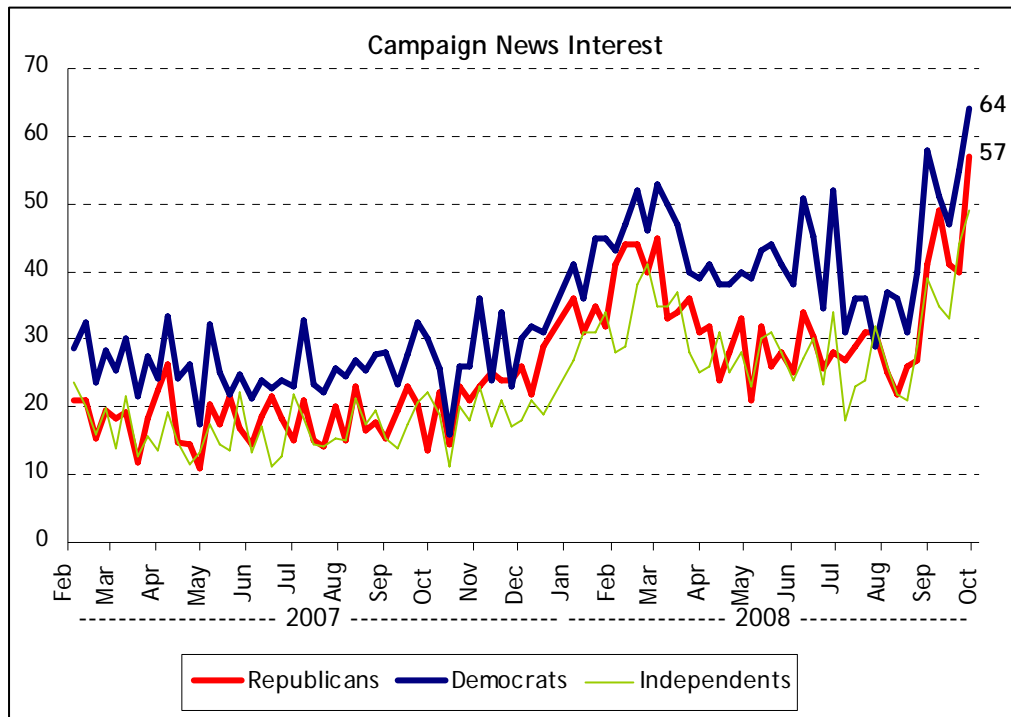
The balance of candidate visibility tracks with Pew’s Project for Excellence in Journalism’s *Campaign Coverage Index* which found that McCain was featured in 68%, and Obama in 60%, of campaign news stories last week.

Palin has faded somewhat from the public’s attention in the weeks leading up to the vice presidential debate on October 2. Fully 17% of Americans volunteered that Palin was the presidential candidate they were hearing the most about in the week following the Republican Convention. That slipped to 5% in the current survey. Fewer than 1% in any week since he was chosen to be Obama’s running mate have named Biden as the most visible candidate.

## Surging Interest in Presidential Campaign

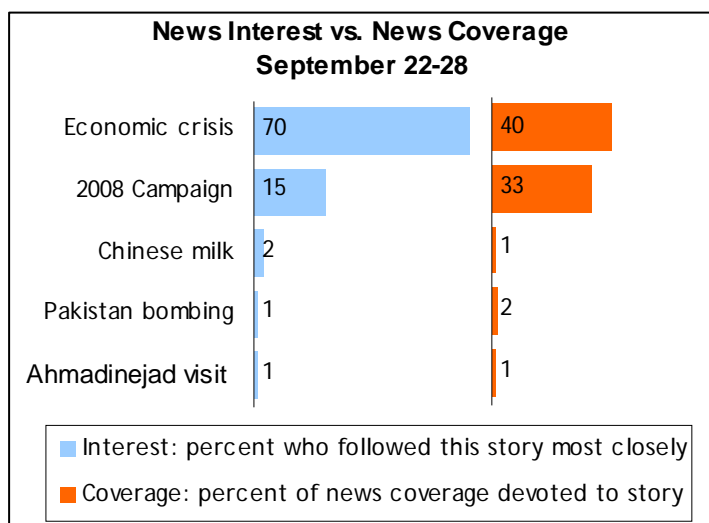
In the week leading up to the highly anticipated first presidential debate, public interest in news about the 2008 campaign reached a new high. Fully 56% of Americans say they followed news about the race very closely and, among registered voters, as many as 60% say they followed campaign news very closely. The election accounted for a third (33%) of the national newshole last week as measured by the Project for Excellence in Journalism, exceeded only by the financial crisis and debate about legislation to address that crisis. Attention to campaign news matched or exceeded the level of interest recorded in Pew's final weekend presidential election polls in the last three presidential elections.

As has been the case throughout the campaign, Democrats are following election news more closely than Republicans and independents. Particularly during the late primary season and start of the general election, interest in the campaign was higher among Democrats than Republicans. In recent, post-convention surveys, Republicans and Democrats have both registered increasingly higher levels of interest in the campaign. Last week, 64% of Democrats and 57% of Republicans reported following the campaign very closely.



## In Other News

Amid record interest in economic news, more than half (56%) of the public reported hearing a lot about the federal government's decision to seize the failing lender Washington Mutual and sell it to banking giant JPMorgan Chase. A third of the public (32%) reported hearing a little about the Washington Mutual deal. Americans were roughly as familiar with this story as they were with news from the previous week that



investment bank Lehman Brothers had filed for bankruptcy. During that week, 59% said they heard a lot and 28% heard a little about the Lehman filing.

Half of all Americans say that they heard a lot and another four-in-ten (39%) heard a little about President Bush's televised address last week on the need to stabilize financial markets quickly. As many people reported hearing about the president's address as heard about the sale of investment bank Merrill Lynch to Bank of America the previous week.

In spite of the heavy focus on economic news, the public's understanding of recent financial problems involving Wall Street investment banks and other companies with ties to the housing market does not seem to have improved. In the current survey, just 26% of the public say they understand these problems very well and about half (49%) say they understand them fairly well. These percentages are virtually unchanged from the previous week.

In news from abroad last week, reports about contaminated milk powder in China were followed very closely by 17% of the public; just 2% followed this story more closely than any other news. Similarly, a hotel bombing in Pakistan last week attracted very close attention from 16% of the public; just 1% cited this as their most closely followed story.

The visit to New York City by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to address the United Nations General Assembly was followed very closely by 13% of the public.

## About the News Interest Index

The *News Interest Index* is a weekly survey conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press aimed at gauging the public's interest in and reaction to major news events.

This project has been undertaken in conjunction with the Project for Excellence in Journalism's *News Coverage Index*, an ongoing content analysis of the news. The News Coverage Index catalogues the news from top news organizations across five major sectors of the media: newspapers, network television, cable television, radio and the internet. Each week (from Sunday through Friday) PEJ will compile this data to identify the top stories for the week. The News Interest Index survey will collect data from Friday through Monday to gauge public interest in the most covered stories of the week.

Results for the weekly surveys are based on telephone interviews among a nationwide sample of approximately 1,000 adults, 18 years of age or older, conducted under the direction of ORC (Opinion Research Corporation). For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls, and that results based on subgroups will have larger margins of error.

For more information about the Project for Excellence in Journalism's News Coverage Index, go to [www.journalism.org](http://www.journalism.org).

## About the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press is an independent opinion research group that studies attitudes toward the press, politics and public policy issues. We are sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts and are one of seven projects that make up the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

The Center's purpose is to serve as a forum for ideas on the media and public policy through public opinion research. In this role it serves as an important information resource for political leaders, journalists, scholars, and public interest organizations. All of our current survey results are made available free of charge.

All of the Center's research and reports are collaborative products based on the input and analysis of the entire Center staff consisting of:

Andrew Kohut, Director  
Scott Keeter, Director of Survey Research  
Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock, Associate Directors  
Kim Parker, Senior Researcher  
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James Albrittain, Research Assistant



**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS**  
**SEPTEMBER 26-29, 2008 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY**  
**TOPLINE**  
**N=1,005**

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]

	<u>Barack Obama</u>	<u>John McCain</u>	<u>Sarah Palin<sup>1</sup></u>	<u>Other<sup>2</sup></u>	<u>Don't know/ Refused</u>
September 26-29, 2008	42	37	5	3	13=100
September 19-22, 2008	39	35	10	5	11=100
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? <sup>3</sup> [ROTATE IN BLOCKS: A/B FIRST, FOLLOWED BY C/D]

	<u>More Favorable</u>	<u>Less Favorable</u>	<u>Opinion has Not changed</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
a. Barack Obama	31	23	45	1=100
September 19-22, 2008	25	20	53	2=100
September 12-15, 2008	20	20	58	2=100
September 5-8, 2008	20	20	59	1=100

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

<sup>2</sup> "Other" includes responses for Hillary Clinton.

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

Q.2 CONTINUED...

	More <u>Favorable</u>	Less <u>Favorable</u>	Opinion has <u>Not change</u>	Don't <u>know</u>
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
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	24	35	40	1=100
September 19-22, 2008	20	30	48	2=100
September 12-15, 2008	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	15	19	60	6=100
September 19-22, 2008	17	19	55	9=100
September 12-15, 2008	14	18	58	10=100

Q.2 CONTINUED...

	More <u>Favorable</u>	Less <u>Favorable</u>	Opinion has <u>Not change</u>	Don't <u>know</u>
d. Sarah Palin	20	38	38	4=100
September 19-22, 2008	29	34	33	4=100
September 12-15, 2008	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; 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?”]

	Very <u>Closely</u>	Fairly <u>Closely</u>	Not too <u>Closely</u>	Not at all <u>Closely</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
a. A bombing at a Marriott Hotel in Pakistan that killed over 50 people	16	32	23	28	1=100
<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:<sup>4</sup></b>					
August 15-18, 2008: <i>Pakistan instability</i>	10	25	29	35	1=100
February 22-25, 2008: <i>Parliamentary elections</i>	9	24	28	39	*=100
January 11-14, 2008: <i>Pakistan instability</i>	19	33	20	27	1=100
January 4-7, 2008: <i>Bhutto assassination</i>	32	36	15	16	1=100
Nov. 30-Dec. 3, 2007: <i>Pakistan instability</i>	16	28	26	30	*=100
Nov. 23-26, 2007: <i>Pakistan instability</i>	13	27	31	28	1=100
Nov. 16-19, 2007: <i>Pakistan instability</i>	20	30	21	28	1=100
Nov. 9-12, 2007: <i>Pakistan instability</i>	20	29	23	28	*=100
October 19-22, 2007: <i>Pakistan bombing aimed at Bhutto</i>	21	28	21	30	*=100
July 13-16, 2007: <i>Raid on Pakistani mosque</i>	10	19	23	47	1=100
b. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy	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

<sup>4</sup> November 9-12, 2007 through November 30-December 3, 2007; January 11-14, 2008 and August 15-18, 2008 asked about “Political instability in Pakistan.” 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.”

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>
<b>March 20-24, 2008</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>February 29-March 3, 2008</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>February 15-18, 2008</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8=100</b>
<b>February 1-4, 2008</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>January 18-21, 2008</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>January 11-14, 2008</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>November 2-5, 2007</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>October 19-22, 2007</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>August 10-13, 2007</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>*=100</b>
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
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

### 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>
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
c. Reports about contaminated milk powder in China	17	27	24	31	1=100
<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:<sup>5</sup></b>					
February 22-25, 2008: <i>U.S. Beef recall</i>	29	36	19	16	*=100
November 9-12, 2007: <i>Chinese toys</i>	33	34	17	15	1=100
August 17-20, 2007: <i>Chinese toys/other products</i>	28	32	21	19	*=100
June 29-July 2, 2007: <i>Chinese food/other products</i>	26	30	20	24	*=100
May 4-7, 2007: <i>Contaminated pet food</i>	28	28	21	22	1=100
September, 1997: <i>Contaminated hamburger meat</i>	40	37	16	7	*=100
d. The debate in Washington over a plan to use government funds to stabilize financial markets	60	22	10	8	*=100
<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:<sup>6</sup></b>					
September 19-22, 2008: <i>Wall Street turmoil</i>	49	28	14	9	*=100
September 12-15, 2008: <i>Government takeover of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac</i>	28	35	19	17	1=100
March 20-24, 2008: <i>Bear Stearns buyout</i>	21	26	21	32	*=100
August, 1989: <i>Savings and loan bailout</i>	26	30	20	23	1=100
e. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's recent trip to New York City where he spoke at the United Nations	13	22	27	38	*=100
<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:<sup>7</sup></b>					
September 28 – October 1, 2007: <i>Ahmadinejad visit to U.S.</i>	23	31	20	25	1=100
f. News about candidates for the 2008 presidential election	56	29	10	5	*=100
September 19-22, 2008	47	33	14	6	*=100
September 12-15, 2008	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

<sup>5</sup> February 22-25, 2008 asked about "The U.S. Department of Agriculture recalling over 100 million pounds of frozen beef." November 9-12, 2007, asked about "The recall of various toys made in China that can be dangerous for children." August 17-20, 2007, asked about "Safety issues involving toys and other products from China." June 29-July 2, 2007, asked about "Safety issues involving food and other products from China." May 4-7, 2007, asked about "Reports about contaminated pet food." September, 1997, asked about "The recall of contaminated hamburger meat."

<sup>6</sup> 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." August, 1989 asked about: "Passage in Congress of a bill to bailout ailing savings and loan institutions."

<sup>7</sup> September 28-October 1, 2007, asked about "Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's recent trip to New York City where he spoke at Columbia University and the United Nations."

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>
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
January 18-21, 2008	36	34	18	12	*=100
January 11-14, 2008 <sup>8</sup>	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

<sup>8</sup> January 11-14, 2008 asked about: “News about the New Hampshire primaries and the presidential campaign.”

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>
<b>August 3-6, 2007</b>	19	31	25	25	*=100
<b>July 27-30, 2007</b>	19	32	22	26	1=100
<b>July 20-23, 2007</b>	16	26	30	27	1=100
<b>July 13-16, 2007</b>	17	29	27	27	*=100
<b>July 6-9, 2007</b>	24	29	24	22	1=100
<b>June 29-July 2, 2007</b>	20	32	25	23	*=100
<b>June 22-25, 2007</b>	18	31	21	30	*=100
<b>June 15-18, 2007</b>	17	32	26	25	*=100
<b>June 8-11, 2007</b>	19	30	24	26	1=100
<b>June 1-4, 2007</b>	16	27	32	24	1=100
<b>May 24-27, 2007</b>	22	33	23	22	*=100
<b>May 18-21, 2007</b>	18	31	24	27	*=100
<b>May 11-14, 2007</b>	18	30	23	28	1=100
<b>May 4-7, 2007</b>	23	34	21	21	1=100
<b>April 27-30, 2007</b>	14	30	29	26	1=100
<b>April 20-23, 2007</b>	18	28	27	27	*=100
<b>April 12-16, 2007</b>	18	28	27	27	*=100
<b>April 5-9, 2007</b>	25	30	26	19	*=100
<b>March 30-April 2, 2007</b>	20	29	27	23	1=100
<b>March 23-26, 2007</b>	20	32	22	26	*=100
<b>March 16-19, 2007</b>	15	28	29	27	1=100
<b>March 9-12, 2007</b>	24	30	23	23	*=100
<b>March 2-5, 2007</b>	19	31	26	23	1=100
<b>February 23-26, 2007</b>	22	33	24	21	*=100
<b>February 16-19, 2007</b>	18	32	22	27	1=100
<b>February 9-12, 2007</b>	24	30	24	21	1=100
<b>February 2-5, 2007</b>	24	36	22	18	*=100
<b>January 26-29, 2007</b>	24	33	23	20	*=100
<b>January 19-22, 2007<sup>9</sup></b>	24	27	22	26	1=100
<b>2004 Presidential Election</b>					
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 <sup>10</sup>	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

<sup>9</sup> January 19-22, 2007 asked about: "Recent announcements by prominent Democrats about plans to run for president in 2008."

<sup>10</sup> 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...**

	<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not too Closely</u>	<u>Not at all Closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
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
<b>2000 Presidential Election</b>					
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
<b>1996 Presidential Election</b>					
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
June, 1995	11	31	31	26	1=100
<b>1992 Presidential Election</b>					
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
<b>1988 Presidential Election</b>					
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.]**

- 43 Reports about the conditions of the U.S. economy
- The debate in Washington over a plan to use government funds to stabilize financial
- 27 markets
- 15 News about the candidates for the 2008 presidential election
- 2 Reports about contaminated milk powder in China
- 1 A bombing at a Marriott Hotel in Pakistan that killed over 50 people
- Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's recent trip to New York City where he spoke
- 1 at the United Nations
- 3 Some other story (SPECIFY)
- 8 Don't know/Refused
- 100

**ASK Q.5 THROUGH Q.7 THROUGH MONDAY ONLY [N=701]:**

Thinking about the presidential campaign...

Q.5 Did you happen to watch the presidential debate between Barack Obama and John McCain (last night/this past Friday night), or didn't you get a chance to see it? **IF YES, ASK:** How much of the debate did you watch: all of it, some of it, or only a little?

**BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=639]:**

		<i><b>Bush/Kerry</b></i>	<i><b>Gore/Bush</b></i>
		<u>Early Oct 2004</u>	<u>Early Oct 2000</u>
70	Yes (NET)	69	63
44	Yes, all	41	32
20	Yes, some	22	24
6	Yes, a little	6	7
30	No, didn't watch	31	37
<u>0</u>	Don't know/Refused	*	*
100		100	100

Q.6 Thinking about the news coverage about the presidential debate, do you think news organizations have been more favorable to John McCain in their coverage of the debate, more favorable to Barack Obama, or have they treated both about equally?

**BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=639]:**

		<i><b>Bush/Kerry</b></i>
		<u>Early Oct 2004</u>
7	More favorable to John McCain	11
35	More favorable to Barack Obama	26
49	Treated both equally	52
<u>9</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>11</u>
100		100

Q.7 In reporting about the presidential debate, do you think news organizations paid **[READ AND ROTATE]**

**BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=639]:**

		<i>Bush/Kerry</i> <u>Early Oct 2004</u>
55	More attention to the qualities of the candidates	56
30	More attention to the issues and policy plans of the candidates	24
8	Both/Neither ( <b>VOL. DO NOT READ</b> )	7
<u>7</u>	Don't know/Refused ( <b>VOL. DO NOT READ</b> )	<u>13</u>
100	100	

**ASK ALL:**

Q.7a How likely is it that you will watch this coming Thursday's vice-presidential debate between Sarah Palin and Joe Biden?

**BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=903]:**

		<i>Cheney/Edwards</i> <u>Early Oct 2004</u>
69	Very likely	41
14	Somewhat likely, OR	29
16	Not likely	29
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused ( <b>VOL.</b> )	<u>1</u>
100	100	

Q.7b Regardless of which presidential candidate you support, who do you think will do the better job in the vice presidential debate **[READ AND ROTATE]**?

**BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=903]:**

34	Sarah Palin
53	Joe Biden
4	Neither/Both
<u>9</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q.8 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.	John McCain deciding to suspend his presidential campaign and calling for a postponement of the first presidential debate	65	21	14	*=100
b.	Sarah Palin's TV interview with Katie Couric of CBS News	31	37	32	*=100
<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:</b>					
	<b>September 12-15, 2008:</b> Sarah Palin's TV interview with Charles Gibson of ABC News	35	32	32	1=100
c.	Sarah Palin's recent visit to New York where she met with several foreign leaders	26	43	30	1=100
d.	George Bush's address to the nation about the need to stabilize the nation's financial markets	50	39	10	1=100

**Q.8 CONTINUED...**

		<u>A lot</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Nothing at all</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
e.	Mortgage lender Washington Mutual being seized by the federal government and sold to J.P. Morgan Chase	56	32	12	*=100

Now thinking about recent economic news and what's been happening on Wall Street...

Q.9 How well would you say you understand recent financial problems involving Wall Street investment banks and other companies with ties to the housing market? **[READ IN ORDER]**

		Sept 19-22 <u>2008</u>
26	Very well	24
49	Fairly well	48
18	Not too well [OR]	22
6	Not at all well	6
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>*</u>
100		100

**NO QUESTION 10**

Q.11 As you may know, the government is considering investing billions of dollars to try and keep financial institutions and markets secure. As you've thought about this, has it made you feel... **[READ AND ROTATE]?**

		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
a.	Optimistic	29	68	3=100
b.	Angry	61	37	2=100
c.	Scared	50	49	1=100
d.	Confused	43	56	1=100