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Take the Quiz Before You Read the Report!

As part of the Pew Knowledge Project, people are invited to test their own news IQ by taking an interactive knowledge quiz now available on the Pew Research Center website. The short quiz includes the same questions that were included in the national poll. Participants will instantly learn how they did on the quiz in comparison with the general public as well as with people like them. To take the quiz, click on this link:
<http://pewresearch.org/newsiq/>

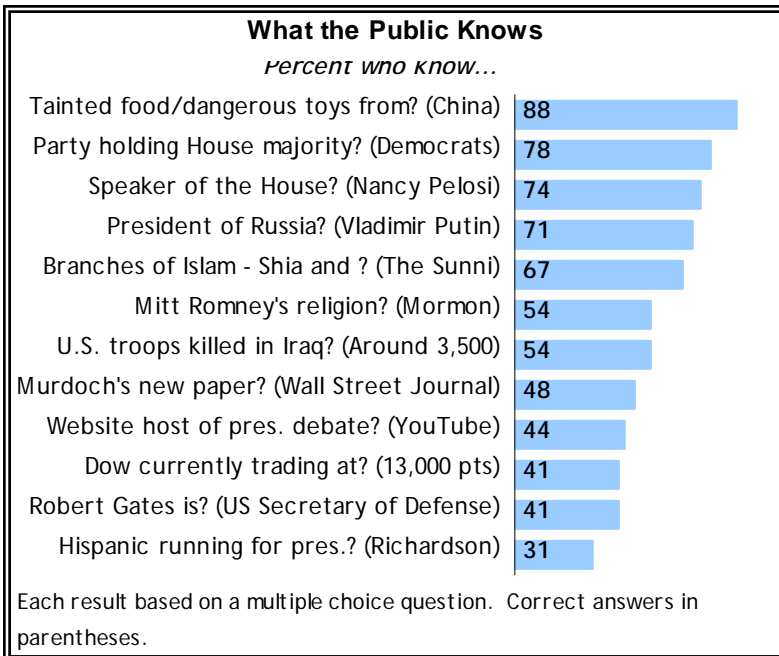
Political Knowledge Update

PUBLIC FAMILIAR WITH KEY POLITICAL & IRAQ FACTS

Nearly nine-in-ten Americans know that China was the source of dangerous toys and tainted food recently in the news. And sizeable majorities can identify House speaker Nancy Pelosi, Russian president Vladimir Putin, and the Sunni as the branch of Islam struggling with the Shi'a for control in Iraq. But many fewer can identify Robert Gates' position in the administration, the level of Dow Jones Industrial Average, or the Hispanic candidate in the Democratic Party's presidential race.

Public knowledge of political and world affairs varies widely in the most recent update to the Pew News IQ survey, conducted Aug. 16-19 among 1,005 adults by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. Respondents correctly answered an average of seven multiple-choice questions

out of the 12 asked on the quiz. But many people did very well: 26% could answer 10 or more of



the questions. Relatively few people did very poorly; just 15% could answer only three or fewer questions.

There are familiar demographic differences in knowledge levels. Better educated people did better on every question than those with less education. Overall, those with a college degree answered, on average, about eight (8.2) out of 12 questions correctly, while those with a high school education or less had an average of fewer than six (5.5) correct answers. Men did better than women on many questions, and correctly answered an average of slightly more than one more question overall than women did.

Older people did better than younger people on the test. People 50 and older answered, on average, seven and a half (7.5) questions correctly, while people under the age of 30 average fewer than six (5.5) correct responses.

People in the News

Americans were also tested on their knowledge about several people in the news. Roughly three-quarters (74%) could identify the current speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives as Nancy Pelosi. Somewhat surprisingly, more Republicans than Democrats knew this (81% among Republicans, 72% among Democrats).

A comparable percentage overall (71%) knew that Vladimir Putin is the President of Russia. The percentage able to identify Putin increased from 61 percent in a March poll. A smaller majority of 54% could identify Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney's religion as Mormon.

The public is less familiar with two other individuals. Just 41% could identify Robert Gates' position as the U.S. Secretary of Defense. And fewer than one-in-three (31%) knew that Democratic presidential candidate Bill Richardson is Hispanic.

Knowledge about Iraq

Two key facts about the situation in Iraq were known by majorities of the public. Two-thirds (67%) could identify that the Sunni are the branch of Islam vying for political control in Iraq with the other major branch, the Shi'a. The ability to correctly identify this Islam sect

	Average # correct out of 12 questions
TOTAL	7.0
<u>Sex</u>	
Men	7.6
Women	6.3
<u>Education</u>	
College Grad	8.2
Some College	6.6
High School or Less	5.5
<u>Age</u>	
18-29	5.5
30-49	7.1
50-64	7.4
65+	7.6
<i>Correctly answered at least*...</i>	
10 questions	26%
8 questions	44%
6 questions	63%
4 questions	86%
2 questions	97%
1 question	99%
*Out of 12 questions.	

increased slightly from 62% in March. The percentage of Americans who could identify how many U.S. troops have been killed in Iraq has remained relatively stable over the course of the war. Today, more than half (54%) know that the war dead number around 3,500 American troops; comparable numbers answered this question correctly in April, 2006 (53%) when there were around 2,500 total troop deaths, and in April, 2004 (55%) when there were between 500 and 1,000.

Wall Street – the Dow and the Journal

Americans are more knowledgeable today about the level of the stock market than they were at the beginning of this decade. About four-in-ten Americans (41%) correctly identify that the Dow Jones Industrial average is currently trading at around 13,000 points. When this same question was asked in May 2000, at the height of the dot-com era, fewer than three-in-ten (28%) were able to correctly estimate the Dow’s average.

Nearly half of the public (48%) could correctly identify the *Wall Street Journal* as the newspaper that Rupert Murdoch is in the process of purchasing. (44% correct for Republicans vs. 37% for Democrats)

Young People Tuned in to YouTube, But Little Else

Significantly higher percentages of older Americans than younger ones could provide a correct answer to each question on the quiz, with one notable exception: more young people knew that YouTube was the website that sponsored a Democratic candidate debate. More than half (55%) of those under 30 years of age got this one right, compared with just 21% among those 65 and older. In contrast, just 37% knew that Mitt Romney is Mormon compared with 73% among the oldest respondents. Similarly, just 20% of the youngest group knew the current level of the Dow Jones Industrial Average, compared with 50% of those 50 and older.

Percent who know...	YouTube sponsored <u>debate</u>	House speaker is <u>Pelosi</u>	Romney's religion: <u>Mormon</u>
TOTAL	44	74	54
18-29	55	58	37
30-49	51	78	52
50-64	39	79	59
65+	21	83	73

Two-thirds of young people (66%) were aware that the Democratic Party holds a majority in the U.S House of Representatives, but older people were even more aware of this (77% among those 30-49 and 84% among those 65 and older). Overall, 77% know of the Democratic Party’s majority, about the same as in February of this year (76%). This level of awareness of party control is somewhat higher than it was throughout the period of Republican control from 1995 through 2006, or the Democratic Party’s control in the years before the Republican takeover in 1995.

About the Survey

Results for this report are based on telephone interviews among a nationwide sample of 1,005 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.

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 six 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:

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**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
AUGUST POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE UPDATE SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
AUGUST 16-19, 2007
N=1,005**

RANDOMIZE ORDER OF QUESTIONS

Q.1 Do you happen to know if the Dow Jones Industrial Average is currently closer to **[READ IN ORDER]**?

		<u>May 2000¹</u>	
16	2,000	5	3,000
14	4,000	4	5,000
13	8,000 [OR]	28	10,000 [OR]
41	13,000	1	20,000
<u>16</u>	Don't know/No answer (VOL.)	<u>62</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100		100	

Correct answers for each trend highlighted in bold

Q.2 Which popular online website sponsored a Democratic presidential debate in July with CNN? Was it **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**:

44	YouTube (<i>Correct</i>)
18	Yahoo
12	Google [OR]
2	Facebook
<u>24</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

Q.3 What religion is Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney? Is he **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**:

54	Mormon (<i>Correct</i>)
16	Catholic
8	Baptist [OR]
6	Jewish
<u>16</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

Q.4 Which of the following Democratic presidential candidates is Hispanic? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

31	Bill Richardson (<i>Correct</i>)
21	Barack Obama
10	Chris Dodd [OR]
16	Joe Biden
<u>22</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

¹ In May, 2000 the question was worded: "Do you happen to know at what level the Dow Jones Industrial average is currently trading? Is it about..."

Q.5 Which U.S. newspaper did billionaire Rupert Murdoch recently purchase? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

- 48 The Wall Street Journal (*Correct*)
 - 6 The Los Angeles Times
 - 14 The New York Daily News [OR]
 - 15 USA Today
 - 17 Don't know/Refused (**VOL.**)
- 100

Q.6 There have been many recent news stories about tainted food and dangerous toys. From what country did many of these products come? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

- 88 China (*Correct*)
 - 4 North Korea
 - 3 India [OR]
 - 2 France
 - 3 Don't know/Refused (**VOL.**)
- 100

Q.7 Followers of the two major branches of Islam are seeking political control in Iraq. One branch is the Shi'a, **[PRONOUNCED: SHE-ah]** whose members are known as Shiites **[PRONOUNCED: SHE-ites]**. Can you name the other one? Is it... **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

- | | | March 9-12,
<u>2007</u> ² | |
|----------|------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| 67 | The Sunni (<i>Correct</i>) | 62 | The Sunni (<i>Correct</i>) |
| 8 | The Hezbollah | 7 | The Hezbollah |
| 3 | The Kasmars | 1 | The Kasmars |
| 13 | The Kurds | 9 | [OR] some other group |
| <u>9</u> | DK/Refused (VOL.) | <u>21</u> | DK/Refused (VOL.) |
- 100

Q.8 Do you happen to know the name of the current Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives? Is it... **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

- 74 Nancy Pelosi (*Correct*)
 - 5 Dennis Hastert
 - 7 Barbara Boxer [OR]
 - 5 Scooter Libby
 - 9 Don't know/Refused (**VOL.**)
- 100

Q.9 Is Robert Gates... **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

- | | | March 9-12,
<u>2007</u> ³ | |
|-----------|--|---|--|
| 41 | The U.S. Secretary of Defense (<i>Correct</i>) | 37 | The U.S. Secretary of Defense (<i>Correct</i>) |
| 17 | A Senator from Michigan | 5 | A Senator from Michigan |
| 12 | The chairman of General Motors | 3 | The chairman of General Motors |
| 8 | The host of CNN's evening news broadcast | 24 | [OR] is he something else |
| <u>22</u> | DK/Refused (VOL.) | <u>31</u> | DK/Refused (VOL.) |
- 100

² For March 9-12, 2007 "The Kurds" was not offered as a response option, and "some other group" was offered.

Q.10 Can you tell me who is the President of Russia? Is it... **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

		March 9-12, <u>2007</u> ⁴	
71	Vladimir Putin (<i>Correct</i>)	60	Vladimir Putin (<i>Correct</i>)
10	Boris Yeltsin	7	Boris Yeltsin
10	Mikhail Gorbachev [OR]	7	Mikhail Gorbachev
2	Angela Merkel	8	[OR] is it someone else
<u>7</u>	DK/Refused (VOL.)	<u>18</u>	DK/Refused (VOL.)
100		100	

Q.11 Do you happen to know which political party has a majority in the U.S. House of Representatives? **[READ AND ROTATE]**

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
August 16-19, 2007	78	19	3
February, 2007	76	10	14
Late October, 2006	4	58	38
April, 2006	6	64	30
April, 2004	8	56	36
June, 2001	34	31	35
August, 1999	8	55	37
December, 1998	11	56	33
June, 1997	6	50	44
April, 1996	8	70	22
June, 1995	5	73	22
July, 1994	60	18	22
February, 1994	58	42	n/a
September, 1992	46	9	45
June, 1992	44	12	44
May, 1992	49	12	39
May, 1989 ⁵ <i>Political Knowledge Survey</i>	68	16	16

Correct answers for each trend highlighted in bold

³ For March 9-12, 2007 “The host of CNN’s evening news broadcast” was not offered as a response option, and “is he something else” was offered.

⁴ For March 9-12, 2007 “Angela Merkel” was not offered as a response option, and “is it someone else” was offered.

⁵ In May, 1989 the question was worded: “As a result of the election last year which party now has the most members in the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington?”

Q.12 Since the start of military action in Iraq, about how many U.S. military personnel have been killed? To the best of your knowledge, have there been ... **[READ IN ORDER]** troop deaths?

	June 22-25, <u>2007</u>		Feb <u>2007</u>	Dec <u>2006</u>		April <u>2006</u>		Oct <u>2005</u>	
8	9	Around 1,500	5	6	Around 1,000	4	Around 500	5	Around 500
19	20	Around 2,500	17	24	Around 2,000	16	Around 1,500	23	Around 1,000
54	49	Around 3,500	55	47	Around 3,000	53	Around 2,500	48	Around 2,000
17	12	Around 4,500	17	16	Around 4,000	19	Around 3,500	19	Around 3,000
--	3	Other (VOL.)	1	1	Other (VOL.)	1	Other (VOL.)	1	Other (VOL.)
<u>2</u>	<u>7</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	DK/Ref	<u>7</u>	DK/Ref	<u>4</u>	DK/Ref
100	100		100	100		100		100	

June <u>2005</u>	April <u>2004</u>	
4	28	Under 500
13	55	500 to 1,000
54	6	1,000 to 2,000
24	4	More than 2,000
--	--	Other (VOL.)
<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	DK/Ref
100	100	

Correct answers for each trend highlighted in bold