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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:

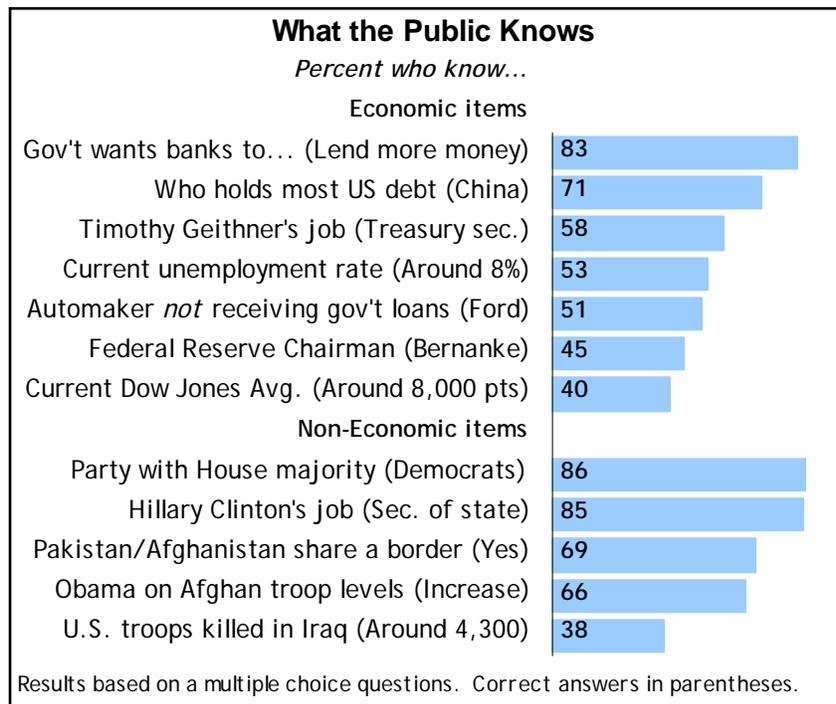
<http://pewresearch.org/newsiq/>

More Know Unemployment Rate than Dow Average
PUBLIC KNOWS BASIC FACTS ABOUT FINANCIAL CRISIS

The latest Pew Research Center News IQ survey finds the American public reasonably well-informed about a number of basic facts pertaining to the current economic situation. Fully 83% know that the government assistance to banks and other financial institutions is aimed at getting them to lend *more* money, not *less* money. Roughly seven-in-ten (71%) correctly identify China as the foreign country holding the most U.S. government debt.

A majority of Americans (58%) know that Timothy Geithner serves as the treasury secretary. And 51% are aware that of the three major U.S. automakers, Ford is the one that has *not* received emergency loans from the government.

Notably, more Americans know the current unemployment rate than the current level of the Dow Jones Industrial Average:



53% correctly estimated the unemployment rate at about 8% (the rate was 8.1% in February, but is projected to rise to 8.5% in March). That compares with 40% who correctly estimated the level of the Dow average at about 8,000; it ranged from 7,696 to 7,925 during the survey field period. This is slightly lower than awareness of the Dow average in the Pew Research Center's December 2008 News IQ survey, when 45% got this question right.

These are the principal findings of the latest News IQ survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted March 26-29, in which 1,003 adults were asked a series of 12 multiple choice questions about events and people in the news. Respondents answered an average of 7.4 questions correctly. Seven of the survey questions were related to the economy, and respondents answered an average of four of these seven questions correctly.

Beyond the economy, the survey also addressed public awareness of some basic facts about U.S policy toward Afghanistan. Two-thirds (66%) are aware that Barack Obama has decided to increase the number of U.S. troops stationed in Afghanistan (21% believe he decided to decrease troop levels and 7% said he decided to make no changes). Roughly the same proportion (69%) responded correctly that Pakistan and Afghanistan share a border; 15% say the two countries do not share a border and 16% offered no response.

An overwhelming majority (86%) knows that Democrats hold a majority in the U.S. House of Representatives. This is up slightly from 82% in December, and is substantially higher than the 70% who correctly identified the Democrats as the majority party a year ago. Public awareness of Hillary Clinton's current position also is widespread – 85% are aware that she is currently serving as secretary of state as opposed to some other position. By comparison, a year ago 70% knew that Condoleezza Rice was serving as the secretary of state.

Unemployment and the Dow

Among those who did not know the current unemployment rate (47% of the public), far more overestimated than underestimated its current level. Nearly a quarter (24%) said the rate is closer to 12%, and another 18% of Americans said the unemployment rate is closer to 16%. By contrast, just 3% of Americans incorrectly think the unemployment rate is *lower* than it actually is.

Compared with the unemployment rate, fewer Americans (40%) correctly said that the current Dow Jones Industrial Average is around 8,000. Again, when people erred, it was in a more gloomy direction. Roughly a third of Americans

<i>Unemployment rate is closer to</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Dow Jones Indust. Avg. is closer to</i>	<i>%</i>
4 percent	3	3,000	20
8 percent	53	5,000	14
12 percent	24	8,000	40
16 percent	18	11,000	4
Don't know	<u>2</u>	Don't know	<u>22</u>
	100		100

Correct answers in bold.

(34%) say the Dow is either closer to 3,000 (20%) or 5,000 (14%), while just 4% estimated it at 11,000.

Lower income, non-employed and younger people are substantially less aware of both the unemployment rate and the Dow Jones average than are higher income, employed and older Americans. Republicans are far more likely than Democrats (52% vs. 33%) to correctly identify the current Dow Jones Industrial Average. There is less of a partisan gap when it comes to identifying the unemployment rate; 58% of Republicans and 51% of Democrats correctly identified the current unemployment rate.

	Unem- ployment rate %	Dow Jones average %
<i>Percent correct</i>		
Total	53	40
Men	62	52
Women	45	29
College grad	65	49
Some college	53	47
HS or less	43	28
18-34	39	28
35-49	58	45
50+	60	47
\$75k or more	61	50
\$30k to \$74,999	56	41
Less than \$30k	30	22
Employed	57	44
Retired	60	45
Not employed	36	22
Republican	58	52
Democrat	51	33
Independent	52	40

Republicans More Knowledgeable

Across the 12 knowledge items tested, the biggest gap between Democrats and Republicans comes over awareness of the current level of the Dow. Republicans also are more likely to correctly name Ben Bernanke as chairman of the Federal Reserve Board and know that Tim Geithner's position is treasury secretary. In addition, a greater percentage of Republicans than Democrats know that Obama decided to increase the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan and that Ford is the U.S. automaker that has not taken emergency government loans.

But there is little or no partisan gap in knowledge on some other key items: Democrats and Republicans are about equally likely to know that China holds the most U.S. debt, that Hillary Clinton is secretary of state; and that roughly 4,300 U.S. troops have been killed in Iraq.

The differences in knowledge levels between Republicans and Democrats

	Rep %	Dem %	Ind %	R-D Diff
Economic items				
Current Dow Jones Avg. (Around 8,000 pts)	52	33	40	+19
Federal Reserve Chairman (Bernanke)	50	39	49	+11
Timothy Geithner's job (Treasury sec.)	63	53	61	+10
Automaker not receiving gov't loans (Ford)	56	46	52	+10
Current unemployment rate (Around 8%)	58	51	52	+7
Gov't wants banks to... (Lend more money)	87	83	80	+4
Who holds most U.S. debt (China)	71	71	71	0
Non-economic items				
Obama on Afghan troop levels (Increase)	72	64	63	+8
Pakistan/Afghanistan share a border (Yes)	77	70	64	+7
Party with House majority (Democrats)	91	87	81	+4
Hillary Clinton's job (Sec. of state)	88	85	82	+3
U.S. troops killed in Iraq (Around 4,300)	39	41	31	-2

are mostly a reflection of the different demographics of the two groups. Republicans tend to be older, more educated, higher income and are more likely to be male; each of these characteristics is strongly associated with political and economic knowledge. When these characteristics are held constant – that is, when Republicans and Democrats with similar demographic characteristics are compared – there is little difference between the two groups.

Large Age Gap in Knowledge

As in past rounds of Pew Research’s News IQ Quiz, a person’s age is closely associated with their knowledge of facts about domestic and international issues. This gap carries over to the economic realm as well.

For each of the 12 items tested, a greater proportion of older people (50 and older) than younger people (younger than 35) knew the correct answer.

This gap is largest on the two questions relating to Afghanistan. Only about half (52%) of those younger than 35 know that Pakistan and Afghanistan share a border,

compared with 71% of those 35 to 49, and 80% of those 50 and older. While just 47% of those younger than 35 know that Obama decided to increase troop levels in Afghanistan, substantial majorities of those 35 to 49 (69%) and 50 and older know this (79%). There also are sizable age differences in the percentages able to identify Timothy Geithner’s position, the name of the Federal Reserve Board chairman and the U.S. automaker that has not taken emergency loans from the government.

Pew Research news consumption surveys have consistently found that higher percentages of men than women say they very closely follow politics, international affairs and economic news. The knowledge survey reflects this gap in news

	18-34	35-49	50+	Old-Yng Diff
	%	%	%	
Economic items				
Timothy Geithner's job (Treasury sec.)	42	59	69	+27
Automaker not receiving gov't loans (Ford)	36	52	60	+24
Federal Reserve Chairman (Bernanke)	31	45	55	+24
Current unemployment rate (Around 8%)	39	58	60	+21
Current Dow Jones Avg. (Around 8,000 pts)	28	45	47	+19
Gov't wants banks to... (Lend more money)	71	90	87	+17
Who holds most U.S. debt (China)	61	74	78	+17
Non-economic items				
Obama on Afghan troop levels (Increase)	47	69	79	+32
Pakistan/Afghanistan share a border (Yes)	52	71	80	+28
Hillary Clinton's job (Sec. of state)	72	89	91	+19
U.S. troops killed in Iraq (Around 4,300)	30	37	44	+14
Party with House majority (Democrats)	77	90	90	+13

	Men	Women	M-W Diff
	%	%	
Economic items			
Automaker not receiving gov't loans (Ford)	64	38	+26
Current Dow Jones Avg. (Around 8,000 pts)	52	29	+23
Current unemployment rate (Around 8%)	62	45	+17
Timothy Geithner's job (Treasury sec.)	65	51	+14
Federal Reserve Chairman (Bernanke)	52	38	+14
Gov't wants banks to... (Lend more money)	89	77	+12
Who holds most U.S. debt (China)	77	66	+11
Non-Economic items			
Pakistan/Afghanistan share a border (Yes)	79	60	+19
Obama on Afghan troop levels (Increase)	72	61	+11
U.S. troops killed in Iraq (Around 4,300)	41	34	+7
Party with House majority (Democrats)	88	84	+4
Hillary Clinton's job (Sec. of state)	87	83	+4

interests. More men than women answer most questions correctly, with particularly large gender differences evident in questions about which automaker has not taken government loans (64% of men answered correctly vs. 38% of women) and the current level of the Dow (52% of men vs. 29% of women).

Yet there are exceptions to this pattern. About as many women (83%) as men (87%) know that Hillary Clinton is secretary of state and that the Democrats hold the majority in the House of Representatives (84% of women, 88% of men).

News Knowledge on Average

To measure knowledge levels, the 12 multiple choice questions in the survey were used to create a knowledge index. For each correct answer respondents were assigned one point on a scale ranging from zero (none correct) to 12 (all correct).

On average, the public correctly answered approximately seven out of 12 questions (mean 7.4, median 8). Just 6% got a perfect score by answering all 12 questions right, while 5% missed 10 or more. A large majority (71%) answered at least half the questions correctly.

Overall, those who are 50 or older answered an average of 8.4 questions correctly, while those younger than 35 answered just 5.9 questions correctly on average. College graduates fared better than those with less education: On average, college graduates correctly answered 8.7 questions correctly, while those with some college got an average of 7.6 right and those with no more than a high school education got 6.2 correct.

Men correctly answered an average of 8.3 out of 12 questions correctly; women answered an average of 6.7. Republicans received higher average scores on the quiz than both Democrats and independents. Republicans averaged 8.1 correct answers, compared with 7.3 for independents and 7.2 for Democrats.

A smaller knowledge index that included only the seven

How Americans Scored on the Pew News IQ Quiz	
	Average # correct out of 12 questions
TOTAL	7.4
<u>Sex</u>	
Men	8.3
Women	6.7
<u>Education</u>	
College grad	8.7
Some college	7.6
High school or less	6.2
<u>Age</u>	
18-34	5.9
35-49	7.8
50+	8.4
<u>Income</u>	
<\$30,000	5.5
\$30,000 to \$74,999	7.4
\$75,000+	8.3
<u>Party Affiliation</u>	
Republican	8.1
Democrat	7.2
Independent	7.3
<i>Correctly answered at least*...</i>	
2 questions	99
4 questions	91
6 questions	71
8 questions	52
10 questions	31
All 12 questions	6
*Out of 12 questions.	

questions relating to economic conditions, economic policy and people in the news involved in many of the nation’s economic decisions, produced similar results both overall and in terms demographic differences in knowledge levels.

Understanding Economic News

The current economic situation is, admittedly, confusing for many Americans. Prior to being asked the series of knowledge questions, people were asked to rate how well they understand the economic situation and the government’s economic policies. Roughly one-in-four (24%) say they understand the current situation and government policies very well, while 49% say they understand these things fairly well; 27% say they understand the economic situation and government policies either not too well (20%) or not at all well (7%).

Self assessments are associated with the ability to answer the questions that followed in the survey. Among the minority of respondents who were able to answer all seven economic questions correctly, 42% say they understand the situation very well. By contrast, very few of those who got less than five of the seven questions correct were as positive about their understanding of the economic situation.

How Well Do You Understand the Economic Situation and the Government’s Economic Policies?			
	Very well %	Fairly well %	Not well* %
Total	24	49	27
Men	30	50	20
Women	19	48	33
College grad	23	57	20
Some college	28	43	29
HS or less	23	46	31
18-34	21	44	35
35-49	23	56	21
50+	27	49	24
\$75k or more	27	50	23
\$30k to \$74,999	23	48	29
Less than \$30k	18	47	35
Republican	27	53	20
Democrat	23	53	24
Independent	22	41	37
<i>Number of econ. questions correct</i>			
7 (of 7)	42	47	11
5 to 6 (of 7)	23	56	21
2 to 4 (of 7)	22	46	32
0 or 1 (of 7)	16	43	41
* “Not too” or “Not at all” well combined; percentages read horizontally.			

About the Survey

Results for this report are based on landline telephone interviews among a nationwide sample of 1,003 adults, 18 years of age or older, conducted March 26-29, 2009 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 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:

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PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
MARCH 2009 POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE UPDATE SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
MARCH 26-29, 2009
N=1,003

Q.1A Thinking about recent economic news, including what's been happening on Wall Street and in Washington D.C.... How well would you say you understand the economic situation and the government's economic policies? Would you say...**[READ]**

		TREND FOR COMPARISON	
		-NII- Sept 26-29 ¹ <u>2008</u>	-NII- Sept 19-22 <u>2008</u>
24	Very well	26	24
49	Fairly well	49	48
20	Not too well [OR]	18	22
7	Not at all well	6	6
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)	<u>1</u>	<u>*</u>
<u>100</u>		<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

Now I would like to ask you about some things that have been in the news recently. Not everyone will have heard of them...

RANDOMIZE Q.1 THROUGH Q.6

Q.1 Do you happen to know which political party has a majority in the U.S. House of Representatives? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>
March 26-29, 2009	86	12	2=100
December 4-7, 2008	82	11	7=100
February 28-March 2, 2008	70	26	4=100
August 16-19, 2007	78	19	3=100
February, 2007	76	10	14=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:²			
May, 2008	53	15	32=100
Late October, 2006	4	58	38=100
April, 2006	6	64	30=100
April, 2004	8	56	36=100
June, 2001	34	31	35=100
August, 1999	8	55	37=100
December, 1998	11	56	33=100
June, 1997	6	50	44=100
April, 1996	8	70	22=100
June, 1995	5	73	22=100
July, 1994	60	18	22=100
February, 1994	58	42	n/a=100
September, 1992	46	9	45=100

¹ For September 26-29, 2008 and September 19-22, 2008 an introduction before the topic read: "Now thinking about recent economic news and what's been happening on Wall Street..." And the question was worded "How well would you say you understand recent financial problems involving Wall Street investment banks and other companies with ties to the housing market?"

² In May 2008, and from May 1992 through Late October 2006 this was asked as an open-ended question, without offering response options for Democrats and Republicans. 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.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
June, 1992	44	12	44=100
May, 1992	49	12	39=100
May, 1989 <i>Political Knowledge Survey</i>	68	16	16=100

Correct answers for each trend highlighted in bold

RANDOMIZE Q.1 THROUGH Q.6

Q.2 Do you happen to know if Pakistan and Afghanistan do or do not share a border?

- 69 Yes, they do (*Correct*)
- 15 No, they do not
- 16** Don't know/Refused (**VOL. DO NOT READ**)
- 100

RANDOMIZE Q.1 THROUGH Q.6

Q.3 Do you happen to know if the Dow Jones Industrial Average is currently closer to **[READ IN ORDER]**?

		<u>Dec 4-7 2008</u>		<u>Feb 28- Mar 2, 2008</u>		<u>Aug 16-19, 2007</u>	
20	3,000	18	2,000	16	4,000	16	2,000
14	5,000	8	4,000	9	5,000	14	4,000
40	8,000 [OR]	45	8,000 [OR]	16	10,000 [OR]	13	8,000 [OR]
4	11,000	5	13,000	31	12,000	41	13,000
<u>22</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)	<u>24</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)	<u>28</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)	<u>16</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)
100		100		100		100	

<u>May 2000³</u>	
5	3,000
4	5,000
28	10,000 [OR]
1	20,000
<u>62</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)
100	

Correct answers for each trend highlighted in bold

RANDOMIZE Q.1 THROUGH Q.6

Q.4 Thinking about the military effort in Afghanistan – do you happen to know if Barack Obama has decided to increase, decrease, or not substantially change the number of U.S. troops stationed in Afghanistan?

- 66 Increase (*Correct*)
- 21 Decrease
- 7 Not substantially change
- 6 Don't know/Refused (**VOL.**)
- 100

³ 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..."

RANDOMIZE Q.1 THROUGH Q.6

Q.5 Which of the following U.S. Automakers has NOT received emergency loans from the government over the past year? [READ, RANDOMIZE 1-3 WITH 4 ALWAYS LAST]

- 51 Ford (*Correct*)
- 7 General Motors
- 13 Chrysler
- 24 Or have all three received emergency loans?
- 5 Don't know/Refused (**VOL. DO NOT READ**)
- 100

RANDOMIZE Q.1 THROUGH Q.6

Q.6 What job does Timothy Geithner currently hold? Is he [READ AND RANDOMIZE]

- 58 The Treasury Secretary (*Correct*)
- 6 The CEO of CitiGroup
- 8 President Obama's Press Secretary
- 4 The House Majority Leader
- 24 Don't know/Refused (**VOL. DO NOT READ**)
- 100

RANDOMIZE Q.7 THROUGH Q.12

Q.7 What job does Hillary Clinton currently hold? Is it [READ AND RANDOMIZE]...

- | | | | |
|----------|--|--------------------------|--|
| | | Dec 4-7 | |
| | | <u>2008</u> ⁴ | |
| 85 | Secretary of State (<i>Correct</i>) | 3 | Secretary of the Treasury |
| 8 | Senator from New York | 87 | Secretary of State (<i>Correct</i>) |
| 2 | Ambassador the United Nations | 2 | Ambassador to the United Nations |
| 2 | Secretary of Health and Human Services | 3 | Or something else? |
| <u>3</u> | DK/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ) | <u>5</u> | DK/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ) |
| 100 | | 100 | |

TREND FOR COMPARISON:

Is Condoleezza Rice... [READ AND RANDOMIZE]

- Feb 28-
- Mar 2, 2008
- 70 The U.S. Secretary of State (*Correct*)
- 20 The Secretary of Defense
- 2 The Governor of Louisiana [OR]
- 1 The President of Harvard University
- 7 Don't know/Refused (**VOL. DO NOT READ**)
- 100

⁴ For December 4-7, 2008 the question asked: "To what cabinet position has Barack Obama recently nominated Hillary Clinton? Is it..." The order of the first three responses was randomized and "something else" was always read last.

RANDOMIZE Q.7 THROUGH Q.12

Q.8 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?

		Dec 4-7, <u>2008</u>		April 4-7, <u>2008</u>	Feb 28- Mar 2, <u>2008</u>	
12	Around 2,300	14	Around 2,200	6	11	Around 2,000
22	Around 3,300	22	Around 3,200	15	35	Around 3,000
38	Around 4,300	40	Around 4,200	60	28	Around 4,000
26	Around 5,300	20	Around 5,200	16	23	Around 5,000
<u>2</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)	<u>4</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)
100		100		100	100	

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

April <u>2006</u>		Oct <u>2005</u>		June <u>2005</u>	April <u>2004</u>	
4	Around 500	5	Around 500	4	28	Under 500
16	Around 1,500	23	Around 1,000	13	55	500 to 1,000
53	Around 2,500	48	Around 2,000	54	6	1,000 to 2,000
19	Around 3,500	19	Around 3,000	24	4	More than 2,000
1	Other (VOL.)	1	Other (VOL.)	--	--	Other (VOL.)
<u>7</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)	<u>4</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)
100		100		100	100	

Correct answers for each trend highlighted in bold

RANDOMIZE Q.7 THROUGH Q.12

Q.9 Do you happen to know if the national unemployment rate is currently closer to **[READ IN ORDER]**?

3	4%
53	8% (Correct)
24	12%
18	16%
<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)
100	

RANDOMIZE Q.7 THROUGH Q.12

Q.10 Do you happen to know who is chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve Board? Is it...
[READ AND RANDOMIZE]

		Feb. 28- <u>Mar. 2, 2008</u>
45	Ben Bernanke (<i>Correct</i>)	35
16	Alan Greenspan	27
7	Paul Volcker	8
12	Henry Paulson	5
<u>20</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)	<u>25</u>
100		100

RANDOMIZE Q.7 THROUGH Q.12

Q.11 As far as you know, which foreign country holds the most U.S. government debt? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

71	China	
10	Japan	
12	Saudi Arabia	
4	Canada	
<u>3</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)	
100		

RANDOMIZE Q.7 THROUGH Q.12

Q.12 As the U.S. government provides assistance to banks and other financial institutions, is the government trying to get them? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

83	To lend more money	
15	To lend less money	
<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)	
100		