

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER  
MARCH 15-18, 2012 OMNIBUS  
FINAL TOPLINE  
N=1,009**

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.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>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
a. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy					
March 15-18, 2012	40	35	11	14	1
March 8-11, 2012	37	32	14	17	*
March 1-4, 2012	41	27	15	17	1
February 23-26, 2012	37	33	14	15	1
February 16-20, 2012	33	32	16	17	1
February 9-12, 2012	42	30	14	13	1
February 2-5, 2012	38	32	16	13	1
January 26-29, 2012	35	31	16	19	*
January 19-22, 2012	35	30	16	19	1
January 12-15, 2012	33	32	14	20	1
January 5-8, 2012	39	31	15	15	*
December 15-18, 2011	36	32	14	16	1
December 8-11, 2011	41	29	13	16	1
December 1-4, 2011	40	33	13	13	1
November 17-20, 2011	35	33	16	15	1
November 10-13, 2011	39	31	15	14	*
November 3-6, 2011	37	31	15	17	1
October 27-30, 2011	38	33	14	15	1
October 20-23, 2011	38	32	14	16	1
October 13-16, 2011	39	32	14	14	*
October 6-9, 2011	43	28	14	14	1
September 29-October 2, 2011	46	26	14	14	*
September 22-25, 2011	44	33	11	11	*
September 8-11, 2011	40	30	15	14	1
September 1-4, 2011	44	30	11	15	*
August 25-28, 2011	44	28	14	13	1
August 18-21, 2011	44	29	12	14	1
August 4-7, 2011	46	30	11	13	1
July 28-31, 2011	43	30	13	13	*
July 21-24, 2011	41	32	13	13	1
July 14-17, 2011	41	30	14	14	1
July 7-10, 2011	36	30	15	18	1
June 30-July 3, 2011	38	32	13	16	1
June 23-26, 2011	37	29	15	19	*
June 16-19, 2011	39	33	14	13	*
June 9-12, 2011	39	30	15	16	1
June 2-5, 2011	35	34	17	14	*
May 19-22, 2011	33	34	17	16	*
May 12-15, 2011	32	32	17	18	2
May 5-8, 2011	40	35	15	9	1
April 21-25, 2011	41	33	12	14	*
April 14-17, 2011	44	30	14	12	1
April 7-10, 2011	46	30	14	10	*
March 31-April 3, 2011	42	31	16	11	0
March 24-27, 2011	36	32	17	15	*
March 17-20, 2011	38	32	17	13	*
March 10-13, 2011	40	30	16	13	*

## PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
March 3-6, 2011	37	31	17	13	1
February 24-27, 2011	49	29	11	10	*
February 17-20, 2011	35	33	14	17	*
February 10-13, 2011	36	34	13	16	*
February 3-6, 2011	35	37	14	14	*
January 20-23, 2011	37	33	14	15	1
January 13-16, 2011	37	29	15	18	1
January 6-9, 2011	39	37	11	12	1

[SEE TRENDS FOR PREVIOUS YEARS:](http://www.people-press.org/files/2011/11/NII-Economy-Trends.pdf) <http://www.people-press.org/files/2011/11/NII-Economy-Trends.pdf>

b. The current situation and events in  
Afghanistan

March 15-18, 2012	27	33	21	18	1
March 1-4, 2012	22	29	25	24	1

**TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:**

February 23-26, 2012: <i>Protests in Afghanistan after NATO personnel burned copies of the Koran</i>	17	22	24	36	1
February 2-5, 2012: <i>The Defense Department announcing its plan to end the U.S. combat mission in Afghanistan</i>	22	31	22	24	1
October 6-9, 2011: <i>The current situation and events in Afghanistan</i>	20	28	25	26	1
September 15-18, 2011: <i>Attacks on the U.S. embassy and NATO's headquarters in Afghanistan</i>	16	24	22	37	1
September 1-4, 2011: <i>The current situation and events in Afghanistan</i>	17	32	26	25	*
August 11-14, 2011: <i>The 30 U.S. troops killed in Afghanistan in a helicopter attack</i>	39	33	13	14	1
June 30-July 3, 2011: <i>The current situation and events in Afghanistan</i>	22	34	24	20	1
June 23-26, 2011: <i>Discussions in Washington about U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan</i>	27	32	20	20	1
June 2-5, 2011: <i>The current situation and events in Afghanistan</i>	20	35	23	21	1
March 3-6, 2011: <i>U.S. airmen killed at an airport in Frankfurt, Germany</i>	16	22	19	42	1
April 1-3, 2011: <i>Deadly protests in Afghanistan after a Florida pastor burned a Koran</i>	15	19	29	36	1
December 16-19, 2010: <i>The Obama administration's review of the Afghanistan war strategy</i>	17	26	25	31	1
December 9-12, 2010: <i>The current situation and events in Afghanistan</i>	24	31	22	22	1
November 18-21, 2010	27	33	21	18	1
October 21-24, 2010	21	34	23	21	1
October 7-10, 2010	21	36	20	22	1
September 30-October 3, 2010	23	37	23	15	1
September 23-26, 2010	29	40	19	11	1
September 9-12, 2010	30	33	20	17	*

## PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
September 9-12, 2010: <i>Controversy over a Florida pastor's plan, later cancelled, to burn copies of the Koran on September 11th</i> <sup>1</sup>	33	25	15	25	1
July 29-August 1, 2010	34	35	22	9	*
July 15-18, 2010	22	33	23	22	*
July 8-11, 2010	23	32	24	20	1
July 1-5, 2010	29	34	23	14	1
June 24-27, 2010: <i>General Stanley McChrystal resigning as head of U.S. forces in Afghanistan after being quoted criticizing President Obama and his Afghanistan strategy</i>	28	31	19	21	1
June 17-20, 2010	21	30	27	22	*
May 20-23, 2010	22	33	25	20	*
April 9-12, 2010	21	29	27	22	1
February 19-22, 2010: <i>The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan</i>	24	36	21	19	*
January 8-11, 2010: <i>Suicide bombing that killed seven Americans at a CIA base in Afghanistan</i>	24	31	27	17	1
December 11-14, 2009: <i>The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan</i>	35	33	18	13	*
December 4-7, 2009: <i>President Obama's decision to send more U.S. troops to Afghanistan</i>	43	33	14	8	1
November 20-23, 2009: <i>The debate over whether to send more troops to Afghanistan</i>	29	31	17	22	1
November 13-16, 2009	29	28	20	22	1
November 6-9, 2009: <i>The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan</i>	22	35	24	18	*
October 30-November 2, 2009	24	32	21	22	*
October 23-26, 2009	32	29	21	18	*
October 16-19, 2009	25	31	20	24	*
September 25-28, 2009: <i>The debate over whether to send more troops to Afghanistan</i>	27	40	17	16	*
September 18-21, 2009: <i>The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan</i>	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: <i>The Obama administration's decision to send 17,000 additional U.S. troops to Afghanistan</i>	27	29	24	19	1
January 30-February 2, 2009: <i>The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan</i>	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: <i>The military effort in Afghanistan against Taliban fighters</i>	19	34	29	18	*
September 12-15, 2008	21	34	25	19	1
August 29-31, 2008	18	27	32	23	*

<sup>1</sup> On the first night of the field period (September 9) the item was worded: "Plans by a Florida pastor to burn copies of the Koran on September 11th."

## PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
August 19-22, 2008: <i>A terrorist bombing at the U.S. embassy in Yemen</i>	15	27	31	26	1
July 18-21, 2008: <i>The military effort in Afghanistan against Taliban fighters</i>	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	*
March 2-5, 2007: <i>A bombing in Afghanistan near where Vice President Cheney was staying</i>	19	33	26	21	1
June, 2005: <i>Newsweek's retraction of a story about flushing the Koran down a toilet as part of prisoner interrogation</i>	20	29	21	29	1
Late July, 2002: <i>The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan</i>	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
October, 2000: <i>The terrorist attack on the navy warship U.S.S. Cole</i>	44	35	12	9	*
August, 1998: <i>The bombing at U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania</i>	27	37	18	18	*
July, 1996: <i>The bombing of a military base in Saudi Arabia</i>	32	36	20	12	*
<b>c. Political violence in Syria</b>					
March 15-18, 2012	16	26	27	30	1
March 8-11, 2012	17	23	23	37	1
February 23-26, 2012	18	24	21	35	1
February 9-12, 2012	17	23	23	36	*
January 12-15, 2012	12	17	26	45	1
<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</b>					
August 4-7, 2011: <i>Political violence following uprisings in Syria</i>	10	19	26	44	1
May 5-8, 2011	14	27	30	28	1
June 2-5, 2011: <i>Anti-government protests and violence in some Middle Eastern countries</i>	18	25	25	32	*
April 28-May 1, 2011	18	29	25	27	1
February 3-6, 2011: <i>Anti-government protests in Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries</i>	32	35	16	18	*
January 27-30, 2011	17	26	21	35	*
<b>d. The debate over insurance coverage for birth control</b>					
March 15-18, 2012	20	17	24	38	1
<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</b>					
February 23-26, 2012: <i>Recent debates over social issues such as gay marriage and contraception</i>	21	24	22	32	1

## PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
February 9-12, 2012: <i>Debate over a new rule requiring religious employers, such as Catholic hospitals and universities, to cover birth control in their health insurance plans</i>	27	22	20	30	1
e. The rising price of gas and oil					
March 15-18, 2012	52	24	12	12	1
April 28-May 1, 2011	51	26	13	10	1
April 14-17, 2011	53	25	11	11	*
March 17-20, 2011	46	28	14	12	*
<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</b>					
February 24-27, 2011: <i>Rising price of oil</i>	50	29	13	8	*
October 17-20, 2008: <i>Falling price of gas and oil</i>	53	33	11	3	*
July 3-7, 2008: <i>Rising price of gasoline</i>	62	25	8	4	1
June 27-30, 2008: <i>Rising price of oil</i>	57	26	11	5	1
June 6-9, 2008: <i>Rising price of gasoline</i>	66	19	7	7	1
May 22-25, 2008	65	22	9	4	*
May 16-19, 2008	64	21	10	4	1
May 2-5, 2008	63	23	9	4	1
April 25-28, 2008	62	23	10	5	*
March 7-10, 2008: <i>Rising price of oil</i>	43	33	12	11	1
November 9-12, 2007	44	28	14	13	1
May 24-27, 2007: <i>Rising price of gasoline</i>	52	29	10	8	1
May 18-21, 2007 <sup>2</sup>	48	27	16	8	1
August, 2006: <i>High price of gasoline these days</i>	60	26	7	5	2
June, 2006	58	26	10	5	1
May, 2006	69	21	6	3	1
April, 2006	65	22	8	4	1
December, 2005	61	27	7	4	1
Early November, 2005	61	27	9	2	1
Late October, 2005	67	23	7	3	*
Early October, 2005	65	25	6	3	1
Early September, 2005	71	19	7	3	*
Mid-May, 2005	58	27	9	5	1
Mid-March, 2005	50	32	13	5	*
Mid-October, 2004	64	22	8	5	1
August, 2004	52	29	10	8	1
July, 2004	56	25	11	7	1
June, 2004	58	26	9	6	1
April, 2004	46	30	15	8	1
Early April, 2004	58	23	10	8	1
Mid-March, 2004	47	27	14	10	2
September, 2003	45	27	15	11	1
March, 2003	52	27	11	9	1
February, 2003	53	25	12	9	1
June, 2001	56	31	7	5	1
May, 2001	61	26	6	6	1
Early October, 2000	56	25	12	6	1
June, 2000: <i>Recent increases in the price of gasoline</i>	61	25	9	5	*
March, 2000	58	28	10	4	*
October, 1990	62	26	8	4	*
September, 1990	56	28	11	5	*
August, 1990	57	27	10	5	1

<sup>2</sup> For May 18-21, 2007 the item was not asked as part of a list.

**PEW.1 CONTINUED...**

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
f. News about candidates for the 2012 presidential elections					
March 15-18, 2012	28	31	17	24	*
March 8-11, 2012	28	27	21	23	*
March 1-4, 2012	31	24	20	24	1
February 23-26, 2012	28	29	18	24	1
February 16-20, 2012	25	29	19	25	2
February 9-12, 2012	35	25	18	20	1
February 2-5, 2012	30	27	20	21	1
January 26-29, 2012	28	30	21	21	1
January 19-22, 2012	28	30	17	24	*
January 12-15, 2012	29	29	18	23	1
January 5-8, 2012	29	30	16	25	*
December 15-18, 2011	26	24	20	29	1
December 8-11, 2011	27	27	18	28	*
December 1-4, 2011	25	28	20	26	1
November 17-20, 2011	24	31	21	23	1
November 3-6, 2011	22	31	20	26	1
October 27-30, 2011	21	26	21	30	1
October 20-23, 2011	21	28	22	28	1
October 13-16, 2011	26	29	22	23	1
October 6-9, 2011	25	25	23	27	1
September 29-October 2, 2011	27	26	21	25	*
September 22-25, 2011	25	26	23	25	1
September 15-18, 2011	24	28	21	27	1
September 8-11, 2011	22	26	21	31	*
September 1-4, 2011	22	23	22	32	1
August 25-28, 2011	22	22	22	33	1
August 18-21, 2011	27	26	19	28	1
August 11-14, 2011	19	24	20	36	1
August 4-7, 2011	18	21	22	37	1
July 28-31, 2011	17	27	21	35	1
July 21-24, 2011	17	22	28	32	*
July 14-17, 2011	18	26	27	28	1
July 7-10, 2011	16	23	27	33	1
June 30-July 3, 2011	21	28	24	25	2
June 23-26, 2011	19	26	24	31	*
June 16-19, 2011	23	29	23	25	*
June 9-12, 2011	18	30	22	30	1
June 2-5, 2011	21	31	22	26	*
May 26-29, 2011	20	27	24	28	*
May 19-22, 2011	15	27	24	32	1
May 12-15, 2011	15	22	26	35	1
May 5-8, 2011	16	24	27	32	1
April 21-25, 2011	18	26	23	32	1
April 14-17, 2011	20	23	29	27	1
March 24-27, 2011	13	19	26	41	1
March 10-13, 2011	15	21	26	38	0
February 10-13, 2011	16	19	24	40	*
February 3-6, 2011	15	20	23	42	*

[SEE TRENDS FOR PREVIOUS YEARS:](http://www.people-press.org/files/2011/11/NII-Election-Trends.pdf) <http://www.people-press.org/files/2011/11/NII-Election-Trends.pdf>

PEW.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.]**

Mar 15-18

2012

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 26 | The rising price of gas and oil                           |
| 15 | News about candidates for the 2012 presidential elections |
| 14 | Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy           |
| 12 | The current situation and events in Afghanistan           |
| 7  | The debate over insurance coverage for birth control      |
| 4  | Political violence in Syria                               |
| 9  | Some other story <b>(VOL.)</b>                            |
| 13 | Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>                          |

**PEWWP.1 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**