

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER NEWS INTEREST INDEX
FEBRUARY 16-20, 2012 OMNIBUS
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1,006**

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>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
a. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy					
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	*
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	*

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
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
<u>SEE TRENDS FOR PREVIOUS YEARS:</u> http://www.people-press.org/files/2011/11/NII-Economy-Trends.pdf					
b. Efforts to deal with the debt crisis in Europe					
February 16-20, 2012	11	21	23	45	*
January 12-15, 2012	12	23	23	42	1
December 8-11, 2011	14	22	27	37	1
December 1-4, 2011	14	24	25	36	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
November 10-13, 2011: <i>Efforts to deal with the debt crisis in Greece and Italy</i>	15	23	23	38	1
November 3-6, 2011: <i>Efforts to deal with the debt crisis in Greece and other European countries</i>	18	26	21	34	1
October 27-30, 2011	12	27	24	36	*
September 29-October 2, 2011: <i>The debt crisis in Greece and other European countries</i>	15	21	24	39	1
September 15-18, 2011	16	23	24	37	1
August 18-21, 2011: <i>The debate among European leaders on how to address the region's debt crisis</i>	12	21	22	44	1
August 11-14, 2011: <i>Riots in London and other parts of Britain</i>	17	28	21	32	1
June 30-July 3, 2011: <i>The financial crisis and violent protests in Greece</i>	14	22	23	39	1
June 16-19, 2011	10	20	25	45	1
May 13-16, 2010: <i>A trillion-dollar bailout package for European governments facing debt problems</i>	21	26	24	28	2
May 7-10, 2010: <i>The financial crisis in Greece and violent protests there</i>	19	23	26	31	*
April 30-May 3, 2010: <i>The financial crisis in Greece</i>	6	15	28	51	1
October, 1998: <i>Financial instability around the world</i>	32	40	19	9	*
September, 1998: <i>Economic and political instability in Russia</i>	18	30	28	24	*
Late August, 1998: <i>Economic problems in Russia</i>	8	22	29	41	*
January, 1998: <i>The deepening financial crisis in many Asian countries</i>	15	25	27	33	*
March, 1995: <i>The financial and political instability in Mexico</i>	12	28	30	29	1
c. The death of singer Whitney Houston					
February 16-20, 2012	18	24	31	26	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
March 24-27, 2011: <i>The death of actress Elizabeth Taylor</i>	11	25	32	31	1
July 2-5, 2009: <i>The death of singer Michael Jackson</i>	25	29	28	18	1
June 26-29, 2009	30	28	23	19	*
October 3-6, 2008: <i>Death of Paul Newman</i>	19	29	28	23	1
January 25-28, 2008: <i>Death of actor Heath Ledger</i>	13	29	27	30	1

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
December, 2001: <i>Death of former Beatle George Harrison</i>	10	23	30	35	2
June, 1998: <i>The death of Frank Sinatra</i>	17	31	31	20	1
September, 1997: <i>The death of Princess Diana</i>	54	31	11	4	*
August, 1995: <i>The death of Jerry Garcia</i>	9	19	23	45	4
May, 1994: <i>The suicide of rock star Kurt Cobain</i>	7	14	25	52	2
d. Congress passing a bill to extend payroll tax cuts and unemployment benefits ¹					
February 16-20, 2012	24	27	21	27	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
August 4-7, 2011: <i>Congress and the president agreeing to cut federal spending and raise the debt limit</i>	46	25	13	14	1
December 16-19, 2010 ² : <i>The extension of tax cuts and unemployment benefits approved by Congress and signed by President Obama</i>	37	27	15	19	1
December 9-12, 2010: <i>The agreement reached between Barack Obama and Congressional Republicans to extend tax cuts and unemployment benefits</i>	37	29	15	17	1
December 2-5, 2010: <i>The debate in Washington over the federal income tax cuts passed when George W. Bush was president</i>	39	26	17	17	1
September 16-19, 2010: <i>The debate in Washington over competing Democratic and Republican tax plans</i>	21	24	21	34	*
September 9-12, 2010	16	19	22	42	1
May 8-11, 2009: <i>The debate in Washington over the federal budget</i>	22	28	19	31	*
March 27-30, 2009: <i>Debate over Barack Obama's budget proposal</i>	28	34	18	19	1
February 27-March 2, 2009: <i>Barack Obama's budget proposal for next year that raises taxes on wealthy Americans and increases spending on health care, education and other programs</i>	47	34	9	10	*
February, 2002: <i>Debate in Congress over G.W. Bush's budget and tax cut plan</i>	17	31	28	23	1
April, 2001	24	38	20	18	*
February, 2001: <i>G.W. Bush's tax cut plan</i>	31	35	19	14	1
e. International tensions over Iran's nuclear program					
February 16-20, 2012	21	25	21	32	1

¹ The wording of item PEW.1d was changed after the first night of interviewing (February 16, 2012) to reflect Congress passing this legislation. On February 16, 2012, the item wording was "Negotiations in Congress to extend payroll tax cuts and unemployment benefits."

² The wording of item PEW.1c was changed after the first night of interviewing (December 16, 2010), to reflect Congress passing and Obama signing this legislation. On December 16, 2010 the item read "The debate in Washington over extending tax cuts and unemployment benefits."

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
February 9-12, 2012: <i>Tension between Iran and Israel over Iran's nuclear program</i>	26	25	21	29	*
January 12-15, 2012: <i>Mounting tensions between the U.S. and Iran</i>	24	30	18	27	*
January 5-8, 2012: <i>Tensions between the U.S. and Iran over shipping in the Persian Gulf</i>	23	26	19	32	*
December 1-4, 2011: <i>Tensions between Britain and Iran following an attack on the British embassy by Iranian protestors</i>	12	19	24	44	1
June 10-13, 2010: <i>New U.N. sanctions against Iran because of its nuclear program</i>	19	28	25	27	1
March 26-29, 2010: <i>Reports about tensions between Israel and the United States</i>	20	27	21	31	1
October 2-5, 2009: <i>Talks between the United States and Iran over Iran's nuclear program</i>	30	32	18	20	*
May 21-24, 2009: <i>Iran testing a missile that could reach Israel</i>	20	29	25	26	*
July 11-14, 2008: <i>The Iranian government firing test missiles capable of striking Israel</i>	25	29	22	23	1
January 11-14, 2008: <i>News about an encounter between U.S. and Iranian ships</i>	25	26	21	27	1
December 7-10, 2007: <i>A new intelligence report stating that Iran stopped its nuclear weapons program in 2003</i>	25	31	20	23	1
October 26-29, 2007: <i>Mounting tensions between the United States and Iran</i>	26	34	21	18	1
September 28 – October 1, 2007: <i>Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's recent trip to New York City where he spoke at Columbia University and the United Nations</i>	23	31	20	25	1
June 1-4, 2007: <i>Recent talks between the United States and Iran</i>	19	27	27	26	1
February 23-26, 2007: <i>Mounting tensions between the United States and Iran</i>	29	37	18	15	1
September, 2006: <i>Iran's nuclear research program</i>	23	34	19	23	1
August, 2006	24	34	20	20	3
June, 2006	21	32	22	22	3
April, 2006	26	30	23	20	1
March, 2006	24	31	22	22	1
f. News about candidates for the 2012 presidential elections					
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

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
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>

ASK ALL:

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.]**

Feb 16-20

2012

19	The death of singer Whitney Houston
18	News about candidates for the 2012 presidential elections
15	Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy
8	International tensions over Iran's nuclear program
6	Congress passing a bill to extend payroll tax cuts and unemployment benefits
4	Efforts to deal with the debt crisis in Europe
11	Some other story (VOL.)
19	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK ALL:

PEW.3 Regardless of whom you might prefer, which Republican candidate have you heard the most about in the news recently? **[READ NAMES; RANDOMIZE]**

Feb 16-20 <u>2012</u>		Feb 9-12 <u>2012</u>	Jan 26-29 <u>2012</u>
41	Mitt Romney	50	36
27	Rick Santorum	19	2
8	Newt Gingrich	13	42
6	Ron Paul	6	4
2	Other (VOL.)	2	1
17	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	11	15

PEW.3 FULL TREND:

*Thinking about Republican candidates for president in 2012... Regardless of whom you might prefer, which Republican candidate have you heard the most about in the news recently? **[OPEN END. RECORD FIRST MENTION ONLY.] [PLEASE BE CERTAIN TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "JOHN MCCAIN" AND "HERMAN CAIN".]***

	Jan 12-15 <u>2012</u>	Jan 5-8 <u>2012</u>	Dec 1-4 <u>2011</u>	Oct 13-16 <u>2011</u>	Sep 8-11 <u>2011</u>	Aug 18-21 <u>2011</u>	Jul 21-24 <u>2011</u>	Jun 16-19 <u>2011</u>	Jun 2-5 <u>2011</u>	May 12-15 <u>2011</u>	Apr 14-17 <u>2011</u>
Newt Gingrich	6	11	13	*	1	1	1	5	2	12	1
Mitt Romney	51	39	5	18	12	7	13	27	22	7	9
Ron Paul	4	6	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	2	*
Rick Santorum	1	9	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rick Perry	2	3	3	12	31	22	3	*	*	*	*
Herman Cain	1	*	43	23	*	1	*	*	*	*	*
Michele Bachmann	*	3	*	1	7	23	23	5	1	1	*
Jon Huntsman	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Gary Johnson	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Other											
None/DK/Ref.	32	26	32	39	37	35	44	45	41	50	53

PEW.4-PEW.8 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE