

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER
MARCH 22-25, 2012 NEWS INTEREST INDEX
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1,003**

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					
March 22-25, 2012	36	29	16	18	1
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	*

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 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	*
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. Reports about a soldier accused of killing at least 16 civilians in Afghanistan¹

March 22-25, 2012	28	31	21	19	1
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TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:

March 15-18, 2012: <i>The current situation and events in Afghanistan</i>	27	33	21	18	1
March 1-4, 2012	22	29	25	24	1
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	*

¹ The phrase "at least" was added before "16 civilians" on Friday, March 23, 2012, when it became clear the soldier may have killed more Afghans. This change was made in PEW.1b and PEW2.

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>
September 9-12, 2010: <i>Controversy over a Florida pastor's plan, later cancelled, to burn copies of the Koran on September 11th²</i>	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	*

² 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>	(VOL.) <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	*
c. French police killing a man accused of murdering children and adults at a Jewish school in France					
March 22-25, 2012	16	18	25	39	2
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
July 28-31, 2011: <i>A bombing and shooting attack in Norway that killed more than 70 people</i>	24	33	20	23	*
July 23-24, 2011: <i>A bombing and shooting attack in Norway that killed over 90 people</i>	26	31	17	26	1
September, 2004: <i>The killing of Russian school children by Chechen rebels</i>	48	30	11	10	1
d. Controversy over the shooting death of Trayvon Martin, an African American teen in Florida					
March 22-25, 2012	35	24	15	26	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
July 31-August 3, 2009: <i>Reports about the arrest of Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates and President Obama's response to the incident</i>	25	26	22	25	2
July 24-27, 2009: <i>The arrest of Henry Louis Gates, a black Harvard professor, at his home after a dispute with a police officer</i>	30	31	17	21	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>
April 25-28, 2008: <i>The acquittal of three New York City police officers in the shooting of an unarmed man on his wedding day</i>	13	24	24	38	1
September 21-24, 2007: <i>Demonstrations in Jena, Louisiana, about six black teenagers involved in a schoolyard fight</i>	18	27	25	30	*
April 2001: <i>Rioting in Cincinnati after an unarmed black man was shot by police</i>	24	32	23	20	1
July 2000: <i>The video showing Philadelphia police kicking and beating a carjacking suspect</i>	22	32	22	23	1
March 2000: <i>The acquittal of four New York policemen who shot and killed Amadou Diallo, an African immigrant</i>	28	35	20	17	0
February 1999: <i>The Texas murder trial of a man accused of dragging a black man behind a pickup truck</i>	24	41	20	14	1
May 1993: <i>The Rodney King trial and verdict in Los Angeles</i>	47	34	13	6	*
May 1992: <i>The verdict in the Rodney King case and the riots and disturbances that followed</i>	70	22	5	2	1
March 1991: <i>The videotaped beating by Los Angeles police of a suspect they apprehended in an auto chase</i>	46	30	13	10	1
e. The National Football League suspending coaches who were involved in paying bounties to New Orleans Saints players for injuring opponents					
March 22-25, 2012	17	15	24	43	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
August 18-21, 2011: <i>Recent scandals in college football</i>	10	12	17	61	*
July 28-31, 2011: <i>The NFL owners and players reaching a labor agreement</i>	12	16	23	48	1
July 21-22, 2011: <i>A tentative deal in the NFL labor dispute that threatened to delay the football season</i>	11	13	20	55	1
July 27-30, 2007: <i>News about a former NBA referee who is under investigation for betting on games including some he officiated</i>	9	22	24	45	*
September 1989: <i>The banishment of Pete Rose from baseball for life</i>	31	35	20	15	*
July 1989: <i>The charges that Pete Rose has bet on baseball games</i>	22	32	26	20	0
f. News about candidates for the 2012 presidential elections					
March 22-25, 2012	28	28	18	25	1
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

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
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>

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.]**

Mar 22-25

2012

25	Controversy over the shooting death of Trayvon Martin, an African American teen in Florida
16	News about candidates for the 2012 presidential elections
15	Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy
12	Reports about a soldier accused of killing at least 16 civilians in Afghanistan
	The National Football League suspending coaches who were involved in paying bounties to
8	New Orleans Saints players for injuring opponents
	French police killing a man accused of murdering children and adults at a Jewish school
3	in France
8	Some other story (VOL.)
14	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK ALL:

PEW.3 How would you describe the presidential election campaign so far – is it **[READ ITEM a. FIRST, THEN RANDOMIZE ITEMS b. THRU d.]**

a.	<u>Interesting</u>	<u>Dull</u>	<u>(VOL.) Neither</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>
March 22-25, 2012	38	52	4	7
January 12-15, 2012	36	55	3	5
October 20-23, 2011	35	51	4	10
October 10-13, 2008	71	25	3	1
September 12-15, 2008	68	26	5	1
April 18-21, 2008	59	35	5	1
February 15-18, 2008	70	25	4	1
October 12-15, 2007	37	55	5	3
April, 2007	34	52	6	8
Mid-October, 2004 (RV)	66	28	5	1
Early September, 2004 (RV)	50	42	6	2
June, 2004	33	57	4	6
June, 2000	28	65	4	3
July, 1996	21	73	3	3

b.	<u>Too negative</u>	<u>Not too negative</u>	<u>(VOL.) Neither</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>
March 22-25, 2012	52	34	3	11
January 12-15, 2012	50	41	1	7
October 20-23, 2011	44	41	4	11
October 10-13, 2008	55	41	3	1
September 12-15, 2008	43	51	4	2
April 18-21, 2008	50	44	4	2
February 15-18, 2008	28	66	3	3
Mid-October, 2004 (RV)	57	38	3	2
Early September, 2004 (RV)	62	32	1	5
June, 2004	45	46	2	7
Mid-March, 2004	47	47	2	4

c.	<u>Informative</u>	<u>Not informative</u>	<u>(VOL.) Neither</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>
March 22-25, 2012	40	50	1	8
January 12-15, 2012	48	45	2	6
October 20-23, 2011	40	49	2	9
October 10-13, 2008	63	34	2	1
September 12-15, 2008	54	41	3	2
February 15-18, 2008	65	31	2	2
Mid-October, 2004 (RV)	73	22	3	2
Early September, 2004 (RV)	63	33	1	3
June, 2004	48	46	2	4
Mid-March, 2004	53	42	2	3

d.	<u>Too long</u>	<u>Not too long</u>	<u>(VOL.) Neither</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>
March 22-25, 2012	58	31	3	8
January 12-15, 2012	57	35	2	6
October 20-23, 2011	50	39	2	9
October 10-13, 2008	57	39	3	1
April 18-21, 2008	65	29	5	1
February 15-18, 2008	57	40	*	3
October 12-15, 2007	66	28	3	3
April, 2007	59	32	3	6
Mid-October, 2004 (RV)	51	43	3	2
Early September, 2004 (RV)	53	42	2	3
June, 2004	52	42	2	4
Mid-March, 2004	52	44	1	3

ASK ALL:

PEW.4 This week an aide to Mitt Romney said that if Romney wins the GOP nomination the campaign will "hit a reset button" to take on President Barack Obama in the fall. He said "it's almost like an Etch A Sketch – you can kind of shake it up, start all over again." Had you heard about this remark, or not?

Mar 22-25

2012

44	Yes, heard about
55	No, did not
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK IF HEARD ABOUT (1 IN PEW.4):

PEW.5 What was your reaction to this comment... did it **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**?

BASED ON TOTAL:	BASED ON HEARD ABOUT REMARK:	
Mar 22-5	Mar 22-25	
<u>2012</u>	<u>2012</u>	
3	6	Make you more likely to support Romney
11	25	Make you less likely to support Romney
29	65	Have no effect on your opinion of Romney
2	4	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
55	--	<i>Did not hear about remark/DK/Ref</i>
N 1,003	501	