

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
FEBRUARY 15-18 2008 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1,005

Q.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 ITEMS] [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>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
a. Roger Clemens testifying before Congress about steroid use	13	20	24	42	1=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:¹					
Dec. 14-17, 2007: <i>Mitchell Report</i>	16	24	29	31	*=100
March, 2005: <i>Reports of Steroid Use</i>	18	34	24	23	1=100
December, 2004: <i>Reports of Steroid Use</i>	22	28	23	27	0=100
b. Reports about Congress refusing to make permanent a national security surveillance law	17	23	22	38	*=100
c. The end of the Hollywood writers' strike	7	23	25	45	*=100
November 9-12, 2007²	9	27	28	36	*=100
d. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy	37	36	11	16	*=100
February 1-4, 2008	40	37	14	8	1=100
January 18-21, 2008	42	31	16	11	*=100
January 11-14, 2008	36	32	15	16	1=100
November 2-5, 2007	27	37	16	19	1=100
October 19-22, 2007	25	34	20	21	*=100
August 10-13, 2007	28	36	18	18	*=100
Mid-November, 2006	31	40	17	11	1=100
December, 2005	35	35	18	11	1=100
Early November, 2005	35	39	17	9	*=100
Mid-May, 2005	30	39	19	11	1=100
January, 2005	35	41	17	7	*=100
Mid-October, 2004	30	43	16	10	1=100
Early September, 2004	39	34	15	11	1=100
Mid-January, 2004	37	41	15	7	*=100
December, 2003	35	38	14	11	2=100
November, 2003	40	34	15	10	1=100
October, 2003	32	39	16	12	1=100
September, 2003	39	30	18	12	1=100
March, 2003	40	35	16	8	1=100
February, 2003	42	33	15	10	*=100
January, 2003	40	35	13	11	1=100
December, 2002	38	34	17	10	1=100
February, 2002	35	40	15	9	1=100
January, 2002	30	44	16	9	1=100

¹ For December 14-17, 2007 the story was listed as “A report on steroid and performance-enhancing drug use in Major League Baseball.” In March, 2005 and December, 2005, the story was listed as “Recent reports of steroid use by some Major League Baseball players.”

² For November 9-12, the story was listed as, “A strike by Hollywood writers who work on scripts for TV series and movies.”

Q.1 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>Closely</u>	Fairly <u>Closely</u>	Not too <u>Closely</u>	Not at all <u>Closely</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
December, 2001	37	40	13	8	2=100
Mid-November, 2001	41	36	15	7	1=100
June, 2001	24	41	18	16	1=100
May, 2001	34	36	15	15	0=100
April, 2001	36	34	16	13	1=100
February, 2001	30	39	18	12	1=100
January, 2001	32	38	17	11	2=100
June, 1995	26	41	22	11	*=100
March, 1995	27	45	19	9	*=100
February, 1995	23	41	22	13	1=100
December, 1994	28	43	20	9	*=100
October, 1994	27	40	20	12	1=100
June, 1994	25	42	23	10	*=100
May, 1994	33	40	16	10	1=100
January, 1994	34	39	16	10	1=100
Early January, 1994	36	44	13	7	*=100
December, 1993	35	41	15	8	1=100
October, 1993	33	38	20	9	*=100
September, 1993	37	40	14	8	1=100
Early September, 1993	39	39	14	9	*=100
August, 1993	41	36	14	9	*=100
May, 1993	37	38	18	6	1=100
February, 1993	49	36	10	5	*=100
January, 1993	42	39	12	7	*=100
September, 1992	43	37	13	6	1=100
May, 1992	39	39	15	6	1=100
March, 1992	47	38	11	4	*=100
February, 1992	47	37	10	6	*=100
January, 1992	44	40	11	5	*=100
October, 1991	36	38	16	9	1=100
e. The shootings at Northern Illinois University that resulted in the death of 7 people	26	40	19	15	0=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
October 12-15, 2007: Cleveland High School	22	32	25	20	1=100
April 20-23, 2007: Virginia Tech	45	37	13	5	*=100
October, 2006: <i>Schools in PA & other states</i>	46	33	12	8	1=100
March, 2001: <i>San Diego high school</i>	39	37	16	7	1=100
March, 2000: <i>MI elementary school</i>	40	38	15	7	*=100
April, 1999: <i>Columbine High School</i>	68	24	6	2	*=100
June, 1998: <i>Springfield, OR high school</i>	46	36	14	4	*=100
March, 1998: <i>Jonesboro, AR middle school</i>	49	33	12	5	1=100
f. News about candidates for the 2008 presidential election	44	36	10	10	*=100
February 8-11, 2008	39	37	15	9	0=100
February 1-4, 2008	37	35	16	12	*=100
January 25-28, 2008	36	37	14	12	1=100
January 18-21, 2008	36	34	18	12	*=100
January 11-14, 2008³	32	31	19	17	1=100

³ From January 11-14, 2008 the story was listed as "News about the New Hampshire primaries and the presidential campaign."

Q.1 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>Closely</u>	Fairly <u>Closely</u>	Not too <u>Closely</u>	Not at all <u>Closely</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
January 4-7, 2008	33	36	19	11	1=100
December 14-17, 2007	25	34	22	19	*=100
December 7-10, 2007	24	35	22	19	*=100
November 30 – December 3, 2007	23	35	23	19	*=100
November 23-26, 2007	20	33	26	20	1=100
November 16-19, 2007	26	33	21	19	1=100
November 9-12, 2007	21	33	25	21	*=100
November 2-5, 2007	27	30	21	21	1=100
October 26-29, 2007	21	34	26	19	*=100
October 19-22, 2007	23	32	22	23	*=100
October 12-15, 2007	13	31	26	30	*=100
October 5-8, 2007	22	30	24	24	*=100
September 28 – October 1, 2007	21	34	25	20	*=100
September 21-24, 2007	24	31	22	23	*=100
September 14-17, 2007	22	31	24	23	*=100
September 7-10, 2007	18	34	26	22	*=100
August 30-September 2, 2007	19	35	21	25	*=100
August 24-27, 2007	22	28	24	26	*=100
August 17-20, 2007	19	27	24	30	*=100
August 10-13, 2007	23	32	21	24	*=100
August 3-6, 2007	19	31	25	25	*=100
July 27-30, 2007	19	32	22	26	1=100
July 20-23, 2007	16	26	30	27	1=100
July 13-16, 2007	17	29	27	27	*=100
July 6-9, 2007	24	29	24	22	1=100
June 29-July 2, 2007	20	32	25	23	*=100
June 22-25, 2007	18	31	21	30	*=100
June 15-18, 2007	17	32	26	25	*=100
June 8-11, 2007	19	30	24	26	1=100
June 1-4, 2007	16	27	32	24	1=100
May 24-27, 2007	22	33	23	22	*=100
May 18-21, 2007	18	31	24	27	*=100
May 11-14, 2007	18	30	23	28	1=100
May 4-7, 2007	23	34	21	21	1=100
April 27-30, 2007	14	30	29	26	1=100
April 20-23, 2007	18	28	27	27	*=100
April 12-16, 2007	18	28	27	27	*=100
April 5-9, 2007	25	30	26	19	*=100
March 30-April 2, 2007	20	29	27	23	1=100
March 23-26, 2007	20	32	22	26	*=100
March 16-19, 2007	15	28	29	27	1=100
March 9-12, 2007	24	30	23	23	*=100
March 2-5, 2007	19	31	26	23	1=100
February 23-26, 2007	22	33	24	21	*=100
February 16-19, 2007	18	32	22	27	1=100
February 9-12, 2007	24	30	24	21	1=100
February 2-5, 2007	24	36	22	18	*=100
January 26-29, 2007	24	33	23	20	*=100
January 19-22, 2007 ⁴	24	27	22	26	1=100
<i>2004 Presidential Election</i>					
November, 2004 (RVs)	52	36	8	4	*=100

⁴ January 19-22, 2007 asked about “Recent announcements by prominent Democrats about plans to run for president in 2008.”

Q.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not too Closely</u>	<u>Not at all Closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
Mid-October, 2004	46	30	12	11	1=100
August, 2004	32	38	16	14	*=100
July, 2004	29	37	18	15	1=100
April, 2004	31	33	19	16	1=100
Mid-March, 2004	35	34	18	13	*=100
Late February, 2004	24	40	23	12	1=100
Early February, 2004 ⁵	29	37	20	13	1=100
Mid-January, 2004	16	30	27	26	1=100
Early January, 2004	14	32	30	23	1=100
December, 2003	16	26	27	30	1=100
November, 2003	11	26	34	28	1=100
October, 2003	12	27	28	32	1=100
September, 2003	17	25	30	27	1=100
Mid-August, 2003	12	27	27	33	1=100
May, 2003	8	19	31	41	1=100
January, 2003	14	28	29	28	1=100
2000 Presidential Election					
Early November, 2000 (RVs)	39	44	12	5	*=100
Mid-October, 2000 (RVs)	40	37	15	8	*=100
Early October, 2000 (RVs)	42	36	15	6	1=100
September, 2000	22	42	21	15	*=100
July, 2000	21	38	20	20	1=100
June, 2000	23	32	23	21	1=100
May, 2000	18	33	26	23	*=100
April, 2000	18	39	22	20	1=100
March, 2000	26	41	19	13	1=100
February, 2000	26	36	21	17	*=100
January, 2000	19	34	28	18	1=100
December, 1999	16	36	24	23	1=100
October, 1999	17	32	28	22	1=100
September, 1999	15	31	33	20	1=100
July, 1999	15	38	24	22	1=100
June, 1999	11	25	29	34	1=100
1996 Presidential Election					
November, 1996 (RVs)	34	45	15	6	*=100
October, 1996	31	39	18	12	*=100
Early September, 1996	24	36	23	17	*=100
July, 1996	22	40	23	14	1=100
March, 1996	26	41	20	13	*=100
January, 1996	10	34	31	24	1=100
September, 1995	12	36	30	22	*=100
August, 1995	13	34	28	25	*=100
June, 1995	11	31	31	26	1=100
1992 Presidential Election					
October, 1992 (RVs)	55	36	7	2	0=100
September, 1992 (RVs)	47	36	11	6	*=100

⁵ From May 2003 to Early February 2004 and in March 1992, the story was listed as “The race for the Democratic nomination.” In January 2003, the story was listed as “Recent announcements by prominent Democrats about plans to run for president in 2004.” In September 2000, Early September and July 1996, and May 1992, the question asked about “the presidential election campaign.” In January, March and April 1996, the story was listed as “News about the Republican presidential candidates.” In August 1992, the story was listed as “News about the presidential election.” In July 1992, the story was listed as “News about the presidential campaign.” In January 1992, the story was listed as “News about the Democratic candidates for the presidential nomination.” In 1988, the story was introduced as being from “this past year” and was listed as “News about the presidential campaign in 1988.”

Q.1 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>Closely</u>	Fairly <u>Closely</u>	Not too <u>Closely</u>	Not at all <u>Closely</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
August, 1992 (RVs)	36	51	11	2	0=100
July, 1992	20	45	26	9	*=100
May, 1992	32	44	16	8	*=100
March, 1992	35	40	16	9	*=100
January, 1992	11	25	36	27	1=100
December, 1991	10	28	32	30	*=100
October, 1991	12	26	31	29	2=100
1988 Presidential Election					
October, 1988 (RVs)	43	44	11	2	*=100
August, 1988 (RVs)	39	45	13	3	*=100
May, 1988	22	46	23	6	3=100
November, 1987	15	28	35	21	1=100
September, 1987	14	34	37	14	1=100

Q.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.]**

- 46 News about candidates for the 2008 presidential election
 - 15 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy
 - 15 The shootings at Northern Illinois University that resulted in the death of 7 people
 - 4 Roger Clemens testifying before Congress about steroid use
 - 2 Reports about Congress refusing to make permanent a national security surveillance law
 - 2 The end of the Hollywood writers' strike
 - 5 Some other story (SPECIFY)
 - 11 Don't know/Refused
- 100

Thinking about the presidential campaign...

Q.3 How would you describe the presidential election campaign so far – is it interesting to you, or would you say it is dull?

		Oct. 12-15, <u>2007</u>	April <u>2007</u>	—RVs— Mid-Oct <u>2004</u>	—RVs— Early Sept <u>2004</u>	June <u>2004</u>	June <u>2000</u>	July <u>1996</u>
70	Interesting	37	34	66	50	33	28	21
25	Dull	55	52	28	42	57	65	73
4	Neither (VOL.)	5	6	5	6	4	4	3
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>3</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Q.4 And thus far, is the presidential election **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

		Oct 12-15, <u>2007</u>	April <u>2007</u>	—RVs— Mid-Oct <u>2004</u>	—RVs— Early Sept <u>2004</u>	June <u>2004</u>	Mid-March <u>2004</u>	
a.	90	Important OR	--	--	96	90	79	81
	10	Unimportant	--	--	3	9	18	17
	*	Neither applies (VOL.)	--	--	1	*	1	1
	<u>*</u>	Don't know/Refused	--	--	<u>*</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
	100		--	--	100	100	100	100

Q.4 CONTINUED...

			Oct 12-15, <u>2007</u>	April <u>2007</u>	<u>—RVs—</u> Mid-Oct <u>2004</u>	<u>—RVs—</u> Early Sept <u>2004</u>	June <u>2004</u>	Mid-March <u>2004</u>
b.	65	Informative OR	--	--	73	63	48	53
	31	Not informative	--	--	22	33	46	42
	2	Neither applies (VOL.)	--	--	3	1	2	2
	<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused	--	--	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>
	100		--	--	100	100	100	100
c.	57	Too long OR	66	59	51	53	52	52
	40	Not too long	28	32	43	42	42	44
	*	Neither applies (VOL.)	3	3	3	2	2	1
	<u>3</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>
	100		100	100	100	100	100	100
d.	28	Too negative OR	--	--	57	62	45	47
	66	Not too negative	--	--	38	32	46	47
	3	Neither applies (VOL.)	--	--	3	1	2	2
	<u>3</u>	Don't know/Refused	--	--	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>
	100		--	--	100	100	100	100
e.	17	Hard to follow OR	--	--	12	21	32	28
	80	Easy to follow	--	--	84	75	63	68
	1	Neither applies (VOL.)	--	--	3	2	2	2
	<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused	--	--	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>
	100		--	--	100	100	100	100

Please tell me . . .

SP1 In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, or an Independent?

26	Republican
36	Democrat
32	Independent
2	Other party
<u>4</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

IF RESPONDENT SAYS 'INDEPENDENT', 'OTHER PARTY' OR 'DON'T KNOW' (SP1=03-99), ASK [N=373]:

SP2 As of today, do you lean more to the Democratic Party or the Republican Party?

47	Democratic
27	Republican
18	Neither/other
<u>8</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

ASK OF DEMOCRATS AND DEMOCRATIC LEANING INDEPENDENTS ONLY: [N=505]

Q.5 If [INSERT ITEM, ROTATE] said he was supporting a presidential candidate would you be more likely to vote for that candidate, less likely to vote for that candidate or wouldn't it make any difference?

	More likely <u>to vote</u>	Less likely <u>to vote</u>	Wouldn't make <u>a difference</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
a. Al Gore	25	7	67	1=100
September, 2007	21	7	69	3=100
Early January, 2004 ⁶	22	10	65	3=100
b. John Edwards	18	7	74	1=100

⁶ In January 2004, the question was part of a list asking about various people who might support candidates. The question was asked of a half sample of all respondents, including 354 Democrats and Democratic leaners, for whom results are shown.