

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
JUNE 12-15, 2009 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY
TOPLINE
N=1026

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] [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. The debate in Washington over health care reform	29	26	18	26	*
TREND FOR COMPARISON:¹					
May 15-18, 2009: <i>Debate over Obama’s health care plans</i>	25	30	20	24	*
March 6-9, 2009: <i>Obama proposing a \$630 billion fund for overhauling health care</i>	41	32	13	14	*
September, 1994: <i>The Clinton Administration’s health care reform proposals</i>	32	41	18	9	*
June, 1994	34	40	19	7	*
May, 1994	37	37	16	9	1
January, 1994	38	38	15	9	*
Early January, 1994	40	40	14	6	*
December, 1993	45	35	12	7	1
October, 1993	44	32	17	6	1
September, 1993	49	34	11	6	*
August, 1993: <i>Reports about the White House task force on health care reform headed by Hillary Clinton</i>	27	32	25	15	1
June, 1993	28	38	19	15	*
May, 1993	30	30	25	14	1
b. A deadly shooting at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.	26	34	17	23	*
c. The continuing financial troubles of GM and Chrysler	30	37	18	16	*
TREND FOR COMPARISON:²					
June 5-8, 2009: <i>GM declaring bankruptcy</i>	29	37	19	14	*

¹ May 15-18, 2009 asked about: “Debate over Barack Obama’s health care plans.” March 6-9, 2009 asked about: “Barack Obama proposing a \$630 billion fund for overhauling the U.S. health care system.” September, 1993 through September, 1994 asked about: “The Clinton Administration’s health care reform proposals.” May, 1993 through August, 1993 asked about: “Reports about the White House task force on health care reform headed by Hillary Clinton.”

² May 29-June 1, 2009 asked about: “Reports that General Motors may go into bankruptcy.” February 20-23, 2009 asked about: “U.S. automakers seeking billions of dollars in federal loans to avoid bankruptcy.” December 19-22, 2008 asked about “The Bush administration’s plan to provide billions in emergency loans to U.S. automakers.” December 12-15, 2008 asked about “The debate over a government bailout for the U.S. auto industry.” November 21-24, 2008 and December 5-8, 2008 asked about “The debate in Congress over a government bailout for the U.S. auto industry.” November 14-17, 2008 asked about: “News about problems facing U.S. automakers.” October 31-November 3, 2008 asked about: “The possible merger of automakers General Motors and Chrysler.” May 18-21, 2007 asked about: “DaimlerChrysler’s decision to sell Chrysler to a private equity firm.” January, 1992 and December, 2005 asked about: “The major job cuts announced by General Motors.” June, 1998 asked about: “The merger of the Chrysler Corporation and Daimler Benz.” September 28-October 1, 2007 asked about “An agreement between General Motors and the United Auto Workers union that ended a two-day strike over wages and job security.”

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>
May 29-June 1, 2009: <i>Reports that GM may go into bankruptcy</i>	34	40	17	9	*
May 1-4, 2009: <i>Financial problems in the U.S. auto industry</i>	32	42	17	8	1
April 24-27, 2009	30	39	16	15	*
April 3-6, 2009	31	35	16	18	*
February 20-23, 2009: <i>U.S. automakers seeking billions in federal loans to avoid bankruptcy</i>	33	34	22	11	*
December 19-22, 2008: <i>Bush administration plan for emergency loans to U.S. automakers</i>	37	33	16	13	1
December 12-15, 2008: <i>Debate over a government bailout for U.S. auto industry</i>	40	33	18	9	*
December 5-8, 2008: <i>Debate in Congress over a bailout for U.S. auto industry</i>	34	38	17	11	*
November 21-24, 2008	41	26	17	15	1
November 14-17, 2008: <i>Problems facing U.S. automakers</i>	30	35	20	15	*
October 31-November 3, 2008: <i>Possible merger of GM and Chrysler</i>	16	28	24	31	1
May 18-21, 2007: <i>DaimlerChrysler sells Chrysler</i>	8	20	25	46	1
September 28-October 1, 2007: <i>Agreement between GM and UAW ending strike</i>	14	28	28	30	*
December, 2005: <i>General Motors job cuts</i>	22	30	26	21	1
June, 1998: <i>Chrysler/Daimler Benz merger</i>	12	22	27	38	1
January, 1992: <i>General Motors job cuts</i>	35	38	18	9	*
d. Congress passing legislation placing new restrictions on the tobacco industry	19	24	22	34	*
TREND FOR COMPARISON:³					
December, 1998: <i>Settlement between tobacco companies and states restricting sales and marketing</i>	19	39	25	17	*
April, 1998: <i>Debate in Washington over legislation to regulate tobacco</i>	20	37	25	18	*
April, 1997: <i>Settlement in which Ligett tobacco admitted that cigarettes are addictive</i>	20	40	22	18	*
September, 1996: <i>The Administration's efforts to regulate tobacco sales to children</i>	32	36	20	11	1
March, 1996: <i>Investigations and lawsuits brought against tobacco companies</i>	20	32	27	21	*
e. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy	41	35	12	12	*
June 5-8, 2009	41	34	11	14	*
May 29-June 1, 2009	43	37	11	8	*
May 21-24, 2009	44	35	13	9	*
May 15-18, 2009	44	35	12	8	*

³ December 1998 asked about: "A settlement reached by four major tobacco companies and 46 states to restrict the sale and marketing of tobacco products." April, 1998 asked about: "The debate in Washington over legislation to regulate the tobacco industry." April, 1997 asked about: "A legal settlement in which the Liggett tobacco company admitted that cigarettes are addictive." September, 1996 asked about: "The Administration's efforts to regulate tobacco sales to children." March, 1996 asked about: "Investigations and lawsuits being brought against tobacco companies."

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>
May 8-11, 2009	42	34	12	12	*
May 1-4, 2009	47	36	11	5	1
April 17-20, 2009	52	30	10	7	1
April 9-13, 2009	48	29	13	10	0
March 27-30, 2009	48	32	10	10	*
March 20-23, 2009	52	34	8	6	*
March 13-16, 2009	48	33	9	10	*
February 27-March 2, 2009	56	30	8	6	*
February 13-16, 2009	55	29	10	6	*
January 30-February 2, 2009	52	31	12	5	*
January 23-26, 2009	57	30	8	5	0
January 16-19, 2009	43	35	13	9	*
January 2-4, 2009	42	36	15	7	*
December 12-15, 2008	51	33	9	7	*
December 5-8, 2008	42	38	13	7	*
November 21-24, 2008	59	24	9	8	*
November 14-17, 2008	56	29	9	6	*
November 7-10, 2008	54	31	8	7	*
October 31-November 3, 2008	63	27	6	4	*
October 24-27, 2008	52	35	7	5	1
October 17-20, 2008	62	29	6	3	*
October 10-13, 2008	65	25	7	3	*
October 3-6, 2008	69	23	5	3	*
September 26-29, 2008	70	22	5	3	*
September 19-22, 2008	56	27	12	5	*
September 5-8, 2008	44	33	16	7	*
August 29-31, 2008	41	34	13	11	1
August 15-18, 2008	39	36	15	10	*
August 8-11, 2008	39	35	16	10	*
August 1-4, 2008	47	34	11	8	0
July 25-28, 2008	46	32	10	12	*
July 18-21, 2008	45	33	13	9	*
July 11-14, 2008	44	33	12	10	1
June 27-30, 2008	49	31	12	7	1
June 13-16, 2008	42	33	14	11	*
May 9-12, 2008	45	31	13	11	*
May 2-5, 2008	43	31	15	10	1
April 18-21, 2008	41	35	13	10	1
April 4-7, 2008	39	37	12	12	*
March 28-31, 2008	42	36	14	8	*
March 20-24, 2008	45	33	13	9	*
February 29-March 3, 2008	38	35	15	11	1
February 15-18, 2008	37	36	11	16	8
February 1-4, 2008	40	37	14	8	1
January 18-21, 2008	42	31	16	11	*
January 11-14, 2008	36	32	15	16	1
November 2-5, 2007	27	37	16	19	1
October 19-22, 2007	25	34	20	21	*
August 10-13, 2007	28	36	18	18	*
Mid-November, 2006	31	40	17	11	1
December, 2005	35	35	18	11	1
Early November, 2005	35	39	17	9	*
Mid-May, 2005	30	39	19	11	1

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>
January, 2005	35	41	17	7	*
Mid-October, 2004	30	43	16	10	1
Early September, 2004	39	34	15	11	1
Mid-January, 2004	37	41	15	7	*
December, 2003	35	38	14	11	2
November, 2003	40	34	15	10	1
October, 2003	32	39	16	12	1
September, 2003	39	30	18	12	1
March, 2003	40	35	16	8	1
February, 2003	42	33	15	10	*
January, 2003	40	35	13	11	1
December, 2002	38	34	17	10	1
February, 2002	35	40	15	9	1
January, 2002	30	44	16	9	1
December, 2001	37	40	13	8	2
Mid-November, 2001	41	36	15	7	1
June, 2001	24	41	18	16	1
May, 2001	34	36	15	15	0
April, 2001	36	34	16	13	1
February, 2001	30	39	18	12	1
January, 2001	32	38	17	11	2
June, 1995	26	41	22	11	*
March, 1995	27	45	19	9	*
February, 1995	23	41	22	13	1
December, 1994	28	43	20	9	*
October, 1994	27	40	20	12	1
June, 1994	25	42	23	10	*
May, 1994	33	40	16	10	1
January, 1994	34	39	16	10	1
Early January, 1994	36	44	13	7	*
December, 1993	35	41	15	8	1
October, 1993	33	38	20	9	*
September, 1993	37	40	14	8	1
Early September, 1993	39	39	14	9	*
August, 1993	41	36	14	9	*
May, 1993	37	38	18	6	1
February, 1993	49	36	10	5	*
January, 1993	42	39	12	7	*
September, 1992	43	37	13	6	1
May, 1992	39	39	15	6	1
March, 1992	47	38	11	4	*
February, 1992	47	37	10	6	*
January, 1992	44	40	11	5	*
October, 1991	36	38	16	9	1

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>
f. The presidential election in Iran	18	26	23	34	*
TREND FOR COMPARISON:⁴					
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>Encounter between U.S. and Iranian ships</i>	25	26	21	27	1
December 7-10, 2007: <i>Intelligence report on Iran's nuclear weapons program</i>	25	31	20	23	1
October 26-29, 2007: <i>Mounting tensions</i>	26	34	21	18	1
September 28 – October 1, 2007: <i>Ahmadinejad visit to U.S.</i>	23	31	20	25	1
June 1-4, 2007: <i>US-Iranian talks</i>	19	27	27	26	1
February 23-26, 2007: <i>Mounting tensions</i>	29	37	18	15	1
February 16-19, 2007: <i>Iran supplying weapons to Iraqi insurgents</i>	28	32	20	19	1
February 2-5, 2007: <i>Mounting tensions</i>	33	38	18	10	1
Sept., 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

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.**]

- 25 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy
- 19 The continuing financial troubles of GM and Chrysler
- 13 The debate in Washington over health care reform
- 12 A deadly shooting at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.
- 8 The presidential election in Iran
- 4 Congress passing legislation placing new restrictions on the tobacco industry
- 8 Some other story
- 11 Don't know/Refused

⁴ May 21-24, 2009 asked about: "Iran testing a missile that could reach Israel." July 11-14, 2008 asked about: "The Iranian government firing test missiles capable of striking Israel." January 11-14, 2008 asked about: "News about a naval encounter between U.S. and Iranian ships." December 7-10, 2007 asked about: "A new intelligence report stating that Iran stopped its nuclear weapons program in 2003." October 26-29, 2007, February 23-26, 2007 and February 2-5, 2007 asked about: "Mounting tensions between the United States and Iran." September 28-October 1, 2007 asked about: "Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's recent trip to New York City where he spoke at Columbia University and the United Nations." June 1-4, 2007 asked about: "Recent talks between the United States and Iran." February 16-19, 2007 asked about: "Reports that Iran may be supplying weapons to insurgents in Iraq." March, 2006 through June, 2006 asked about: "Iran's nuclear research program."

On another topic...

Q.3 Are you hearing mostly good news about the economy these days, mostly bad news about the economy or a mix of both good and bad news?

		May 8-11 2009	Apr 9-13 2009	Mar 13-16 2009	Feb 13-16 2009	Jan 16-19 2009	Dec 5-8 2008
4	Hearing mostly good news about the economy	4	4	2	2	2	1
37	Hearing mostly bad news about the economy [OR]	31	39	51	60	67	80
59	A mix of good and bad	64	56	46	37	30	19
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)	1	1	1	1	1	*

Q.4 Thinking about some specific aspects of the nation's economy... Please tell me if you are hearing mostly good news, mostly bad news or a mix of both good and bad news about each of the following. [READ and RANDOMIZE]

	Hearing mostly good news	Hearing mostly bad news	A mix of good and bad news	DK/ Refused
a. The financial markets	9	43	45	3
b. Real estate values	11	45	40	3
c. Prices for food and consumer goods	9	39	46	6
d. The job situation	1	71	27	1

NO QUESTIONS 5 THROUGH 7

Q.8 How much if anything, have you heard about each of the following? Have you heard a lot, a little or nothing at all? [READ AND RANDOMIZE]

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Nothing at all</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
a. Stephen Colbert performing for U.S. troops in Iraq	13	33	54	*
b. North Korea sentencing two U.S. journalists to 12 years hard labor	44	29	26	*
c. A feud between Sarah Palin and David Letterman over a joke he made about Palin's daughter	35	36	29	*
d. TV stations around the country changing the way their signals are broadcast from analog to digital	75	18	7	*
TREND FOR COMPARISON: ⁵ Jan. 30-Feb.2, 2009: <i>Digital television transition</i>	81	16	3	*

⁵ For January 30-February 2, 2009 the question was worded: "On February 17th, television stations around the country are scheduled to change the way their signals are broadcast from what is called an analog signal to a digital signal. How much, if anything, have you read or heard about this upcoming change?"