

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
July 31-August 3, 2009 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1013

Q.1 What recent news story, if any, have you and your friends been talking about [OPEN END. PROBE ONCE FOR ADDITIONAL MENTIONS. RECORD UP TO THREE. RECORD EACH RESPONSE ON SEPARATE SCREEN. DO NOT READ PRECODE LIST. DO NOT SUGGEST ANSWERS]?

36	Health care reform
24	State of the economy
14	Henry Louis Gates' arrest and Obama's response
11	Michael Jackson's death
10	Cash for Clunkers
6	Iraq war
5	Government/Politics
5	Obama
3	Auto industry
3	Iran
2	Sonia Sotomayor
1	Weather
1	Sarah Palin
1	Stimulus
1	Reports that Manny Ramirez and David Ortiz tested positive for performance enhancing drugs in 2003
1	Bailouts
37	Other (VOL.)
20	No answer/Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

Figures add to more than 100% because of multiple responses.

Q.2 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. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy	46	34	11	8	*
July 24-27, 2009	45	35	12	8	*
July 17-20, 2009	43	35	11	11	1
July 10-13, 2009	37	38	13	11	*
July 2-5, 2009	38	35	15	12	*
June 19-22, 2009	42	33	15	10	*
June 12-15, 2009	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	*
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

Q.2 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
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
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	*

Q.2 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
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
b. Debate in Washington over health care reform	47	26	14	13	1
July 24-27, 2009	44	28	15	13	*
July 17-20, 2009	33	31	13	21	2
July 10-13, 2009	24	29	20	27	*
June 26-29, 2009	29	26	20	25	1
June 19-22, 2009	28	28	20	23	*
June 12-15, 2009	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
c. The Iranian government's crackdown on opposition protestors	18	23	26	31	2
July 2-5, 2009: News about controversy surrounding the recent Iranian election	22	31	23	23	*
June 26-29, 2009: The Iranian government's crackdown on election protestors	31	27	18	23	1
June 19-22, 2009: Protests in Iran over disputed elections	28	28	21	22	1
June 12-15, 2009: The presidential election in Iran	18	26	23	34	*

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."

Q.2 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<u>DK/Refused</u>
TREND FOR COMPARISON:²					
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
d. The popularity of the government's "Cash for Clunkers" car trade-in program	18	30	26	23	2
e. Reports about the arrest of Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates and President Obama's response to the incident	25	26	22	25	2
July 24-27, 2009: The arrest of Henry Louis Gates, a black Harvard professor, at his home after a dispute with a police officer	30	31	17	21	1
f. Controversy surrounding Michael Jackson's death	17	18	26	38	1
July 17-20, 2009	17	22	25	34	2
July 10-13, 2009: Michael Jackson's funeral and controversy surrounding his death	25	26	24	24	1
July 2-5, 2009: The death of singer Michael Jackson	25	29	28	18	1
June 26-29, 2009	30	28	23	19	*
TREND FOR COMPARISON—celebrity deaths:					
March 20-23, 2009: <i>Death of actress Natasha Richardson in a skiing accident</i>	18	28	24	30	*
October 3-6, 2008: <i>Death of Paul Newman</i>	19	29	28	23	1
June 13-16, 2008: <i>Death of Meet the Press host Tim Russert</i>	28	23	19	30	*
January 25-28, 2008: <i>Death of actor Heath Ledger</i>	13	29	27	30	1
November 30-December 3, 2007: <i>Death of NFL player Sean Taylor</i>	14	25	22	38	1
March 2-5, 2007: <i>Death of Anna Nicole Smith</i>	14	19	30	36	1
February 23-26, 2007	13	22	33	31	1
February 16-19, 2007	14	25	29	31	1
February 9-12, 2007	11	27	31	30	1
September, 2006: <i>Death of the Crocodile Hunter, Steve Irwin, from a stingray strike</i>	30	36	21	12	1

² 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."

Q.2 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
December, 2001: <i>Death of former Beatle George Harrison</i>	10	23	30	35	2
July, 1999: <i>Death of John F. Kennedy Jr., his wife and sister-in-law in a plane crash near Martha's Vineyard</i>	54	29	13	4	0
March, 1999: <i>Death of former baseball player Joe DiMaggio</i>	18	33	27	21	1
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
August, 1995: <i>The death of Mickey Mantle</i>	24	36	21	18	1
May, 1994: <i>The suicide of rock star Kurt Cobain</i>	7	14	25	52	2
TREND FOR COMPARISON—Michael Jackson:					
June, 2005: <i>Michael Jackson trial</i>	13	31	29	26	1
Mid-March, 2005	12	23	32	32	1
February, 2005	8	17	30	44	1
November, 2003: <i>Recent charges of child molestation against Michael Jackson</i>	29	27	22	20	2
January, 1994: <i>Michael Jackson's personal problems</i>	19	30	30	20	1
December, 1993	15	25	27	32	1

Q.3 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.]**

- 36 Debate in Washington over health care reform
- 15 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy
- 15 Controversy surrounding Michael Jackson's death
- 11 Reports about the arrest of Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates and President Obama's response to the incident
- 5 The popularity of the government's "Cash for Clunkers" car trade-in program
- 3 The Iranian government's crackdown on opposition protestors
- 6 Some other story (VOL.)
- 9 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

Q.4 Thinking about health care, how good a job have news organizations done explaining **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]**

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
a. The details of health care proposals	4	17	32	40	7
b. The political debate over health care	6	25	34	28	7
c. The effect health care proposals would have on people like yourself	7	16	33	37	8

Q.5 How much have you heard about some people who claim that Barack Obama was not born in the U.S. and therefore not eligible to be president?

31	A lot
49	A little
19	Nothing at all
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK IF Q.5=1,2 [N=842]:

Q.6 Do you think news organizations have given too much, too little, or the right amount of attention to the people who claim that Barack Obama was not born in the U.S.?

41	Too much
28	Too little
24	Right amount
7	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)