

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS  
 DECEMBER POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE UPDATE SURVEY  
 FINAL TOPLINE  
 DECEMBER 4-7, 2008  
 N=1,000**

Now I would like to ask you about some things that have been in the news recently. Not everyone will have heard of them...

**ROTATE ITEMS Q.1 THROUGH Q.5 AND ITEMS Q.6 THROUGH Q.10 IN SEPARATE SECTIONS.**

Q.1 Do you happen to know which political party has a majority in the U.S. House of Representatives? **[READ AND ROTATE]**

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
December 4-7, 2008	<b>82</b>	11	7=100
February 28-March 2, 2008	<b>70</b>	26	4=100
August 16-19, 2007	<b>78</b>	19	3=100
February, 2007	<b>76</b>	10	14=100
<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:<sup>1</sup></b>			
May, 2008	<b>53</b>	15	32=100
Late October, 2006	4	<b>58</b>	38=100
April, 2006	6	<b>64</b>	30=100
April, 2004	8	<b>56</b>	36=100
June, 2001	34	<b>31</b>	35=100
August, 1999	8	<b>55</b>	37=100
December, 1998	11	<b>56</b>	33=100
June, 1997	6	<b>50</b>	44=100
April, 1996	8	<b>70</b>	22=100
June, 1995	5	<b>73</b>	22=100
July, 1994	<b>60</b>	18	22=100
February, 1994	<b>58</b>	42	n/a=100
September, 1992	<b>46</b>	9	45=100
June, 1992	<b>44</b>	12	44=100
May, 1992	<b>49</b>	12	39=100
May, 1989 <i>Political Knowledge Survey</i>	<b>68</b>	16	16=100

**Correct answers for each trend highlighted in bold**

Q.2 To what cabinet position has Barack Obama recently nominated Hillary Clinton? Is it **[RANDOMIZE 1-3 AND READ]**...

- 3 Secretary of the Treasury
- 87 Secretary of State (*Correct*)
- 2 Ambassador to the United Nations
- 3 Or something else?
- 5 Don't know/Refused (**VOL. DO NOT READ**)
- 100

<sup>1</sup> In May 2008, and from May 1992 through Late October 2006 this was asked as an open-ended question, without offering response options for Democrats and Republicans (read and rotated). In May 1989 the question was worded "As a result of the election last year which party now has the most members in the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington?"

Q.3 Since the start of military action in Iraq, about how many U.S. military personnel have been killed? To the best of your knowledge, have there been ... [READ IN ORDER] troop deaths?

Dec 4-7, 2008		April 4-7, 2008	Feb 28-Mar 2, 2008	
14	Around 2,200	6	11	Around 2,000
22	Around 3,200	15	35	Around 3,000
<b>40</b>	<b>Around 4,200</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>Around 4,000</b>
20	Around 5,200	16	23	Around 5,000
--	Other (VOL.)	--	--	Other (VOL.)
<u>4</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)
100		100	100	
Aug 9-16, 2007	June 22-25, 2007	Feb 2007	Dec 2006	
8	9	5	6	Around 1,000
19	20	17	24	Around 2,000
<b>54</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>Around 3,000</b>
17	12	17	16	Around 4,000
--	3	1	1	Other (VOL.)
<u>2</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)
100	100	100	100	
April 2006	Oct 2005	June 2005	April 2004	
4	5	4	28	Under 500
16	23	13	<b>55</b>	<b>500 to 1,000</b>
<b>53</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>54</b>	6	<b>1,000 to 2,000</b>
19	19	24	4	More than 2,000
1	1	--	--	Other (VOL.)
<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)
100	100	100	100	

Correct answers for each trend highlighted in bold

Q.4 Is Nicolas Sarkozy the President of... [READ AND RANDOMIZE]

38	France (Correct)
8	Colombia
6	Mexico [OR]
22	Rusia
<u>26</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)
100	

Q.5 Is Guantanamo Bay... [READ AND RANDOMIZE]

4	A luxury resort in the Caribbean
76	The location of a U.S. naval base (Correct)
4	A new action film by Steven Spielberg
5	The location of recent pirate attacks on commercial ships
<u>11</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)
100	

Q.6 Do you happen to know the name of the current Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives? Is it...  
**[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

**TREND FOR COMPARISON:**

		<i>Senate</i>		
		<i>Majority Leader</i>		
		August 16-19, 2007	Feb. 28- March 2, 2008	
72	Nancy Pelosi ( <i>Correct</i> )	74	24	Harry Reid ( <i>Correct</i> )
3	Dennis Hastert	5	13	Patrick Leahy
3	Barbara Boxer [OR]	7	13	Trent Lott
3	Eric Holder	5	14	Joe Biden
<u>19</u>	DK/Refused ( <b>VOL.</b> )	<u>9</u>	<u>36</u>	DK/Refused ( <b>VOL.</b> )
100		100	100	

Q.7 Compared to Western Europe, do you think the tax on gasoline in the U.S. is higher, lower, or about the same?

		February 1989
20	Higher	21
64	Lower ( <i>Correct</i> )	53
9	About the same	10
<u>7</u>	Don't know/Refused ( <b>VOL. DO NOT READ</b> )	<u>16</u>
100		100

Q.8 Do you happen to know if the Dow Jones Industrial Average is currently closer to **[READ IN ORDER]**?

		Feb. 28- March 2, <u>2008</u>			Aug. 16-19, <u>2007</u>			May <u>2000</u> <sup>2</sup>
18	2,000	16	4,000	16	2,000	5	3,000	
8	4,000	9	5,000	14	4,000	4	5,000	
<b>45</b>	<b>8,000</b> [OR]	16	10,000 [OR]	13	8,000 [OR]	<b>28</b>	<b>10,000</b> [OR]	
5	13,000	<b>31</b>	<b>12,000</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>13,000</b>	1	20,000	
<u>24</u>	DK/Ref ( <b>VOL.</b> )	<u>28</u>	DK/Ref ( <b>VOL.</b> )	<u>16</u>	DK/Ref ( <b>VOL.</b> )	<u>62</u>	DK/Ref ( <b>VOL.</b> )	
100		100		100		100		

**Correct answers for each trend highlighted in bold**

Q.9 Is Robert Gates... **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

		August 16-19, <u>2007</u>			March 9-12, <u>2007</u> <sup>3</sup>
52	The U.S. Secretary of Defense ( <i>Correct</i> )	41	37		The U.S. Secretary of Defense ( <i>Correct</i> )
7	A Senator from Michigan	17	5		A Senator from Michigan
11	The chairman of General Motors	12	3		The chairman of General Motors
3	The host of CNN's evening news broadcast	8	24		[OR] is he something else
<u>27</u>	DK/Refused ( <b>VOL.</b> )	<u>22</u>	<u>31</u>		DK/Refused ( <b>VOL.</b> )
100		100	100		

<sup>2</sup> In May, 2000 the question was worded: "Do you happen to know at what level the Dow Jones Industrial average is currently trading? Is it about..."

<sup>3</sup> For March 9-12, 2007 "The host of CNN's evening news broadcast" was not offered as a response option, and "is he something else" was offered.

Q.10 The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court is John Roberts. Can you tell me if he is generally considered a liberal, a moderate, or a conservative? [READ AND RANDOMIZE]

		February	TREND FOR COMPARISON:
		<u>2007</u>	<i>Rehnquist</i>
			Political
			Knowledge Survey
			<u>May 1989</u>
11	Liberal	6	11
11	Moderate	9	9
53	Conservative ( <i>Correct</i> )	37	30
<u>25</u>	Don't know/Refused ( <b>VOL.</b> )	<u>48</u>	<u>50</u>
100		100	100