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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:
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Democrats Tracking Candidates Most Closely
HIGH INTEREST IN EARLY CAMPAIGN

High-profile candidates and the accelerated pace of the 2008 presidential campaign have drawn the public into the race far earlier than in past election cycles. In this week's survey, 55% of Americans say they are tracking news about the candidates for the 2008 presidential election very or fairly closely. Public interest has been at or near this level consistently over the past three months with an average of 53% closely following the campaign. By comparison, polls conducted in the spring and summer of 2003, found an average of only 38% paying close attention to news about the 2004 presidential election. Similarly, in the early months of the 2000 presidential election, 45% of Americans were closely following campaign news. And, in 1995, 46% of the public was closely following news of the 1996 election.

Interest In Early Campaigns				
---Following Campaign News---				
	Very/ Fairly closely	Not too/ Not at all closely	DK %	Number of surveys
2007	53	47	*=100	11
2003	38	62	*=100	4
1999	45	54	1=100	3
1995	46	54	*=100	3

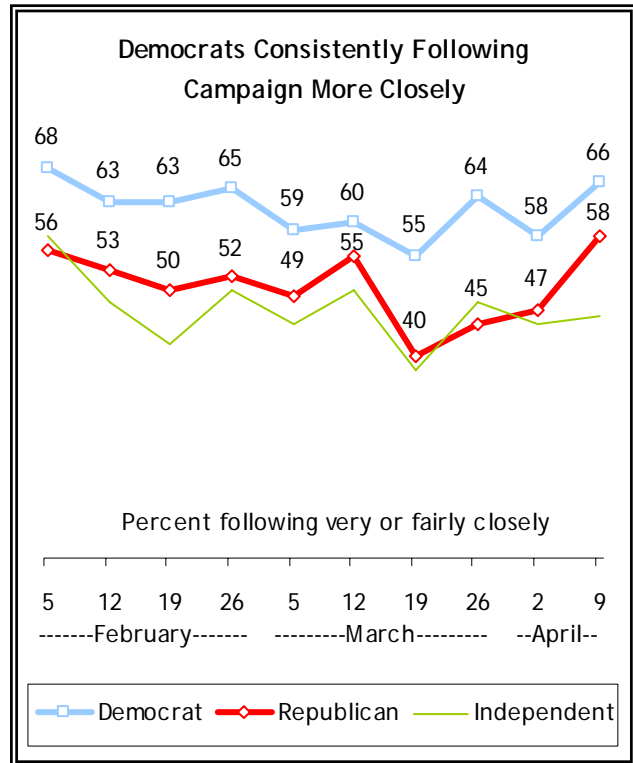
Figures for 2003, 1999 and 1995 are based on surveys conducted between January and September of each year.

Public interest in the 2006 campaign has coincided with heavy media coverage of the race. According to the Project for Excellence in Journalism, the campaign has been one of the top five most covered news stories for every week from mid-January through March, as well as the first full week of April. The only news story that has received more coverage this year is the Iraq war.

Democrats have consistently paid closer attention to campaign news than have Republicans. On average interest among Democrats has exceeded interest among Republicans by 12 percentage points. During the week of April 2, when candidates' first quarter fundraising totals dominated campaign news, 66% of Democrats were paying very or fairly close attention to the campaign compared to 58% of Republicans. Independents have been slightly less attentive to

the campaign than Democrats or Republicans throughout most of the year. Last week, 46% of Independents were closely following campaign news.

The most recent comparable presidential election, without an incumbent president, was 2000. In the early stages of that contest, Republicans were following campaign news more closely than were Democrats. During June and July of 1999, the gap in interest between Republicans and Democrats was just under 10% points. In the early stages of the 2004 presidential campaign, when only the Democratic nomination was up for grabs, Democrats were paying closer attention than Republicans to campaign news. Similarly, in 1995, when only the GOP nomination was at stake, Republicans were more interested than Democrats in campaign news.

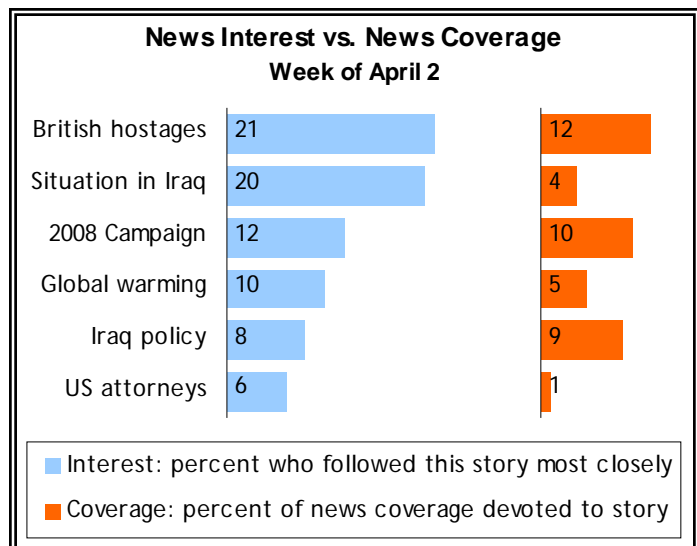


The partisan gap on interest in the campaign this year may reflect the lopsided nature of the media coverage thus far. According to the Project for Excellence in Journalism, coverage of Democratic candidates has outweighed coverage of Republicans by a roughly two-to-one margin.

This past week, the presidential campaign was the third most closely followed news story. Fully one quarter of the public followed campaign news very closely and another 30% paid fairly close attention. Twelve percent of the public said the campaign was the single news story they followed more closely than any other. In terms of news coverage, the campaign was ranked no. 2 – 10% of the entire newshole was devoted to campaign news.

Iraq and British Hostages Top News Interests

Two foreign policy stories topped campaign news last week in terms of

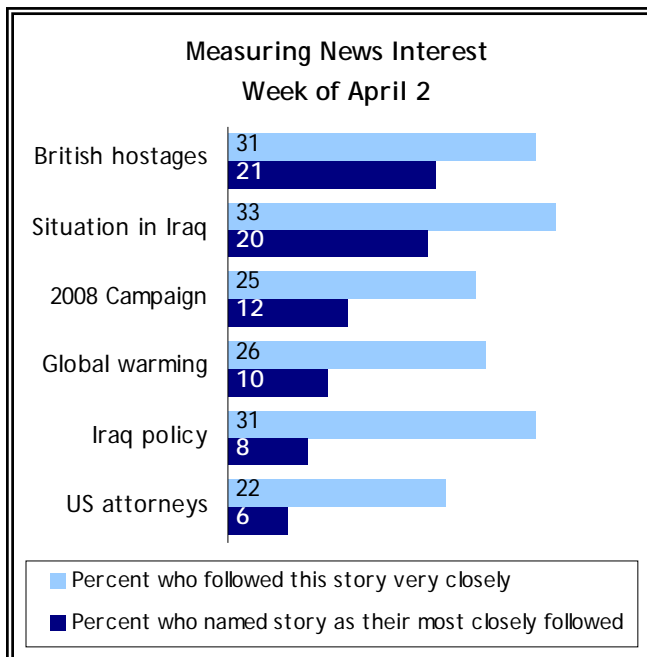


public interest. Roughly three-in-ten Americans (31%) paid very close attention to the release of 15 British sailors and marines held captive by the Iranian government, and 21% said this was the story they followed most closely. The hostage story was no. 1 in terms of coverage: 12% of the newshole was devoted to this story. One third of the public paid very close attention to the situation in Iraq and 20% said this was the story they followed most closely.

While media coverage of the Iraq war remains focused more heavily on the policy debate, the public expresses more interest in events on the ground in Iraq. Coverage of the policy debate outweighed news about the war itself by a better than two-to-one margin this past week. At the same time, the public was more than twice as likely to list the situation in Iraq, rather than the policy debate at home, as their top news story.

These findings are based on the most recent installment of the weekly *News Interest Index*, an ongoing project of the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. The index, building on the Center’s longstanding research into public attentiveness to major news stories, examines news interest as it relates to the news media’s agenda. The weekly survey is conducted in conjunction with The Project for Excellence in Journalism’s *News Coverage Index*, which monitors the news reported by major newspaper, television, radio and online news outlets on an ongoing basis.

News coverage of the firing of eight U.S. attorneys fell off dramatically last week, while public interest in the story remained fairly constant. The week of March 26, 11% of the newshole was devoted to the U.S. attorney firings – making it one of the top two most covered stories of that week. This past week, only 1% of the news coverage was devoted to this story. Roughly one-in-five Americans paid very close attention to this story last week and 6% said it was the story they followed most closely.



Global warming was back in the news last week – with a Supreme Court ruling on auto emissions and a new report on the causes of global climate change. Five percent of the news for the week was devoted to this topic. Roughly one quarter of the public (26%) followed news about global warming very closely. The same percentage paid very close attention to global warming news in early February of this year

following the worldwide conference on the issue in Paris. Public interest in this topic is substantially higher now than it was ten years ago. In late 1997, only about 10% of the public was following news about global warming very closely.

This past week, Democrats followed global warming news much more closely than did Republicans – 35% vs. 18%, respectively, followed the news very closely. In addition, the topic is of greater interest to college graduates than to those who have never attended college (32% vs. 21%, respectively).

About the News Interest Index

The *News Interest Index* is a weekly survey conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press aimed at gauging the public's interest in and reaction to major news events.

This project has been undertaken in conjunction with the Project for Excellence in Journalism's *News Coverage Index*, an ongoing content analysis of the news. The News Coverage Index catalogues the news from top news organizations across five major sectors of the media: newspapers, network television, cable television, radio and the internet. Each week (from Sunday through Friday) PEJ will compile this data to identify the top stories for the week. The News Interest Index survey will collect data from Friday through Monday to gauge public interest in the most covered stories of the week.

Results for the weekly surveys are based on telephone interviews among a nationwide sample of approximately 1,000 adults, 18 years of age or older, conducted under the direction of ORC (Opinion Research Corporation). For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls, and that results based on subgroups will have larger margins of error.

For more information about the Project for Excellence in Journalism's News Coverage Index, go to www.journalism.org.

About the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press is an independent opinion research group that studies attitudes toward the press, politics and public policy issues. We are sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts and are one of six projects that make up the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

The Center's purpose is to serve as a forum for ideas on the media and public policy through public opinion research. In this role it serves as an important information resource for political leaders, journalists, scholars, and public interest organizations. All of our current survey results are made available free of charge.

All of the Center's research and reports are collaborative products based on the input and analysis of the entire Center staff consisting of:

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PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
APRIL 5-9, 2007 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1,030

Q.1 As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, 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. News about the current situation and events in Iraq	33	39	16	11	1=100
March 30-April 2, 2007	34	37	16	13	*=100
March 23-26, 2007¹	31	38	18	12	1=100
March 16-19, 2007	34	34	17	15	*=100
March 9-12, 2007	34	37	16	13	*=100
March 2-5, 2007	37	37	16	9	1=100
February 23-26, 2007	36	36	15	13	*=100
February 16-19, 2007	30	36	19	14	1=100
February 9-12, 2007	37	34	18	11	*=100
February 2-5, 2007	38	38	17	7	*=100
January 26-29, 2007	36	38	15	11	*=100
January 19-22, 2007	37	34	18	10	1=100
January 12-15, 2007	38	36	17	8	1=100
January, 2007	46	40	8	5	1=100
January 5-8, 2007	40	32	16	12	0=100
December, 2006	42	39	12	7	*=100
November 30-December 3, 2006	40	36	13	11	*=100
Mid-November, 2006	44	38	12	6	*=100
September, 2006	33	43	14	8	2=100
August, 2006	41	39	12	7	1=100
June, 2006	37	43	13	6	1=100
May, 2006	42	35	15	7	1=100
April, 2006	43	36	13	7	1=100
March, 2006	43	38	12	6	1=100
February, 2006	39	42	12	6	1=100
January, 2006	40	40	12	7	1=100
December, 2005	45	38	11	5	1=100
Early November, 2005	41	40	13	6	*=100
Early October, 2005	43	36	15	6	*=100
Early September, 2005	32	40	20	7	1=100
July, 2005	43	37	13	6	1=100
Mid-May, 2005	42	42	11	5	*=100
Mid-March, 2005	40	39	14	5	2=100
February, 2005	38	45	13	4	*=100
January, 2005	48	37	11	4	*=100
December, 2004	34	44	15	6	1=100
Mid-October, 2004	42	38	11	8	1=100
Early September, 2004	47	37	9	6	1=100
August, 2004	39	42	12	6	1=100
July, 2004	43	40	11	6	*=100
June, 2004	39	42	12	6	1=100

¹ From May, 2003 to March 23-26, 2007, the story was listed as “News about the current situation in Iraq.”

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>
April, 2004	54	33	8	5	*=100
Mid-March, 2004	47	36	12	4	1=100
Early February, 2004	47	38	10	4	1=100
Mid-January, 2004	48	39	9	4	*=100
December, 2003	44	38	11	6	1=100
November, 2003	52	33	9	5	1=100
September, 2003	50	33	10	6	1=100
Mid-August, 2003	45	39	10	5	1=100
Early July, 2003	37	41	13	8	1=100
June, 2003	46	35	13	6	*=100
May, 2003	63	29	6	2	*=100
April 11-16, 2003 ²	47	40	10	2	1=100
April 2-7, 2003	54	34	9	2	1=100
March 20-24, 2003	57	33	7	2	1=100
March 13-16, 2003 ³	62	27	6	4	1=100
February, 2003	62	25	8	4	1=100
January, 2003	55	29	10	4	2=100
December, 2002	51	32	10	6	1=100
Late October, 2002	53	33	8	5	1=100
Early October, 2002	60	28	6	5	1=100
Early September, 2002 ⁴	48	29	15	6	2=100
b. The debate in Washington over U.S. policy in Iraq					
	31	28	20	21	*=100
March 30-April 2, 2007	26	29	21	23	1=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
January 12-15, 2007: President Bush's proposal to increase the number of U.S. troops in Iraq	40	33	13	13	1=100
c. Fifteen British sailors and marines held captive and later releases by the Iranian government					
	31	37	18	14	*=100
March 30-April 2, 2007⁵	27	28	22	22	1=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
November, 1990⁶	49	33	13	4	1=100
October, 1990	47	37	11	5	*=100
September, 1990	57	30	9	3	1=100
d. News about candidates for the 2008 presidential election					
	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

² From March 20-24, 2003 to April 11-16, 2003, the story was listed as "News about the war in Iraq."

³ From October, 2002, to March 13-16, 2003, the story was listed as "Debate over the possibility that the U.S. will take military action in Iraq."

⁴ In Early September, 2002, the story was listed as "Debate over the possibility that the U.S. will invade Iraq."

⁵ March 30-April 2, 2007 asked about "Fifteen British sailors and marines held captive by the Iranian government."

⁶ From September, 1990 to November, 1990, the story was listed as "The plight of American hostages and other Westerners detained in Iraq and Kuwait."

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>
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, 2007⁷	24	27	22	26	1=100
2004 Presidential Election					
November, 2004 (RVs)	52	36	8	4	*=100
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 ⁸	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	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

⁷ January 19-22, 2007 asked about "Recent announcements by prominent Democrats about plans to run for president in 2008."

⁸ 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>
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
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
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
e. Questions about how the White House and Attorney General Alberto Gonzales were involved in the firing of eight federal prosecutors					
	22	26	24	28	*=100
March 30-April 2, 2007	22	25	22	30	1=100
March 23-26, 2007	20	28	24	28	*=100
March 16-19, 2007	19	24	22	35	*=100
March 9-12, 2007⁹	9	17	22	52	*=100
f. Recent reports about global warming research and policies					
	26	29	23	21	1=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
February 2-5, 2007¹⁰	26	37	21	16	0=100
December, 1997 ¹¹	11	19	24	43	3=100
November, 1997	9	24	33	33	1=100
August, 1988	42	32	15	10	1=100

⁹ March 9-12, 2007 asked about "The firing of eight federal prosecutors by the Justice Department."

¹⁰ February 2-5, 2007 asked about "Recent reports about the causes of global warming."

¹¹ In December 1997, the story was listed as "The conference on global warming taking place in Kyoto, Japan." In November 1997, the story was listed as "The debate over U.S. policy concerning global warming." In August 1988 the story was listed as "The hot weather this summer and the greenhouse effect."

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.**)

- 21 Fifteen British sailors and marines held captive and later released by the Iranian government
- 20 News about the current situation and events in Iraq
- 12 News about candidates for the 2008 presidential election
- 10 Recent reports about global warming research and policies
- 8 The debate in Washington over U.S. policy in Iraq
- 6 Questions about how the White House and Attorney General Alberto Gonzales were involved in the firing of eight federal prosecutors
- 7 Some other story (**SPECIFY**)
- 16 Don't know/Refused
- 100

Q.3 Now I'd like to ask you about where you get your news. Do you regularly get news about national and international issues from [INSERT ITEM], or not? How about...[**READ AND RANDOMIZE**]

	<u>Yes, regularly</u>	<u>No, not regularly</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
a. Newspapers	49	51	*=100
March 30-April 2, 2007	49	51	*=100
March 23-26, 2007	53	47	*=100
March 16-19, 2007	53	47	0=100
February 23-26, 2007	51	49	*=100
b. Network television news, such as ABC, CBS or NBC	64	36	*=100
March 30-April 2, 2007	65	35	*=100
March 23-26, 2007	66	33	1=100
March 16-19, 2007	65	34	1=100
February 23-26, 2007	68	32	*=100
c. Cable news channels such as CNN or the Fox News channel	58	42	0=100
March 30-April 2, 2007	60	39	1=100
March 23-26, 2007	58	41	1=100
March 16-19, 2007	59	40	1=100
February 23-26, 2007	60	40	*=100
d. Radio	40	60	*=100
March 30-April 2, 2007	39	61	*=100
March 23-26, 2007	43	57	*=100
March 16-19, 2007	40	59	1=100
February 23-26, 2007	40	61	*=100
e. The Internet	38	62	0=100
March 30-April 2, 2007	39	61	*=100
March 23-26, 2007	38	61	1=100
March 16-19, 2007	36	63	1=100
February 23-26, 2007	38	62	*=100

Q.4 Which would you say is your MAIN source for news about national and international issues? **[DO NOT READ LIST. ACCEPT ONLY ONE RESPONSE]**

	<u>Newspapers</u>	<u>Network TV News</u>	<u>Cable TV News</u>	<u>Radio</u>	<u>Internet</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>None DK/Ref</u>
April 5-9, 2007	13	29	28	10	15	3	2=100
March 30-April 2, 2007	11	32	30	11	14	1	1=100
March 23-26, 2007	14	30	26	10	14	4	2=100
March 16-19, 2007	11	29	29	10	14	2	5=100
February 23-26, 2007	11	35	25	10	14	3	2=100