



THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER
For The People & The Press

NEWS Release
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Thursday, October 7, 2010

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Education Debate Also Draws Interest Public Focuses More on Economy than Election

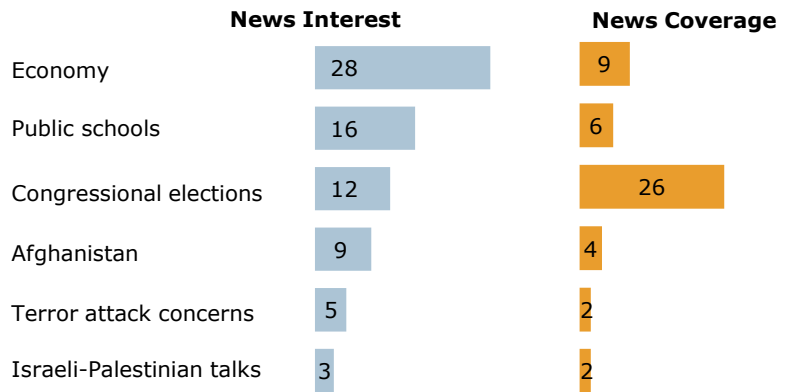
The 2010 congressional elections dominated news coverage last week, but not the public's attention. Americans continued to focus most closely on news about the nation's struggling economy and about four-in-ten (39%) say news reports portray the economy "about the way it really is."

Smaller, roughly equal percentages say the media make the economy seem worse (28%) or better (27%)

than it actually is, according to the latest News Interest Index survey of 1,002 adults conducted Sept. 30-Oct. 3 by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press.

Those numbers are little changed since June, but the percentages that say news reports present the economy as better or worse than it actually is have shifted since October 2008. At that point – when the depths of the economic crisis were becoming more clear and the nation was nearing the presidential election – many thought coverage was overly negative; 45% said news reports presented the economy as it was, 40% said news reports made conditions seem worse than they were and just 11% thought news reports painted too rosy a picture.

News Interest vs. Coverage



News interest shows the percentage of people who say they followed this story most closely, Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Sept. 30-Oct. 3, 2010. News coverage shows the percentage of news coverage devoted to each story, Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, Sept. 27-Oct 3, 2010.

Looking at the public's news interest last week, nearly three-in-ten (28%) say they followed news about the economy most closely, while 12% say they followed news about this year's congressional elections that closely.

The media devoted 26% of its coverage to the November midterms, nearly three times the 9% of newshole taken up by economic news, according to a separate analysis by the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism.

Shifting Perceptions of Economic Coverage, 2008-2010

As the economic crisis worsened in 2008, the percentage of Americans that said news reports were portraying the economy as worse than it actually was rose slightly from June to October. This year, as the recovery slowed, perceptions of economic coverage changed little between June and October.

Press Coverage of the Economy

	Jun 2008	Oct 2008	Jun 2010	Oct 2010	Jun-Oct change
<i>News reports make economy seem...</i>	%	%	%	%	
About as it really is	48	45	36	39	+3
Worse than it really is	34	40	28	28	0
Better than it really is	14	11	23	27	+4
Don't know	4	4	13	7	
	100	100	100	100	

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Sept. 30-Oct. 3, 2010

The changes in perceptions of media coverage since October 2008, however, vary dramatically by party. Two years ago, more than half of Republicans (55%) said the press made the economy seem worse than it really was, a view shared by 42% of independents but just 27% of Democrats. Currently, 24% of Republicans say the press makes the economy look worse than it is — a 31-point drop since this time in 2008. Republicans are now much

Partisan Divide in Evaluations of Economic Coverage

	About as it really is	Worse than it really is	Better than it really is	DK
<i>October 2010</i>	%	%	%	%
Total	39	28	27	7=100
Republican	35	24	37	5=100
Democrat	47	29	17	7=100
Independent	32	31	30	7=100
<i>October 2008</i>	%	%	%	%
Total	45	40	11	4=100
Republican	34	55	9	2=100
Democrat	56	27	13	4=100
Independent	43	42	10	5=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Sept. 30-Oct. 3, 2010, Oct. 24-27, 2008.

more likely to say the press makes the economy look better than it really is (37% now vs. 9% two years ago). At each point, about a third of Republicans have seen coverage of the economy about as it is.

Fewer independents now say the economy is made to look worse than it is (42% in 2008, 31% now), while far more say the economy is portrayed as better than it is (10% in 2008, 30% now). In 2008, 43% of independents said the media showed the economy as it actually was; that has dropped to 32% this year.

The changes have been much more subtle among Democrats. Currently, 29% of Democrats say the press portrays the economy as worse than it really is, virtually the same as two years ago. Still, Democrats are slightly less likely to say the press is getting it right when it comes to the economy than they were in 2008 (56% then, 47% now).

How the Press Covers Education, the Terrorism Threat, Afghanistan

Roughly four-in-ten Americans say news reports portray the U.S. public education system (44%), the threat of terrorism in the U.S. (44%) and the situation in Afghanistan (38%) about the way they really are. The rest of the public is evenly divided over whether the press makes public education seem better (22%) or worse (23%) than it really is.

Americans, however, are more likely to say the media make the terrorism threat seem worse than it really is (28%) than make it seem better (17%). About a quarter (26%) say news reports make the situation in Afghanistan seem better than it really is, while slightly fewer (21%) say news reports make the situation there seem worse than it really is.

Although women generally are more likely to follow stories that concern children more closely than are men, there is no difference in their assessments of media coverage of schools. There also is no difference by party, overall, but conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats are notably more likely than others to say the press makes the U.S. education system look better than it is. About three-in-ten of each of these groups (29%) say this, a view shared by about half as many moderate and liberal Republicans and conservative and moderate Democrats. A quarter of independents also express this view.

Media Portrayals of Schools, the Terrorism Threat and Afghanistan

<i>News about _____ portray it ...</i>	About as it really is %	Worse than it really is %	Better %	DK %
U.S. public education	44	23	22	10=100
Threat of terrorism in U.S.	44	28	17	11=100
Situation in Afghanistan	38	21	26	15=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Sept. 30-Oct 3, 2010.

When it comes to the threat of terrorism on U.S. soil, Republicans (27%) are far more likely than Democrats (11%) to say the media portray the situation as better than it actually is; 21% of independents agree. Half of Democrats say the press portrays the terrorism threat about as it actually is, a view shared by 42% of independents and 39% of Republicans. There is no significant difference in the proportions of Republicans, Democrats and independents who say the media make the threat of terrorism look worse than it really is.

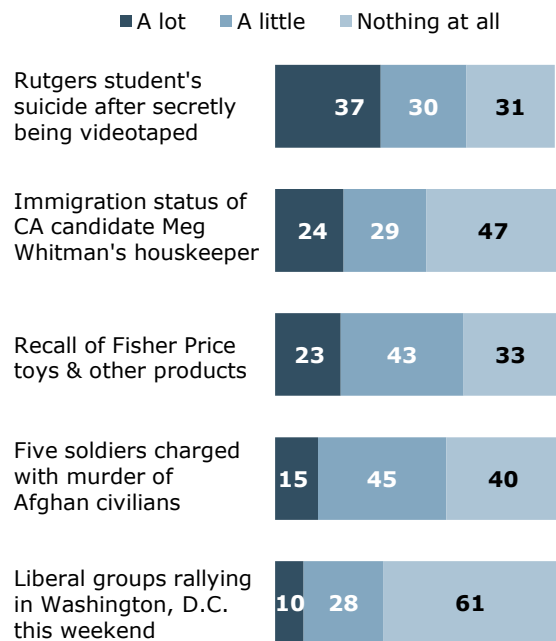
There also are no substantive differences in partisans' perceptions of how the media cover the situation in Afghanistan, but men are somewhat more likely than women (24% versus 18%) to say the press makes Afghanistan look worse than it really is.

What the Public is Hearing About

More than a third of Americans (37%) say they heard a lot last week about a Rutgers University student who committed suicide after other students streamed live video of him having a sexual encounter in his dorm room over the internet. About a quarter (24%) say they heard a lot about a controversy concerning the immigration status of California Republican gubernatorial candidate Meg Whitman's housekeeper. About as many (23%) say they heard a lot about a recall of Fisher Price toys and other products. Fewer had heard a lot about five soldiers charged with the murder of Afghan civilians (15%) or about a rally of liberal groups in Washington, D.C., last weekend (10%).

More than half heard at least a little about each of these stories – except the Washington rally. Just 38% say they heard at least a little about this. In late August, 42% had heard at least a little about talk show Glenn Beck's rally on the National Mall.

Fewer Heard About Rally, Recall



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Sept. 30-Oct 3, 2010. "Don't know/Refused" answers not shown.

Women (42%) were more likely to have heard a lot about the suicide of the Rutgers student than were men (32%), and Democrats (47%) were more likely to have heard a lot about this story than were independents (37%) or Republicans (33%). Though the story focused on a college freshman, just 24% of 18-to-29-year-olds say they heard a lot about it, compared with about four-in-ten (41%) older adults.

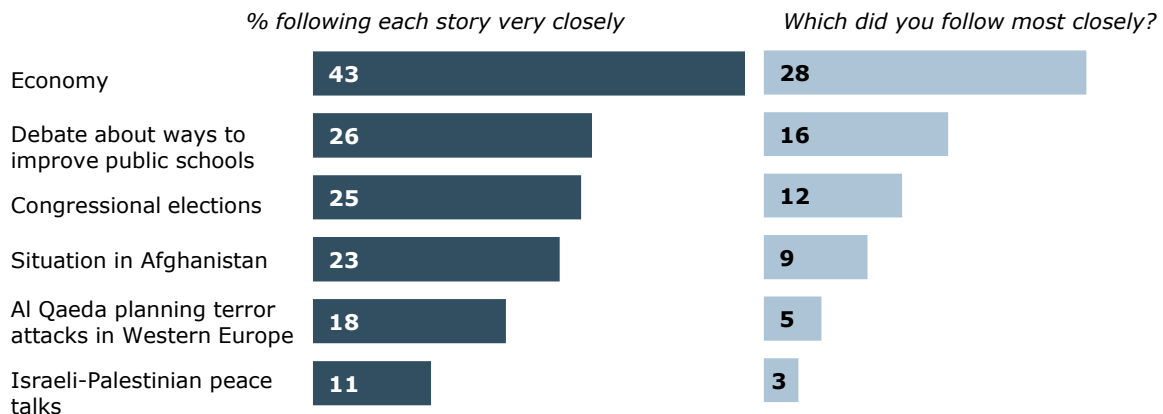
The Week's Top News

Though Americans focused most closely last week on economic news, 16% say they followed the debate over ways to improve the nation's public education system more closely than any other top story. About a quarter (26%) say they followed this story very closely. News about the education debate accounted for 6% of the newshole.

More than one-in-ten (12%) say they followed news about the midterm elections most closely. A quarter (25%) say they followed this news *very* closely, comparable to the levels of interest each week since the start of September. The media devoted 26% of coverage to the elections.

News about al Qaeda's alleged plans for terror attacks in Europe was the most closely followed story for 5%, while the story garnered 2% of coverage. Similarly, 3% say they followed news about peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians most closely; 2% of the news coverage was dedicated to that issue.

News Interest



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Sept. 30-Oct. 3, 2010.

The situation in Afghanistan attracted a little more attention from both the public and the media: 9% say this is the story they followed most closely, and 4% of the coverage focused on this subject. Almost a quarter say they followed news about Afghanistan *very* closely (23%), while 18% say the same about possible al Qaeda plans for terror attacks in Europe. About one-in-ten people (11%) say they followed news about the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks very closely.

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 coverage. 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. In the most recent week, data relating to news coverage were collected September 27 –October 3, and survey data measuring public interest in the top news stories of the week were collected September 30-October 3, from a nationally representative sample of 1,002 adults.

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 Monday through Sunday) PEJ compiles this data to identify the top stories for the week. (For more information about the Project for Excellence in Journalism's News Coverage Index, go to www.journalism.org.) The News Interest Index survey collects data from Thursday through Sunday to gauge public interest in the most covered stories of the week.

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International among a national sample of 1,002 adults living in the continental United States, 18 years of age or older, from September 30-October 3, 2010 (671 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 331 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 132 who had no landline telephone). Both the landline and cell phone samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin, region, and population density to parameters from the March 2009 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. The sample is also weighted to match current patterns of telephone status based on extrapolations from the 2009 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size within the landline sample. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Sample Size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1,002	4.0 percentage points
Republicans	250	7.5 percentage points
Democrats	335	6.5 percentage points
Independents	337	6.5 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.

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 seven 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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For more information about the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press' weekly News Interest Index, go to www.people-press.org.

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**PEW RESEARCH CENTER NEWS INTEREST INDEX
SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 3, 2010 OMNIBUS
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1002**

PEW.1-PEW.2 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

ASK ALL:

PEW.3 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>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
a. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy					
September 30-October 3, 2010	43	35	10	11	1
September 23-26, 2010	43	34	13	9	1
September 16-19, 2010	37	30	16	16	1
September 2-6, 2010	43	31	13	12	*
August 19-22, 2010	39	31	14	15	1
August 5-8, 2010	39	33	14	13	1
July 29-August 1, 2010	51	33	11	5	*
July 22-25, 2010	46	33	14	6	1
July 15-18, 2010	37	33	14	15	1
July 8-11, 2010	36	33	15	16	*
July 1-5, 2010	48	30	13	8	*
June 24-27, 2010	37	37	15	11	1
June 17-20, 2010	38	34	15	13	*
June 10-13, 2010	39	35	17	9	*
June 3-6, 2010	35	33	16	14	1
May 27-30, 2010	43	29	13	15	*
May 20-23, 2010	40	35	13	11	*
May 13-16, 2010	49	32	11	8	1
May 7-10, 2010	42	34	11	12	*
April 30-May 3, 2010	32	37	17	14	1
April 23-26, 2010	42	31	13	14	*
April 16-19, 2010	40	32	14	14	0
April 9-12, 2010	40	32	15	13	*
April 1-5, 2010	33	34	14	19	*
March 19-22, 2010	41	32	14	13	*
March 12-15, 2010	41	35	12	12	*
March 5-8, 2010	40	34	12	13	*
February 26-March 1, 2010	31	33	17	19	*
February 19-22, 2010	38	34	15	12	*
February 12-15, 2010	35	34	15	16	*
February 5-8, 2010	43	36	13	9	*
January 29-February 1, 2010	45	32	13	10	*
January 22-25, 2010	41	34	14	10	*
January 15-18, 2010	37	38	14	11	*
January 8-11, 2010	39	33	15	12	*
December 18-21, 2009	45	31	14	10	0
December 11-14, 2009	42	31	14	13	*
December 4-7, 2009	41	36	13	9	1
November 13-16, 2009	38	33	14	15	*
October 30-November 2, 2009	34	32	17	16	*
October 23-26, 2009	44	30	15	10	1
October 9-12, 2009	41	29	16	13	*
October 2-5, 2009	44	30	15	11	0
September 25-28, 2009	44	37	10	10	*
September 18-21, 2009	44	34	15	7	*

PEW.3 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
September 11-14, 2009	45	32	14	9	*
September 3-6, 2009	41	31	15	13	*
August 28-31, 2009	45	30	13	12	1
August 21-24, 2009	50	27	13	10	1
August 14-17, 2009	41	37	11	12	*
August 7-10, 2009	42	34	13	10	*
July 31-August 3, 2009	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
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

PEW.3 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
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	*
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
b. News about this year's congressional elections					
September 30-October 3, 2010	25	34	19	21	1
September 23-26, 2010	25	33	23	18	1
September 16-19, 2010	23	26	23	27	1

PEW.3 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
September 9-12, 2010	22	23	21	34	1
September 2-6, 2010	26	24	23	26	1
August 26-29, 2010	20	27	23	28	1
August 19-22, 2010	19	23	24	33	1
August 12-15, 2010	20	22	19	38	1
July 29-August 1, 2010	29	34	22	14	*
July 15-18, 2010	17	23	26	33	1
June 10-13, 2010	20	29	24	27	1
May 20-23, 2010	23	25	24	27	*
April 23-26, 2010	20	25	19	35	*
March 5-8, 2010	25	27	21	26	1
January 8-11, 2010	20	24	26	29	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
October 24-27, 2008: <i>News about candidates for local and statewide elections</i>	20	35	24	20	1
Early November, 2006: <i>News about candidates and election campaigns in your state and district</i>	27	37	18	17	1
Late October, 2006 (RVs)	27	45	17	11	*
Early October, 2006	21	38	25	15	1
Early September, 2006	16	32	28	23	1
August, 2006	20	29	28	22	1
June, 2006	18	30	29	21	2
May, 2006	18	28	30	23	1
Early November, 2002 (RVs)	27	46	18	9	*
Late October, 2002 (RVs)	28	34	24	13	1
Early October, 2002 (RVs)	21	46	22	10	1
Early September, 2002	17	29	29	24	1
Late October, 1998 (RVs)	26	45	20	9	*
Early October, 1998 (RVs)	21	43	24	11	1
Early September, 1998	17	32	28	23	*
Early August, 1998	13	30	28	23	1
June, 1998	9	27	33	30	1
April, 1998 ¹	16	33	24	27	*
November, 1994	18	42	25	15	*
Late October, 1994	14	38	31	16	1
Early October, 1994	23	34	23	19	1
September, 1994	19	34	29	18	*
November, 1990	38	34	17	11	*
October, 1990	18	32	28	22	*
c. Reports about Al Qaeda planning terror attacks in Western Europe					
September 30-October 3, 2010	18	31	24	25	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
June 24-27, 2010: <i>The man who attempted to bomb Times Square pleading guilty</i>	18	28	26	27	1
May 7-10, 2010: <i>The investigation and arrests following an attempted car bombing in Times Square in New York</i>	37	32	16	15	*
January 8-11, 2010: <i>The government's response to an attempted terrorist attack on a Detroit-bound plane on Christmas</i>	37	36	14	12	*
December 11-14, 2009: <i>The arrest of five Muslim American men in Pakistan with suspected ties to terrorists</i>	21	28	24	27	*

¹ In April 1998, September 1994 and October 1990, story was listed as "Candidates and election campaigns in your state."
In November 1990, story was listed as "Candidates and elections in your state."

PEW.3 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/ <u>Refused</u>
September 25-28, 2009: <i>News about recent terrorist plots in the United States</i>	32	38	17	14	0
September, 2007: <i>German officials stopping a terrorist plot to bomb several locations including a U.S. military base in Germany</i>	20	27	23	28	2
July 20-23, 2007: <i>Reports that the terrorist network Al Qaeda is gaining strength</i>	26	30	22	21	1
July 13-16, 2007	21	36	18	24	1
May 11-14, 2007: <i>The arrest of six men charged with plotting an attack on the Fort Dix Army base</i>	19	29	20	31	1
August, 2006: <i>British officials stopping a terrorist plot to blow up planes flying to the U.S.</i>	54	26	9	9	2
August, 2004: <i>The recent 'code orange' alert about the increased risk of a terrorist attack</i>	34	36	18	11	1
January, 2004	35	38	16	10	1
February, 2003	39	35	16	9	1
Early September, 2002: <i>The Homeland Security office issuing a 'code orange' alert about the increased risk of a terrorist attack</i>	39	29	16	15	1
July, 2002: <i>Defending against terrorist attacks in the U.S.</i>	51	33	9	6	1
June, 2002: <i>The arrest of a man for planning a "dirty bomb" attack on the U.S.</i>	30	30	24	15	1
June, 2002: <i>Defending against terrorist attacks in the U.S.</i>	45	35	12	7	1
April, 2002	46	36	10	7	1
Early April, 2002	49	35	10	5	1
January 2002: <i>Reports on the failed suicide bombing of an American Airlines jet coming from Paris</i>	20	34	22	23	1
December, 2001: <i>Terrorism attacks on the United States</i>	60	29	7	3	1
Mid-November, 2001	66	25	6	2	1
Early November, 2001	63	26	6	3	2
Mid-October, 2001	78	16	4	1	1
Early October, 2001: <i>News about the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington</i>	73	22	4	1	*
Mid-September, 2001	74	22	3	1	*
January, 2000: <i>The recent arrests of suspected terrorists in the U.S.</i>	23	36	23	17	1
September, 1998: <i>Reports about activities to prevent terrorism both here and abroad</i>	33	38	19	10	*
d. Debate about ways to improve public schools across the country					
September 30-October 3, 2010	26	31	21	21	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
February, 2001: <i>George W. Bush's education plan</i>	21	35	23	19	2
May, 1991: <i>President Bush's educational reform plan</i>	14	25	33	27	1
October, 1989: <i>The education summit held by Bush and the nation's governors</i>	15	29	25	30	1

PEW.3 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/ <u>Refused</u>
e. The current situation and events in Afghanistan					
September 30-October 3, 2010	23	37	23	15	1
September 23-26, 2010	29	40	19	11	1
September 9-12, 2010	30	33	20	17	*
July 29-August 1, 2010	34	35	22	9	*
July 15-18, 2010	22	33	23	22	*
July 8-11, 2010	23	32	24	20	1
July 1-5, 2010	29	34	23	14	1
June 17-20, 2010	21	30	27	22	*
May 20-23, 2010	22	33	25	20	*
April 9-12, 2010	21	29	27	22	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
June 24-27, 2010: <i>General Stanley McChrystal resigning as head of U.S. forces in Afghanistan after being quoted criticizing President Obama and his Afghanistan strategy</i>	28	31	19	21	1
February 19-22, 2010: <i>The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan</i>	24	36	21	19	*
January 8-11, 2010: <i>Suicide bombing that killed seven Americans at a CIA base in Afghanistan</i>	24	31	27	17	1
December 11-14, 2009: <i>The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan</i>	35	33	18	13	*
December 4-7, 2009: <i>President Obama's decision to send more U.S. troops to Afghanistan</i>	43	33	14	8	1
November 20-23, 2009: <i>The debate over whether to send more troops to Afghanistan</i>	29	31	17	22	1
November 13-16, 2009	29	28	20	22	1
November 6-9, 2009: <i>The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan</i>	22	35	24	18	*
October 30-November 2, 2009	24	32	21	22	*
October 23-26, 2009	32	29	21	18	*
October 16-19, 2009	25	31	20	24	*
October 9-12, 2009	31	31	21	17	0
September 25-28, 2009: <i>The debate over whether to send more troops to Afghanistan</i>	27	40	17	16	*
September 18-21, 2009: <i>The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan</i>	26	33	25	16	*
September 11-14, 2009	25	35	22	18	1
September 3-6, 2009	23	33	23	21	0
August 7-10, 2009	24	32	23	21	1
March 20-23, 2009	24	32	22	22	*
February 20-23, 2009: <i>The Obama administration's decision to send 17,000 additional U.S. troops to Afghanistan</i>	27	29	24	19	1
January 30-February 2, 2009: <i>The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan</i>	26	34	24	16	*
January 2-4, 2009	22	33	23	21	1
October 24-27, 2008	28	32	22	17	1
October 10-13, 2008: <i>The military effort in Afghanistan against Taliban fighters</i>	19	34	29	18	*
September 12-15, 2008	21	34	25	19	1
August 29-31, 2008	18	27	32	23	*
July 18-21, 2008	27	33	24	16	*
July 11-14, 2008	19	28	29	23	1
July 3-7, 2008	19	28	32	21	*

PEW.3 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/ <u>Refused</u>
June 20-23, 2008	20	30	30	20	*
Late July, 2002: <i>The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan</i>	41	38	13	7	1
June, 2002	38	32	20	9	1
April, 2002	39	39	13	8	1
Early April, 2002	45	37	12	5	1
February, 2002	47	39	8	5	1
January, 2002	51	35	9	4	1
December, 2001	44	38	12	5	1
Mid-November, 2001	49	36	11	3	1
Early November, 2001	45	36	12	6	1
Mid-October, 2001	51	35	10	3	1
f. Israeli-Palestinian peace talks					
September 30-October 3, 2010	11	26	29	34	1
September 16-19, 2010	13	21	26	40	*
September 2-6, 2010: <i>Israeli-Palestinian peace talks in Washington</i>	14	24	27	35	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
January 18-21, 2008: <i>George Bush's recent trip to the Middle East and news about renewed efforts at peace in the region</i>	17	30	25	28	*
January 11-14, 2008: <i>News about President Bush attending peace talks in Israel</i>	16	30	23	30	1
November 30-December 3, 2007: <i>The Middle East peace summit in Annapolis, MD</i>	11	25	24	39	1
June, 2003: <i>President Bush's summit meeting with world leaders and with the prime ministers of Israel and the Palestinian Authority</i>	20	36	24	19	1
January, 2001: <i>Renewed efforts at reaching a peace agreement in the Middle East</i>	21	32	29	17	1
July, 2000: <i>The Middle East peace summit at Camp David</i>	15	30	24	31	*
November, 1998: <i>The latest Mideast peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians</i>	18	33	28	19	2
Early October, 1998 (RVs): <i>Renewed efforts at reaching a peace agreement in the Middle East</i>	21	40	27	12	*
September, 1995: <i>The latest Mideast peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians</i>	11	32	29	27	1
Late September, 1993: <i>The peace accords between Israel and the PLO</i>	23	33	24	19	1
Early September, 1993: <i>Talks between Israel and the PLO about Arab self-rule for the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho</i>	19	31	23	26	1

ASK ALL:

PEW.4 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.]**

- 28 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy
- 16 Debate about ways to improve public schools across the country
- 12 News about this year's congressional elections
- 9 The current situation and events in Afghanistan
- 5 Reports about Al Qaeda planning terror attacks in Western Europe
- 3 Israeli-Palestinian peace talks
- 10 Some other story **(VOL.)**
- 17 Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

ASK ALL:

PEW.5 Now thinking about some topics in the news...In general, do you think news reports are making **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] [RANDOMIZE, KEEP IN SAME ORDER FOR ALL ITEMS: seem WORSE than it really is, seem BETTER than it really is]**, or are reports showing the situation about the way it really is?

		Worse than <u>it really is</u>	Better than <u>it really is</u>	About the way <u>it really is</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
a.	The U.S. economy				
	September 30-October 3, 2010	28	27	39	7
	June 24-27, 2010	28	23	36	13
	October 24-27, 2008	40	11	45	4
	June 13-16, 2008	34	14	48	4
	March 28-31, 2008	35	16	46	3
	November 9-12, 2007	42	17	35	6
	December, 2005	39	18	36	7
b.	The U.S. public education system				
	September 30-October 3, 2010	23	22	44	10
c.	The threat of terrorism in the U.S.				
	September 30-October 3, 2010	28	17	44	11
d.	The situation in Afghanistan				
	September 30-October 3, 2010	21	26	38	15

ASK ALL:

PEW.A How much if anything, have you heard about each of the following? Have you heard a lot, a little or nothing at all? **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]**

		<u>A lot</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Nothing at all</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
a.	The suicide of a Rutgers University student after a fellow student secretly put video of him having sex on the internet				
	September 30-October 3, 2010	37	30	31	1
b.	The recall of more than 10 million toys and other products by Fisher Price				
	September 30-October 3, 2010	23	43	33	1
	TREND FOR COMPARISON:				
	May 7-10, 2010: <i>The recall of many children's medicines, including children's Tylenol and Motrin</i>	29	40	30	*
c.	Controversy about the immigration status of a housekeeper employed by Meg Whitman, the Republican candidate for governor of California				
	September 30-October 3, 2010	24	29	47	*

PEW.A CONTINUED...

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Nothing at all</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
d. A rally in Washington, D.C. this weekend organized by a coalition of liberal groups September 30-October 3, 2010	10	28	61	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:				
September 23-26, 2010: <i>Talk show hosts Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert planning rallies in Washington D.C. next month</i>	13	33	54	1
August 26-29, 2010: <i>Talk show host Glenn Beck's upcoming rally at the Lincoln Memorial, on the anniversary of Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech</i>	16	26	58	*
August 19-22, 2010	11	17	71	*
September 18-21, 2009: <i>A September 12th rally in Washington to protest government spending and policies</i>	23	37	40	*
May 2-6, 2000: <i>The Million Mom March, a rally to be held in Washington, D.C. on Mother's Day in support of gun control</i>	10	42	48	*
e. Five U.S. soldiers who have been charged with the premeditated murder of civilians in Afghanistan September 30-October 3, 2010	15	45	40	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:				
June, 2005: <i>Reported mistreatment of prisoners held by the U.S. at Guantanamo Bay</i>	49	40	10	1
May, 2004: <i>Reports of mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners by U.S. troops</i>	58	34	7	1

PEW.6-PEW.8 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED