

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
JANUARY 30-FEBRUARY 2, 2009 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY
TOPLINE
N=1,002

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 recall of peanut products after a nationwide outbreak of salmonella	33	38	20	9	*=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:¹					
September 26-29, 2008: <i>Chinese milk powder</i>	17	27	24	31	1=100
February 22-25, 2008: <i>U.S. Beef recall</i>	29	36	19	16	*=100
November 9-12, 2007: <i>Chinese toys</i>	33	34	17	15	1=100
August 17-20, 2007: <i>Chinese toys/other products</i>	28	32	21	19	*=100
June 29-July 2, 2007: <i>Chinese food/other products</i>	26	30	20	24	*=100
May 4-7, 2007: <i>Contaminated pet food</i>	28	28	21	22	1=100
September, 1997: <i>Contaminated hamburger meat</i>	40	37	16	7	*=100
October, 2000: <i>Firestone tires</i>	42	34	16	8	*=100
b. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy	52	31	12	5	*=100
January 23-26, 2009	57	30	8	5	0=100
January 16-19, 2009	43	35	13	9	*=100
January 2-4, 2009	42	36	15	7	*=100
December 12-15, 2008	51	33	9	7	*=100
December 5-8, 2008	42	38	13	7	*=100
November 21-24, 2008	59	24	9	8	*=100
November 14-17, 2008	56	29	9	6	*=100
November 7-10, 2008	54	31	8	7	*=100
October 31-November 3, 2008	63	27	6	4	*=100
October 24-27, 2008	52	35	7	5	1=100
October 17-20, 2008	62	29	6	3	*=100
October 10-13, 2008	65	25	7	3	*=100
October 3-6, 2008	69	23	5	3	*=100
September 26-29, 2008	70	22	5	3	*=100
September 19-22, 2008	56	27	12	5	*=100
September 5-8, 2008	44	33	16	7	*=100
August 29-31, 2008	41	34	13	11	1=100
August 15-18, 2008	39	36	15	10	*=100
August 8-11, 2008	39	35	16	10	*=100
August 1-4, 2008	47	34	11	8	0=100
July 25-28, 2008	46	32	10	12	*=100

¹ September 23-26, 2008 asked about “Reports about contaminated milk powder in China.” February 22-25, 2008 asked about “The U.S. Department of Agriculture recalling over 100 million pounds of frozen beef.” November 9-12, 2007, asked about “The recall of various toys made in China that can be dangerous for children.” August 17-20, 2007, asked about “Safety issues involving toys and other products from China.” June 29-July 2, 2007, asked about “Safety issues involving food and other products from China.” May 4-7, 2007, asked about “Reports about contaminated pet food.” October, 2000, asked about “The recall of defective Firestone tires.” September, 1997, asked about “The recall of contaminated hamburger meat.”

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>
July 18-21, 2008	45	33	13	9	*=100
July 11-14, 2008	44	33	12	10	1=100
June 27-30, 2008	49	31	12	7	1=100
June 13-16, 2008	42	33	14	11	*=100
May 9-12, 2008	45	31	13	11	*=100
May 2-5, 2008	43	31	15	10	1=100
April 18-21, 2008	41	35	13	10	1=100
April 4-7, 2008	39	37	12	12	*=100
March 28-31, 2008	42	36	14	8	*=100
March 20-24, 2008	45	33	13	9	*=100
February 29-March 3, 2008	38	35	15	11	1=100
February 15-18, 2008	37	36	11	16	8=100
February 1-4, 2008	40	37	14	8	1=100
January 18-21, 2008	42	31	16	11	*=100
January 11-14, 2008	36	32	15	16	1=100
November 2-5, 2007	27	37	16	19	1=100
October 19-22, 2007	25	34	20	21	*=100
August 10-13, 2007	28	36	18	18	*=100
Mid-November, 2006	31	40	17	11	1=100
December, 2005	35	35	18	11	1=100
Early November, 2005	35	39	17	9	*=100
Mid-May, 2005	30	39	19	11	1=100
January, 2005	35	41	17	7	*=100
Mid-October, 2004	30	43	16	10	1=100
Early September, 2004	39	34	15	11	1=100
Mid-January, 2004	37	41	15	7	*=100
December, 2003	35	38	14	11	2=100
November, 2003	40	34	15	10	1=100
October, 2003	32	39	16	12	1=100
September, 2003	39	30	18	12	1=100
March, 2003	40	35	16	8	1=100
February, 2003	42	33	15	10	*=100
January, 2003	40	35	13	11	1=100
December, 2002	38	34	17	10	1=100
February, 2002	35	40	15	9	1=100
January, 2002	30	44	16	9	1=100
December, 2001	37	40	13	8	2=100
Mid-November, 2001	41	36	15	7	1=100
June, 2001	24	41	18	16	1=100
May, 2001	34	36	15	15	0=100
April, 2001	36	34	16	13	1=100
February, 2001	30	39	18	12	1=100
January, 2001	32	38	17	11	2=100
June, 1995	26	41	22	11	*=100
March, 1995	27	45	19	9	*=100
February, 1995	23	41	22	13	1=100
December, 1994	28	43	20	9	*=100
October, 1994	27	40	20	12	1=100
June, 1994	25	42	23	10	*=100
May, 1994	33	40	16	10	1=100
January, 1994	34	39	16	10	1=100
Early January, 1994	36	44	13	7	*=100
December, 1993	35	41	15	8	1=100

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, 1993	33	38	20	9	*=100
September, 1993	37	40	14	8	1=100
Early September, 1993	39	39	14	9	*=100
August, 1993	41	36	14	9	*=100
May, 1993	37	38	18	6	1=100
February, 1993	49	36	10	5	*=100
January, 1993	42	39	12	7	*=100
September, 1992	43	37	13	6	1=100
May, 1992	39	39	15	6	1=100
March, 1992	47	38	11	4	*=100
February, 1992	47	37	10	6	*=100
January, 1992	44	40	11	5	*=100
October, 1991	36	38	16	9	1=100
c. The debate in Congress over Barack Obama's economic stimulus plan	36	29	22	13	*=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:²					
January 16-19, 2009: Debate in Washington over the nation's economic problems	35	33	17	15	*=100
December 19-22, 2008: Bush administration plan for emergency loans to U.S. automakers	37	33	16	13	1=100
December 12-15, 2008: Debate over a government bailout for U.S. auto industry	40	33	18	9	*=100
December 5-8, 2008: Debate in Congress over a bailout for U.S. auto industry	34	38	17	11	*=100
November 21-24, 2008	41	26	17	15	1=100
October 3-6, 2008: Washington debates plan to stabilize markets	62	26	7	5	*=100
September 26-29, 2008	60	22	10	8	*=100
September 19-22, 2008: Wall Street turmoil	49	28	14	9	*=100
September 12-15, 2008: Government takeover of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac	28	35	19	17	1=100
March 20-24, 2008: Bear Stearns buyout	21	26	21	32	*=100
February 8-11, 2008: Bush and Congress agreeing on an economic stimulus plan	22	33	23	21	1=100
January 25-28, 2008	24	36	19	21	*=100
August, 1989: Savings and loan bailout	26	30	20	23	1=100
d. The impeachment and removal from office of the Illinois governor	20	31	27	22	*=100
January 9-12, 2009: Governor's impeachment	21	31	25	22	1=100

² January 16-19, 2009 asked about "The debate in Washington over what the government should do about the nation's economic problems." 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." September 26-29, 2008 and October 3-6, 2008 asked about "The debate in Washington over a plan to use government funds to stabilize financial markets." September 19-22, 2008 asked about "Turmoil among major financial institutions on Wall Street." September 12-15, 2008 asked about "The federal government taking control of the mortgage companies Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac." March 20-24, 2008 asked about "The buyout of Wall Street investment bank Bear Stearns." January 25-28, 2008 and February 8-11, 2008 asked about "President Bush and Congress agreeing on an economic stimulus plan." August, 1989 asked about: "Passage in Congress of a bill to bailout ailing savings and loan institutions."

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>
TREND FOR COMPARISON:³					
January 2-4, 2009	25	34	23	17	1=100
December 12-15, 2008	29	35	19	16	1=100
e. The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan	26	34	24	16	*=100
January 2-4, 2009	22	33	23	21	1=100
October 24-27, 2008	28	32	22	17	1=100
October 10-13, 2008⁴	19	34	29	18	*=100
September 12-15, 2008	21	34	25	19	1=100
August 29-31, 2008	18	27	32	23	*=100
July 18-21, 2008	27	33	24	16	*=100
July 11-14, 2008	19	28	29	23	1=100
July 3-7, 2008	19	28	32	21	*=100
June 20-23, 2008	20	30	30	20	*=100
Late July, 2002	41	38	13	7	1=100
June, 2002	38	32	20	9	1=100
April, 2002	39	39	13	8	1=100
Early April, 2002	45	37	12	5	1=100
February, 2002	47	39	8	5	1=100
January, 2002	51	35	9	4	1=100
December, 2001	44	38	12	5	1=100
Mid-November, 2001	49	36	11	3	1=100
Early November, 2001	45	36	12	6	1=100
Mid-October, 2001	51	35	10	3	1=100
f. The Super Bowl	19	15	26	38	1=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
February 1-4, 2008	20	21	27	32	*=100
February 9-12, 2007	26	21	16	36	1=100
February, 2000	31	22	15	32	0=100
February, 1990	22	22	19	37	0=100

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.**]

- 34 Reports about the conditions of the U.S. economy
 - 24 The debate in Congress over Barack Obama's economic stimulus plan
 - 11 The recall of peanut products after a nationwide outbreak of salmonella
 - 7 The Super Bowl
 - 7 The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan
 - 4 The impeachment and removal from office of the Illinois governor
 - 5 Some other story (VOL.)
 - 8 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
- 100

³ For January 2-4, 2009 the item was listed as "The Governor of Illinois appointing someone to fill Obama's Senate seat while under investigation for corruption." For December 12-15, 2008 the item was listed as "The arrest of the Illinois Governor on corruption charges associated with Barack Obama's vacant Senate seat."

⁴ From June 20-23, 2008 to October 10-13, 2008 the story was listed as "The military effort in Afghanistan against Taliban fighters."

Thinking about the new Obama administration...

Q.3 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 ROTATE]**

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Nothing at all</u>	<u>DK/Refused</u>
a. Barack Obama criticizing executive bonuses	46	32	22	*=100
b. Barack Obama's executive order to close Guantanamo Bay prison within a year	57	27	15	1=100
c. Barack Obama keeping his Blackberry phone	26	39	34	1=100
d. Barack Obama calling for improved relations with the Muslim world in an interview with an Arab TV channel	28	39	32	1=100
e. Chief Justice John Roberts giving the oath to Barack Obama for a second time after a mistake on inauguration day	38	40	22	*=100
f. Barack Obama pushing for quick action on his economic stimulus plan	69	24	7	*=100
g. The marketing of dolls with the names of the Obamas' daughters Sasha and Malia	14	38	47	1=100
h. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner's failure to pay some of his taxes on time	40	33	27	*=100
i. Barack Obama lifting a ban on funding for international organizations that provide abortions or abortion information	25	36	38	1=100

On another topic...

Q.4 On February 17th, television stations around the country are scheduled to change the way their signals are broadcast over the air from what is called an analog signal to a digital signal. How much, if anything, have you read or heard about this upcoming change?

81 A lot
 16 A little
 3 Nothing at all
 * Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
 100

Q.5 From what you know, do you think the upcoming switch to digital television signals WILL affect televisions you use in your house or WILL NOT affect your televisions?

20 Think it will affect
 77 Think it will not affect
 3 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
 100