

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
FEBRUARY 13-16, 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. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy	55	29	10	6	*= 100
January 30-February 2, 2009	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
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

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>
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
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
b. Congress passing Barack Obama's economic stimulus plan	50	32	13	5	*=100
February 6-9, 2009¹	41	33	15	11	*=100
January 30-February 2, 2009	36	29	22	13	*=100

¹ January 30-February 2, 2009 and February 6-9, 2009 asked about "The debate in Congress over Barack Obama's economic stimulus plan."

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:²					
January 16-19, 2009: <i>Debate in Washington over the nation's economic problems</i>	35	33	17	15	*=100
December 19-22, 2008: <i>Bush administration plan for emergency loans to U.S. automakers</i>	37	33	16	13	1=100
December 12-15, 2008: <i>Debate over a government bailout for U.S. auto industry</i>	40	33	18	9	*=100
December 5-8, 2008: <i>Debate in Congress over a bailout for U.S. auto industry</i>	34	38	17	11	*=100
November 21-24, 2008	41	26	17	15	1=100
October 3-6, 2008: <i>Washington debates plan to stabilize markets</i>	62	26	7	5	*=100
September 26-29, 2008	60	22	10	8	*=100
September 19-22, 2008: <i>Wall Street turmoil</i>	49	28	14	9	*=100
September 12-15, 2008: <i>Government takeover of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac</i>	28	35	19	17	1=100
March 20-24, 2008: <i>Bear Stearns buyout</i>	21	26	21	32	*=100
February 8-11, 2008: <i>Bush and Congress agreeing on an economic stimulus plan</i>	22	33	23	21	1=100
January 25-28, 2008	24	36	19	21	*=100
August, 1989: <i>Savings and loan bailout</i>	26	30	20	23	1=100
c. Alex Rodriguez admitting that he used performance-enhancing drugs	11	20	33	36	0=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:³					
Feb. 15-18, 2008: <i>Roger Clemens/Congress</i>	13	20	24	42	1=100
Dec. 14-17, 2007: <i>Mitchell Report</i>	16	24	29	31	*=100
March, 2005: <i>Reports of Steroid Use</i>	18	34	24	23	1=100
December, 2004: <i>Reports of Steroid Use</i>	22	28	23	27	0=100
d. A 10-year-old dog named Stump winning the Westminster dog show	5	12	21	61	1=100
e. A plane crashing into a house near Buffalo, New York, killing 50 people	32	39	16	13	*=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
Jan. 16-19, 2009: <i>Plane landing in Hudson</i>	44	34	14	8	*=100
November, 2001: <i>Crash of an American Airlines plane near JFK Airport in New York</i>	48	34	13	4	1=100
February, 2000: <i>Crash of an Alaskan Airlines jet near Los Angeles</i>	35	40	17	8	*=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."

³ For February 15-18, 2008, the story was listed as "Roger Clemens testifying before Congress about steroid use." December 14-17, 2007 the story was listed as "A report on steroid and performance-enhancing drug use in Major League Baseball." In March 2005 and December, 2005, the story was listed as "Recent reports of steroid use by some Major League Baseball players."

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>
December 1999: <i>Crash of EgyptAir plane off the coast of New England and its investigation</i>	30	44	15	10	1=100
June, 1999: <i>Crash of an American Airlines flight in Arkansas</i>	19	38	25	17	1=100
March, 1999: <i>The derailment of an Amtrak train in Illinois</i>	29	39	19	12	1=100
July 1996: <i>Crash of a Paris-bound TWA plane off the coast of New York</i>	69	23	6	2	*=100
February 1996: <i>Recent train crashes in Maryland, Colorado and New Jersey</i>	24	40	24	11	1=100
September, 1993: <i>Amtrak train wreck in Alabama</i>	40	37	15	7	1=100
February, 1990: <i>Crash of Columbian airliner near JFK airport in New York</i>	33	39	18	10	0=100

f. A California mother of six who recently gave birth to octuplets after receiving fertility treatment	26	33	24	17	*=100
February 6-9, 2008	23	33	27	17	*=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.**]

44	Congress passing Barack Obama's economic stimulus plan
22	Reports about the conditions of the U.S. economy
10	A plane crashing into a house near Buffalo, New York, killing 50 people
10	A California mother of six who recently gave birth to octuplets after receiving fertility treatment
3	Alex Rodriguez admitting that he used performance-enhancing drugs
1	A 10-year-old dog named stump winning the Westminster dog show
4	Some other story (VOL.)
6	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

Q.3 I'm going to read you a list of some of the ways that people feel about economic news? For each one, please tell me if you often feel this way, or not. First, [**READ AND RANDOMIZE**]. Do you often feel this way about economic news, or not?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	(VOL.) Don't know/ <u>Refused</u>
a. It seems like the same economic news all the time, nothing ever really changes	49	50	1=100
b. I don't always have enough background information to follow economic news stories	46	52	2=100
c. The economic news can be so depressing, I'd rather not hear about it	28	71	1=100
d. I feel better knowing what's going on, even if the news is bad	85	14	1=100

Q.3 CONTINUED...

		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	(VOL.) Don't know/ <u>Refused</u>
e.	I need to stay on top of economic news because it matters in the financial decisions I make	77	23	*=100
f.	I find myself looking for lighter news to get away from the negative economic news	44	54	2=100

[PLEASE PLACE Q.4 IN DIFFERENT MODULE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE]

On another topic...

Q.4 Are you hearing mostly good news about the economy these days, mostly bad news about the economy or a mix of both good and bad news?

		Jan 16-19 <u>2009</u>	Dec 5-8 <u>2008</u>
2	Hearing mostly good news about the economy	2	1
60	Hearing mostly bad news about the economy [OR]	67	80
37	A mix of good and bad	30	19
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)	<u>1</u>	<u>*</u>
100		100	100