

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
MAY 21-24, 2009 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY
TOPLINE
N=1000

Q.1 In the past few weeks, have you come to have a MORE favorable opinion of Barack Obama, a LESS favorable opinion of Barack Obama, or hasn't your opinion of him changed lately?

	<u>More favorable</u>	<u>Less favorable</u>	<u>Opinion has not changed</u>	<u>Don't know/Refused</u>
Barack Obama				
May 21-24, 2009	18	21	60	1
April 9-13, 2009	20	18	60	2
March 20-23, 2009	22	19	56	3
February 27-March 2, 2009	23	20	56	1
February 6-9, 2009	23	16	60	1

2008 CAMPAIGN

TREND FOR COMPARISON:¹

October 31-November 3, 2008	25	25	49	1
October 24-27, 2008	24	21	52	3
October 17-20, 2008	33	23	43	1
October 10-13, 2008	29	21	48	2
October 3-6, 2008	28	23	47	2
September 26-29, 2008	31	23	45	1
September 19-22, 2008	25	20	53	2
September 12-15, 2008	20	20	58	2
September 5-8, 2008	20	20	59	1
August 29-31, 2008	29	19	50	2
August 22-25, 2008	22	21	54	3
August 15-18, 2008	16	21	60	3
August 8-11, 2008	15	18	64	3
August 1-4, 2008	16	22	60	2
July 25-28, 2008	17	21	59	3
July 18-21, 2008	16	22	60	2
July 11-14, 2008	15	17	64	4
July 3-7, 2008	17	17	62	4
June 27-30, 2008	21	19	56	4
June 20-23, 2008	16	16	66	2
June 13-16, 2008	17	15	64	4
June 6-9, 2008	19	17	61	3
May 30-June 2, 2008	17	21	58	4
May 22-25, 2008	18	20	60	2
May 16-19, 2008	19	19	59	3
May 9-12, 2008	20	23	55	2
May 2-5, 2008	11	25	59	5
April 25-28, 2008	16	24	58	2
April 18-21, 2008	18	24	54	4
March 28-31, 2008	18	27	52	3
March 20-24, 2008	22	30	46	2

¹ For March 20-24, 2008, through October 31-November 3, 2008, the introduction read, "In the past few days." For September 12-15 through October 31-November 3, 2008, the question asked respondents to "Please think about each of the following candidates," Barack Obama, John McCain, Joe Biden and Sarah Palin in the 2008 presidential and vice presidential elections. For June 13-16, 2008, through September 5-8, 2008, the question was worded, "Please think about each of the following *presidential* candidates..." and asked about Barack Obama and John McCain. For March 20-24, 2008, through June 6-9, 2008, the list of presidential candidates included Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama and John McCain.

Q.2 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?”]

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
a. New federal regulations on the credit card industry	26	31	22	21	*
b. Barack Obama’s proposal requiring better fuel efficiency for automobiles	25	35	23	18	*
c. The debate over how America can best defend against terrorism	23	29	23	25	1
TREND FOR COMPARISON:²					
January 23-26, 2009: <i>Obama’s order to close the Guantanamo Bay military prison</i>	33	36	18	13	*
June 13-16, 2008: <i>Supreme Court ruling that foreign terror suspects at Guantanamo have the right to challenge their confinement</i>	21	23	24	32	*
d. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy	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	*

² The wording of the item for January 23-26, 2009, was: “President Obama’s order to close the military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.” The wording of the item for June 13-16, 2008, was: “The U.S. Supreme Court ruling that foreign terror suspects held at Guantanamo Bay have the right to challenge their confinement.”

Q.2 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
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
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	*
January, 2003	40	35	13	11	1
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

Q.2 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
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
e. Iran testing a missile that could reach Israel	20	29	25	26	*
July 11-14, 2008: The Iranian government firing test missiles capable of striking Israel	25	29	22	23	1
TREND FOR COMPARISON:³					
January 11-14, 2008: <i>Encounter between U.S. and Iranian ships</i>	25	26	21	27	1
December 7-10, 2007: <i>Intelligence report on Iran's nuclear weapons program</i>	25	31	20	23	1
October 26-29, 2007: <i>Mounting tensions</i>	26	34	21	18	1
September 28 – October 1, 2007: <i>Ahmadinejad visit to U.S.</i>	23	31	20	25	1
June 1-4, 2007: <i>US-Iranian talks</i>	19	27	27	26	1
February 23-26, 2007: <i>Mounting tensions</i>	29	37	18	15	1
February 16-19, 2007: <i>Iran supplying weapons to Iraqi insurgents</i>	28	32	20	19	1
February 2-5, 2007: <i>Mounting tensions</i>	33	38	18	10	1
f. Reports about swine flu in the U.S. and elsewhere	30	39	21	11	*
May 8-11, 2009	34	36	19	11	*
May 1-4, 2009: <i>Swine flu</i> ⁴	43	37	15	4	1
April 25-27, 2009	25	30	19	26	*

³ January 11-14, 2008 asked about: "News about a naval encounter between U.S. and Iranian ships." December 7-10, 2007 asked about: "A new intelligence report stating that Iran stopped its nuclear weapons program in 2003." October 26-29, 2007, February 23-26, 2007 and February 2-5, 2007 asked about: "Mounting tensions between the United States and Iran." September 28-October 1, 2007 asked about: "Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's recent trip to New York City where he spoke at Columbia University and the United Nations." June 1-4, 2007 asked about: "Recent talks between the United States and Iran." February 16-19, 2007 asked about: "Reports that Iran may be supplying weapons to insurgents in Iraq."

⁴ For May 1-4, 2009 the story was listed as: "The outbreak of swine flu in different parts of the world." For April 25-27, 2009 the story was listed as: "Reports of swine flu in Mexico and the U.S."

Q.2 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:⁵					
October 19-22, 2007: <i>Drug-resistant staph infection in the U.S.</i>	26	31	19	24	0
June 1-4, 2007: <i>Atlanta man traveling with dangerous form of Tuberculosis</i>	24	34	21	19	2
March, 2006: <i>Outbreaks of bird flu</i>	21	36	24	19	*
November, 2005: <i>Bird flu</i>	22	37	25	15	1
Late October, 2005: <i>Bird flu</i>	22	33	24	20	1
January 2004: <i>Mad cow disease in Washington State</i>	29	42	19	9	1
June 2003: <i>The lung disease called "SARS" that has spread from Asia</i>	28	44	19	8	1
May 2003: <i>SARS</i>	39	39	15	6	1
September, 2002: <i>Cases of West Nile virus</i>	34	36	21	8	1
Early September, 2001: <i>Mad cow disease in Europe</i>	18	34	27	20	1
March, 2001: <i>Foot-and-mouth disease</i>	22	33	22	22	1
January, 1998: <i>Bird flu</i>	19	36	25	20	*

Q.3 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.**]

- 24 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy
- 21 Reports about swine flu in the U.S. and elsewhere
- 11 The debate over how America can best defend against terrorism
- 11 New federal regulations on the credit card industry
- 9 Barack Obama's proposal requiring better fuel efficiency for automobiles
- 4 Iran testing a missile that could reach Israel
- 11 Some other story (**SPECIFY**)
- 9 Don't know/Refused

On another topic...

Q.4 All in all, do you think the government is on the right track or the wrong track in the way it is handling economic problems facing the nation?

		<u>Mar 27-30, 2009</u>	<u>Feb 20-23, 2009</u>	<u>Jan 16-19, 2009</u>
53	Right track	50	47	31
39	Wrong track	39	34	48
8	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	11	19	21

⁵ October 19-22, 2007 asked about: "The growing danger of a drug-resistant staph infection in the U.S." June 1-4, 2007 asked about: "An Atlanta man with a dangerous form of tuberculosis who traveled to Europe against the advice of government health officials." March, 2006 asked about: "Outbreaks of bird flu in different parts of the world." Late October and November, 2005 asked about: "The outbreak of bird flu in Asia and Europe." January, 2004 asked about: "Reports about a case of mad cow disease in Washington state." May and June, 2003 asked about: "The lung disease called "SARS" that has spread from Asia." September, 2002 asked about: "Cases of West Nile Virus spread by mosquitoes." Early September, 2001 asked about: "The spread of mad cow disease in Europe." March, 2001 asked about: "The outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease among livestock in Europe." January, 1998 asked about: "The outbreak of an Asian flu spread by birds or chickens."

Q.5	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 RANDOMIZE]			Nothing	DK/
		<u>A lot</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>at all</u>	<u>Refused</u>
a.	A fossil that researchers believe links humans with early primates	18	34	48	1
b.	A mother who fled with her cancer-stricken son to avoid court-ordered treatment	33	38	28	*
c.	The arrest of four men accused of plotting to bomb New York synagogues and attack military aircraft	29	37	33	*
Q.6	Thinking about some topics that have been in the news recently... Please tell me whether you are hearing too much, too little or the right amount about each of the following [READ AND RANDOMIZE]				
		<u>Too much</u>	<u>Too little</u>	<u>Right amount</u>	<u>DK/Refused</u>
a.	America's policies about torture	34	26	38	2
b.	Steroid use in baseball	53	15	28	4
c.	The swine flu	45	11	44	1
d.	Political instability in Pakistan	17	43	37	3
	November 16-19, 2007 ⁶	12	30	51	7
e.	Problems with the U.S. auto industry	39	18	42	1
f.	Government plans for dealing with the economy	19	31	49	1

⁶ For November 16-19, 2007, the introduction to this item read: "Do you think news organizations are giving too much coverage, too little coverage, or the right amount of coverage to...".