

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
August 28-31, 2009 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1006

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	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	*

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>
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
June, 1994	25	42	23	10	*
May, 1994	33	40	16	10	1
January, 1994	34	39	16	10	1

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>
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. Debate over health care reform	40	28	17	14	1
August 21-24, 2009	49	24	12	15	1
August 14-17, 2009	39	31	15	15	1
TREND FOR COMPARISON:¹					
August 7-10, 2009: <i>Debate in Washington over health care reform</i>	40	27	17	15	1
July 31-August 3, 2009	47	26	14	13	1
July 24-27, 2009	44	28	15	13	*
July 17-20, 2009	33	31	13	21	2
July 10-13, 2009	24	29	20	27	*
June 26-29, 2009	29	26	20	25	1
June 19-22, 2009	28	28	20	23	*
June 12-15, 2009	29	26	18	26	*
May 15-18, 2009: <i>Debate over Obama's health care plans</i>	25	30	20	24	*
March 6-9, 2009: <i>Obama proposing a \$630 billion fund for overhauling health care</i>	41	32	13	14	*
September, 1994: <i>The Clinton administration's health care reform proposals</i>	32	41	18	9	*
June, 1994	34	40	19	7	*
May, 1994	37	37	16	9	1
January, 1994	38	38	15	9	*
Early January, 1994	40	40	14	6	*
December, 1993	45	35	12	7	1
October, 1993	44	32	17	6	1
September, 1993	49	34	11	6	*
August, 1993: <i>Reports about the White House task force on health care reform headed by Hillary Clinton</i>	27	32	25	15	1
June, 1993	28	38	19	15	*
May, 1993	30	30	25	14	1

¹ June 12-15, 2009 to August 7-10, 2009 asked about: "Debate in Washington over health care reform." May 15-18, 2009 asked about: "Debate over Barack Obama's health care plans." March 6-9, 2009 asked about: "Barack Obama proposing a \$630 billion fund for overhauling the U.S. health care system." September, 1993 through September, 1994 asked about: "The Clinton Administration's health care reform proposals." May, 1993 through August, 1993 asked about: "Reports about the White House task force on health care reform headed by Hillary Clinton."

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>
c. The death of Massachusetts Senator Ted Kennedy	28	32	22	17	*
TREND FOR COMPARISON					
June 13-16, 2008: <i>The death of Meet the Press host Tim Russert</i>	28	23	19	30	*
January 10-15, 2007: <i>The death and memorial services of Gerald Ford</i>	25	37	24	13	1
June, 2004: <i>Death and memorial services of Ronald Reagan</i>	40	30	17	11	2
July, 1999: <i>The death of John F. Kennedy, Jr., his wife and sister-in-law in a plane crash near Martha's Vineyard</i>	54	29	13	4	0
May, 1994: <i>Death and funeral of Richard Nixon</i>	36	37	17	10	*
d. Reports about swine flu and the availability of a vaccine	26	33	22	18	*
TREND FOR COMPARISON²:					
May 21-24, 2009	30	39	21	11	*
May 8-11, 2009	34	36	19	11	*
May 1-4, 2009	43	37	15	4	1
April 25-27, 2009	25	30	19	26	*
e. The discovery of a 29-year-old woman in California who had been kidnapped and held captive since she was 11	27	34	21	17	1
TREND FOR COMPARISON					
January 26-29, 2007: <i>News about two kidnapped boys who were found in Missouri</i>	23	31	21	24	1
January 19-22, 2007: <i>Two kidnapped boys found in Missouri</i>	27	35	20	17	1
March, 2003: <i>The Utah girl found alive nine months after being kidnapped from her home</i>	34	36	20	10	*
September, 2002: <i>News stories about kidnapped children</i>	49	30	14	6	1
f. Reports about CIA interrogation methods and an investigation into alleged abuse of terrorism suspects	21	22	23	33	1
TREND FOR COMPARISON					
August 21-24, 2009: <i>The CIA reportedly hiring contractors to assassinate Al Qaeda leaders</i>	11	17	24	44	3
July 17-20, 2009: <i>Reports about a CIA program to kill Al Qaeda leaders that was hidden from Congress</i>	12	19	20	47	3

² May 21-24, 2009 and May 8-11, 2009 asked about: "Reports about swine flu in the U.S. and elsewhere." 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 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.]

- 30 Debate over health care reform
- 17 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy
- 17 The death of Massachusetts Senator Ted Kennedy
- The discovery of a 29-year-old woman in California who had been kidnapped and held 14 captive since she was 11
- 9 Reports about swine flu and the availability of a vaccine
- Reports about CIA interrogation methods and an investigation into alleged abuse of terrorism suspects
- 3 Some other story (VOL.)
- 7 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

Now thinking about the swine flu that's been in the news lately ...

Q.3 How worried are you that you or someone in your family will be exposed to this flu – very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried, or not worried at all?

		May 1-4 2009	<i>Staph infection</i> ³ Oct 19-22, 2007	<i>SARS</i> May 2003
10	Very worried	8	12	12
35	Somewhat worried	28	32	23
34	Not too worried	37	32	31
21	Not worried at all	27	23	32
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	*	1	2

Here are a few questions about what experts have been saying about a possible outbreak of the swine flu. Not everyone will have heard about these.

Q.4 From what you have heard, is the swine flu more likely to infect [older adults] or more likely to infect [children and young adults]? [RANDOMIZE ITEMS]

- 23 Older adults
- 67 Children and young adults
- 10 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

Q.5 The government is developing a vaccine for the swine flu, which is expected to be ready this fall. From what you have heard, is the government recommending that people get the swine flu vaccine INSTEAD of the regular flu vaccine or IN ADDITION TO the regular flu vaccine?

- 7 Instead of
- 71 In addition to
- 23 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

Q.6 From what you've seen and heard, are most cases of the swine flu life-threatening, or not?

- 25 Most life-threatening
- 69 Most not life-threatening
- 6 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

³ Oct 19-22, 2007 asked: "Now thinking about the drug-resistant staph infection that's been in the news lately. How worried are you that you or someone in your family will be exposed to this infection – very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried, or not worried at all?" In May 2003, the question read, "One last question about the new disease known as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS. How worried are you that you or someone in your family will be exposed to SARS – very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried, or not at all worried?"

Q.7 How confident are you in the government's ability to deal with the swine flu? **[READ]**

18	Very confident
47	Somewhat confident
19	Not too confident
15	Not at all confident
2	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

Q.8 How confident are you in the media's ability to accurately report on the swine flu? **[READ]**

17	Very confident
36	Somewhat confident
26	Not too confident
20	Not at all confident
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)