

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
October 16-19, 2009 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1004

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. A boy thought to be aboard a runaway hot air balloon who was later found safe	21	32	24	22	0
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
March 23-26, 2007: <i>The missing Boy Scout found alive in North Carolina</i>	16	30	25	28	1
October 25-November 4, 1987: <i>The little girl in Texas who was rescued after falling into a well</i>	69	21	8	2	*
b. Debate over health care reform	36	28	15	21	*
October 9-12, 2009	37	29	14	19	1
October 2-5, 2009	39	29	16	16	*
September 25-28, 2009	45	31	12	12	0
September 18-21, 2009	44	26	19	11	*
September 11-14, 2009	44	27	14	15	*
September 3-6, 2009	40	26	16	17	0
August 28-31, 2009	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	*

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>
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
c. The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan	25	31	20	24	*
October 9-12, 2009	31	31	21	17	0
September 25-28, 2009 ²	27	40	17	16	*
September 18-21, 2009	26	33	25	16	*
September 11-14, 2009	25	35	22	18	1
September 3-6, 2009	23	33	23	21	0
August 21-24, 2009	14	32	26	28	1
August 7-10, 2009	24	32	23	21	1
March 20-23, 2009	24	32	22	22	*
February 20-23, 2009	27	29	24	19	1
January 30-February 2, 2009	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	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	*
June 20-23, 2008	20	30	30	20	*
Late July, 2002	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
d. Reports about swine flu and the vaccine	32	35	18	14	0
October 9-12, 2009	38	35	16	11	*
September 18-21, 2009 ³	34	31	25	9	*

² September 25-28 asked about "The debate over whether to send more troops to Afghanistan." August 21-24, 2009 asked about "Afghanistan's presidential election." February 20-23, 2009 asked about "The Obama administration's decision to send 17,000 additional U.S. troops to Afghanistan." From June 20-23, 2008 to October 10-13, 2008 the story was listed as "The military effort in Afghanistan against Taliban fighters." All other dates asked about "The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan."

³ From August 28-31 through September 18-21 question was worded "Reports about swine flu and the availability of a vaccine." 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.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>
September 11-14, 2009	30	36	21	12	*
September 3-6, 2009	26	32	25	17	0
August 28-31, 2009	26	33	22	18	*
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. Recent gains in the stock market	15	23	19	43	*
July 24-27, 2009	23	25	24	28	*
March 13-16, 2009 ⁴	38	31	14	17	0
March 6-9, 2009	35	31	15	19	*
February 20-23, 2009	31	32	20	17	*
November 21-24, 2008	50	23	15	12	*
October 17-20, 2008	54	31	9	6	*
October 10-13, 2008	59	26	9	6	*
July 3-7, 2008	22	29	23	26	*
March 14-17, 2008	25	31	23	21	*
January 25-28, 2008	29	28	19	23	1
August 17-20, 2007	21	24	22	33	*
July 27-30, 2007	15	26	21	37	1
March 2-5, 2007	21	28	25	26	*
Early September, 2002	27	30	20	22	1
Late July, 2002	33	33	15	18	1
March, 2001	27	27	18	27	1
Mid-October, 2000	20	26	23	31	1
April, 2000	18	28	23	31	*
Early April, 2000	19	29	20	32	*
March, 2000	23	29	21	26	1
March, 1999	18	29	22	31	*
January, 1999	24	28	19	28	1
Early September, 1998	32	31	20	17	*
Mid-August, 1998	17	23	21	39	*
January, 1998	21	25	23	31	*
Mid-November, 1997	25	36	18	20	1
Early November, 1997	16	29	22	33	*
September, 1997	14	22	23	40	1
April, 1997	17	21	22	40	*
February, 1996	12	20	25	42	1
f. The current situation and events in Iraq	23	30	24	23	*
September 11-14, 2009	21	33	30	16	*
August 21-24, 2009	25	35	22	18	1
August 14-17, 2009	19	38	23	18	*

TREND FOR COMPARISON⁵:

⁴ October 10-13, 2008 and November 21-24, 2008 through March 6-9, 2009 asked about "Recent major drops in the U.S. stock market." March 2-5, 2007 asked about "The recent drop in the U.S. stock market." In Early November, 1997, the story was not asked as part of a list and was worded: "Thinking about last Monday when the stock market dropped, how closely did you follow what was happening?" For all other dates, the story was listed as "Recent major ups and downs in the U.S. stock market."

⁵ July 2-5, 2009 asked about: "U.S. troops withdrawing from Iraqi cities." February 27-March 2, 2009 asked about "Barack Obama's plan to withdraw most U.S. troops from Iraq by August 2010." From March 20-23, 2009 to April 24-27, 2009 and from March 30-April 2, 2007 through December 12-15, 2008 the story was listed as "The current situation and events in Iraq." From May, 2003 to March 23-26, 2007, the story was listed as "News about the current situation in Iraq." From March 20-24, 2003 to April 11-16, 2003,

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>
July 2-5, 2009	25	34	20	21	0
April 24-27, 2009	21	35	25	19	*
March 20-23, 2009	25	37	21	17	*
February 27-March 2, 2009	40	37	13	9	1
December 12-15, 2008	24	35	25	16	*
November 21-24, 2008	32	31	24	13	0
November 14-17, 2008	24	33	27	16	*
October 31-November 3, 2008	30	35	22	12	1
October 24-27, 2008	29	35	25	11	*
October 10-13, 2008	23	34	30	13	*
October 3-6, 2008	29	33	28	10	*
September 5-8, 2008	24	37	26	13	*
August 29-31, 2008	22	32	29	16	1
August 22-25, 2008	26	31	27	15	1
August 1-4, 2008	27	40	23	10	*
July 25-28, 2008	28	33	22	17	*
July 18-21, 2008	33	35	20	12	*
July 11-14, 2008	24	35	24	16	1
July 3-7, 2008	25	35	25	15	*
June 20-23, 2008	25	36	24	15	*
May 9-12, 2008	29	35	21	14	1
May 2-5, 2008	26	35	25	13	1
April 25-28, 2008	29	35	23	12	1
April 18-21, 2008	29	39	20	11	1
April 11-14, 2008	25	39	20	15	1
April 4-7, 2008	25	37	23	15	*
March 28-31, 2008	29	40	19	11	1
March 20-24, 2008	30	38	19	13	*
March 14-17, 2008	29	38	23	10	*
March 7-10, 2008	28	39	18	15	*
February 29-March 3, 2008	28	40	19	13	*
February 8-11, 2008	24	35	25	16	*
February 1-4, 2008	28	39	22	11	*
January 25-28, 2008	23	35	26	16	*
January 18-21, 2008	31	33	20	15	1
January 11-14, 2008	25	38	21	16	*
January 4-7, 2008	27	38	20	15	*
December 14-17, 2007	26	32	24	18	*
December 7-10, 2007	28	37	21	14	*
November 23-26, 2007	25	37	21	16	1
November 16-19, 2007	31	37	19	12	1
November 9-12, 2007	29	38	19	13	1
November 2-5, 2007	31	35	18	15	1
October 26-29, 2007	28	37	21	13	1
October 19-22, 2007	28	37	20	15	*
October 12-15, 2007	26	36	18	19	1
October 5-8, 2007	29	33	22	16	*
September 28 – October 1, 2007	30	41	18	11	*

the story was listed as “News about the war in Iraq.” From Early October, 2002, to March 13-16, 2003, the story was listed as “Debate over the possibility that the U.S. will take military action in Iraq.” In Early September, 2002, the story was listed as “Debate over the possibility that the U.S. will invade Iraq.”

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>
September 21-24, 2007	32	38	17	13	*
September 14-17, 2007	31	36	18	15	0
September 7-10, 2007	32	34	20	14	*
August 30 – September 2, 2007	31	34	18	16	1
August 24-27, 2007	34	36	18	12	*
August 17-20, 2007	33	34	18	15	*
August 10-13, 2007	36	37	14	13	*
August 3-6, 2007	29	40	19	12	*
July 27-30, 2007	28	36	19	16	1
July 20-23, 2007	28	34	21	16	1
July 13-16, 2007	25	41	17	16	1
July 6-9, 2007	36	34	18	12	*
June 29-July 2, 2007	32	35	19	13	1
June 22-25, 2007	30	36	18	15	1
June 15-18, 2007	30	37	20	13	*
June 8-11, 2007	32	38	15	14	1
June 1-4, 2007	30	36	20	13	1
May 24-27, 2007	33	36	18	12	1
May 18-21, 2007	36	34	15	14	1
May 11-14, 2007	30	34	18	17	1
May 4-7, 2007	38	37	15	10	*
April 27-30, 2007	27	35	21	16	1
April 20-23, 2007	28	35	22	15	*
April 12-16, 2007	34	33	20	13	*
April 5-9, 2007	33	39	16	11	1
March 30-April 2, 2007	34	37	16	13	*
March 23-March 26, 2007	31	38	18	12	1
March 16-19, 2007	34	34	17	15	*
March 9-12, 2007	34	37	16	13	*
March 2-5, 2007	37	37	16	9	1
February 23-26, 2007	36	36	15	13	*
February 16-19, 2007	30	36	19	14	1
February 9-12, 2007	37	34	18	11	*
February 2-5, 2007	38	38	17	7	*
January 26-29, 2007	36	38	15	11	*
January 19-22, 2007	37	34	18	10	1
January 12-15, 2007	38	36	17	8	1
January, 2007	46	40	8	5	1
January 5-8, 2007	40	32	16	12	0
December, 2006	42	39	12	7	*
November 30-December 3, 2006	40	36	13	11	*
Mid-November, 2006	44	38	12	6	*
September, 2006	33	43	14	8	2
August, 2006	41	39	12	7	1
June, 2006	37	43	13	6	1
May, 2006	42	35	15	7	1
April, 2006	43	36	13	7	1
March, 2006	43	38	12	6	1
February, 2006	39	42	12	6	1
January, 2006	40	40	12	7	1
December, 2005	45	38	11	5	1
Early November, 2005	41	40	13	6	*
Early October, 2005	43	36	15	6	*

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 September, 2005	32	40	20	7	1
July, 2005	43	37	13	6	1
Mid-May, 2005	42	42	11	5	*
Mid-March, 2005	40	39	14	5	2
February, 2005	38	45	13	4	*
January, 2005	48	37	11	4	*
December, 2004	34	44	15	6	1
Mid-October, 2004	42	38	11	8	1
Early September, 2004	47	37	9	6	1
August, 2004	39	42	12	6	1
July, 2004	43	40	11	6	*
June, 2004	39	42	12	6	1
April, 2004	54	33	8	5	*
Mid-March, 2004	47	36	12	4	1
Early February, 2004	47	38	10	4	1
Mid-January, 2004	48	39	9	4	*
December, 2003	44	38	11	6	1
November, 2003	52	33	9	5	1
September, 2003	50	33	10	6	1
Mid-August, 2003	45	39	10	5	1
Early July, 2003	37	41	13	8	1
June, 2003	46	35	13	6	*
May, 2003	63	29	6	2	*
April 11-16, 2003	47	40	10	2	1
April 2-7, 2003	54	34	9	2	1
March 20-24, 2003	57	33	7	2	1
March 13-16, 2003	62	27	6	4	1
February, 2003	62	25	8	4	1
January, 2003	55	29	10	4	2
December, 2002	51	32	10	6	1
Late October, 2002	53	33	8	5	1
Early October, 2002	60	28	6	5	1
Early September, 2002	48	29	15	6	2

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.**]

32	Debate over health care reform
20	Reports about swine flu and the vaccine
14	A boy thought to be aboard a runaway hot air balloon, who was later found safe
9	The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan
6	Recent gains in the stock market
6	The current situation and events in Iraq
6	Some other story (VOL.)
8	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

Q.3 Do you think news organizations are giving too much coverage, too little coverage or the right amount of coverage to each of the following? [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]

		<u>Too much coverage</u>	<u>Too little coverage</u>	<u>Right amount of coverage</u>	<u>DK/Refused</u>
a.	The current situation and events in Iraq	11	36	49	3
	March 20-23, 2009	8	45	43	4
	February 6-9, 2009: <i>Recent elections in Iraq</i>	5	47	36	12
	June 20-23, 2008	11	42	44	3
	April 25-28, 2008	12	44	42	2
	January 25-28, 2008	13	35	47	5
	December 14-17, 2007	15	36	44	5
	November 16-19, 2007	14	34	48	4
	November 2-5, 2007 ⁶	18	33	43	6
	July 20-23, 2007	18	28	48	6
	June 1-4, 2007	23	23	47	7
b.	Debate over health care reform	16	36	46	2
	October 2-5, 2009	21	35	40	4
	July 17-20, 2009: <i>Debate in Washington over health care reform</i>	6	45	44	6
c.	The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan	11	39	46	4
	March 20-23, 2009	7	54	36	3
	June 20-23, 2008 ⁷	7	55	34	4

Now thinking about the war in Afghanistan ...

Q.4 I'm going to read you a list of some ways that people may feel about Afghanistan war 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 Afghanistan war news, or not?

		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	(VOL.) Don't know/ <u>Refused</u>
a.	It seems like the same news about the war in Afghanistan all the time, nothing ever really changes	56	42	1
b.	I don't always have enough background information to follow the news about the war in Afghanistan	53	46	1
c.	News about the war in Afghanistan can be so depressing I'd rather not hear about it	26	72	1
d.	I feel guilty for not following news about the war in Afghanistan more closely	20	80	1

⁶ For November 2-5, 2007 this item was not part of a list, it was a stand alone question and asked about: "The war in Iraq."

⁷ For June 20-23, 2008 the item was listed as "The military effort in Afghanistan against Taliban fighters."

Q.5 How much confidence do you have that the U.S. military is giving the public an accurate picture of how the war in Afghanistan is going? **[READ]**

- 19 A great deal of confidence
- 43 A fair amount of confidence
- 24 Not too much confidence –OR–
- 12 No confidence at all
- 2 Don't know/Refused (**VOL. DO NOT READ**)

Q.6 How much confidence do you have that the press is giving the public an accurate picture of how the war in Afghanistan is going? **[READ]**

- 5 A great deal of confidence
- 35 A fair amount of confidence
- 36 Not too much confidence –OR–
- 23 No confidence at all
- 1 Don't know/Refused (**VOL. DO NOT READ**)

NO QUESTION 7

Q.8 From what you've seen and heard, do you think a health care reform bill will pass over the next year or not?

		Oct 9-12
		<u>2009</u>
57	Yes, will	45
38	No, will not	46
5	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	9

QUESTIONS 9 AND 10 WERE ASKED AT THE END OF THE SURVEY, AFTER A SERIES OF UNRELATED OMNIBUS QUESTIONS.

ROTATE Q.9 AND Q.10

Q.9 Since the start of military action in AFGHANISTAN, about how many U.S. military personnel have been killed? To the best of your knowledge, have there been ... **[READ IN ORDER]** troop deaths?

- 15 Around 400
- 25 Around 900**
- 25 Around 1,500 [OR]
- 27 Around 2,500
- 8 Don't know/Refused (**VOL. DO NOT READ**)

ROTATE Q.9 AND Q.10

Q.10 Since the start of military action in IRAQ, about how many U.S. military personnel have been killed? To the best of your knowledge, have there been ... **[READ IN ORDER]** troop deaths?

Oct 16-19 <u>2009</u>						
22	Around 2,300					
42	Around 4,300					
17	Around 6,300					
13	Around 8,300					
6	DK/Ref (VOL.)					
Mar 26-29 <u>2009</u>		Dec 4-7 <u>2008</u>		April 4-7 <u>2008</u>	Feb 28- Mar 2 <u>2008</u>	
12	Around 2,300	14	Around 2,200	6	11	Around 2,000
22	Around 3,300	22	Around 3,200	15	35	Around 3,000
38	Around 4,300	40	Around 4,200	60	28	Around 4,000
26	Around 5,300	20	Around 5,200	16	23	Around 5,000
2	DK/Ref (VOL.)	4	DK/Ref (VOL.)	3	3	DK/Ref (VOL.)
Aug 9-16 <u>2007</u>	June 22-25 <u>2007</u>		Feb <u>2007</u>	Dec <u>2006</u>		
8	9	Around 1,500	5	6	Around 1,000	
19	20	Around 2,500	17	24	Around 2,000	
54	49	Around 3,500	55	47	Around 3,000	
17	12	Around 4,500	17	16	Around 4,000	
--	3	Other (VOL.)	1	1	Other (VOL.)	
2	7	DK/Ref (VOL.)	5	6	DK/Ref (VOL.)	
April <u>2006</u>		Oct <u>2005</u>		June <u>2005</u>	April <u>2004</u>	
4	Around 500	5	Around 500	4	28	Under 500
16	Around 1,500	23	Around 1,000	13	55	500 to 1,000
53	Around 2,500	48	Around 2,000	54	6	1,000 to 2,000
19	Around 3,500	19	Around 3,000	24	4	More than 2,000
1	Other (VOL.)	1	Other (VOL.)	--	--	Other (VOL.)
7	DK/Ref (VOL.)	4	DK/Ref (VOL.)	5	7	DK/Ref (VOL.)

Correct answers for each trend highlighted in bold