

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
MARCH 2009 POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE UPDATE SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
MARCH 26-29, 2009
N=1,003

Q.1A Thinking about recent economic news, including what's been happening on Wall Street and in Washington D.C.... How well would you say you understand the economic situation and the government's economic policies? Would you say...[**READ**]

		TREND FOR COMPARISON	
		-NII- Sept 26-29 ¹ <u>2008</u>	-NII- Sept 19-22 <u>2008</u>
24	Very well	26	24
49	Fairly well	49	48
20	Not too well [OR]	18	22
7	Not at all well	6	6
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)	<u>1</u>	*
<u>100</u>		<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

Now I would like to ask you about some things that have been in the news recently. Not everyone will have heard of them...

RANDOMIZE Q.1 THROUGH Q.6

Q.1 Do you happen to know which political party has a majority in the U.S. House of Representatives? [**READ AND RANDOMIZE**]

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>
March 26-29, 2009	86	12	2=100
December 4-7, 2008	82	11	7=100
February 28-March 2, 2008	70	26	4=100
August 16-19, 2007	78	19	3=100
February, 2007	76	10	14=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:²			
May, 2008	53	15	32=100
Late October, 2006	4	58	38=100
April, 2006	6	64	30=100
April, 2004	8	56	36=100
June, 2001	34	31	35=100
August, 1999	8	55	37=100
December, 1998	11	56	33=100
June, 1997	6	50	44=100
April, 1996	8	70	22=100
June, 1995	5	73	22=100
July, 1994	60	18	22=100
February, 1994	58	42	n/a=100
September, 1992	46	9	45=100

¹ For September 26-29, 2008 and September 19-22, 2008 an introduction before the topic read: "Now thinking about recent economic news and what's been happening on Wall Street..." And the question was worded "How well would you say you understand recent financial problems involving Wall Street investment banks and other companies with ties to the housing market?"

² In May 2008, and from May 1992 through Late October 2006 this was asked as an open-ended question, without offering response options for Democrats and Republicans. In May 1989 the question was worded "As a result of the election last year which party now has the most members in the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington?"

Q.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
June, 1992	44	12	44=100
May, 1992	49	12	39=100
May, 1989 <i>Political Knowledge Survey</i>	68	16	16=100

Correct answers for each trend highlighted in bold

RANDOMIZE Q.1 THROUGH Q.6

Q.2 Do you happen to know if Pakistan and Afghanistan do or do not share a border?

- 69 Yes, they do (*Correct*)
- 15 No, they do not
- 16** Don't know/Refused (**VOL. DO NOT READ**)
- 100

RANDOMIZE Q.1 THROUGH Q.6

Q.3 Do you happen to know if the Dow Jones Industrial Average is currently closer to **[READ IN ORDER]**?

		<u>Dec 4-7 2008</u>		<u>Feb 28- Mar 2, 2008</u>		<u>Aug 16-19, 2007</u>	
20	3,000	18	2,000	16	4,000	16	2,000
14	5,000	8	4,000	9	5,000	14	4,000
40	8,000 [OR]	45	8,000 [OR]	16	10,000 [OR]	13	8,000 [OR]
4	11,000	5	13,000	31	12,000	41	13,000
<u>22</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)	<u>24</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)	<u>28</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)	<u>16</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)
100		100		100		100	

<u>May 2000³</u>	
5	3,000
4	5,000
28	10,000 [OR]
1	20,000
<u>62</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)
100	

Correct answers for each trend highlighted in bold

RANDOMIZE Q.1 THROUGH Q.6

Q.4 Thinking about the military effort in Afghanistan – do you happen to know if Barack Obama has decided to increase, decrease, or not substantially change the number of U.S. troops stationed in Afghanistan?

- 66 Increase (*Correct*)
- 21 Decrease
- 7 Not substantially change
- 6** Don't know/Refused (**VOL.**)
- 100

³ In May, 2000 the question was worded: “Do you happen to know at what level the Dow Jones Industrial average is currently trading? Is it about...”

RANDOMIZE Q.1 THROUGH Q.6

Q.5 Which of the following U.S. Automakers has NOT received emergency loans from the government over the past year? [READ, RANDOMIZE 1-3 WITH 4 ALWAYS LAST]

- 51 Ford (*Correct*)
- 7 General Motors
- 13 Chrysler
- 24 Or have all three received emergency loans?
- 5 Don't know/Refused (**VOL. DO NOT READ**)
- 100

RANDOMIZE Q.1 THROUGH Q.6

Q.6 What job does Timothy Geithner currently hold? Is he [READ AND RANDOMIZE]

- 58 The Treasury Secretary (*Correct*)
- 6 The CEO of CitiGroup
- 8 President Obama's Press Secretary
- 4 The House Majority Leader
- 24 Don't know/Refused (**VOL. DO NOT READ**)
- 100

RANDOMIZE Q.7 THROUGH Q.12

Q.7 What job does Hillary Clinton currently hold? Is it [READ AND RANDOMIZE]...

- | | | | |
|----------|--|--------------------------|--|
| | | Dec 4-7 | |
| | | <u>2008</u> ⁴ | |
| 85 | Secretary of State (<i>Correct</i>) | 3 | Secretary of the Treasury |
| 8 | Senator from New York | 87 | Secretary of State (<i>Correct</i>) |
| 2 | Ambassador the United Nations | 2 | Ambassador to the United Nations |
| 2 | Secretary of Health and Human Services | 3 | Or something else? |
| <u>3</u> | DK/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ) | <u>5</u> | DK/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ) |
| 100 | | 100 | |

TREND FOR COMPARISON:

Is Condoleezza Rice... [READ AND RANDOMIZE]

- Feb 28-
- Mar 2, 2008
- 70 The U.S. Secretary of State (*Correct*)
- 20 The Secretary of Defense
- 2 The Governor of Louisiana [OR]
- 1 The President of Harvard University
- 7 Don't know/Refused (**VOL. DO NOT READ**)
- 100

⁴ For December 4-7, 2008 the question asked: "To what cabinet position has Barack Obama recently nominated Hillary Clinton? Is it..." The order of the first three responses was randomized and "something else" was always read last.

RANDOMIZE Q.7 THROUGH Q.12

Q.8 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?

		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
<u>2</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)	<u>4</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)
100		100		100	100	

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.)
<u>2</u>	<u>7</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)
100	100		100	100	

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.)
<u>7</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)	<u>4</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	DK/Ref (VOL.)
100		100		100	100	

Correct answers for each trend highlighted in bold

RANDOMIZE Q.7 THROUGH Q.12

Q.9 Do you happen to know if the national unemployment rate is currently closer to **[READ IN ORDER]**?

3	4%
53	8% (Correct)
24	12%
18	16%
<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)
100	

RANDOMIZE Q.7 THROUGH Q.12

Q.10 Do you happen to know who is chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve Board? Is it...
[READ AND RANDOMIZE]

		Feb. 28- <u>Mar. 2, 2008</u>
45	Ben Bernanke (<i>Correct</i>)	35
16	Alan Greenspan	27
7	Paul Volcker	8
12	Henry Paulson	5
<u>20</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)	<u>25</u>
100		100

RANDOMIZE Q.7 THROUGH Q.12

Q.11 As far as you know, which foreign country holds the most U.S. government debt? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

71	China	
10	Japan	
12	Saudi Arabia	
4	Canada	
<u>3</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)	
100		

RANDOMIZE Q.7 THROUGH Q.12

Q.12 As the U.S. government provides assistance to banks and other financial institutions, is the government trying to get them? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

83	To lend more money	
15	To lend less money	
<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)	
100		