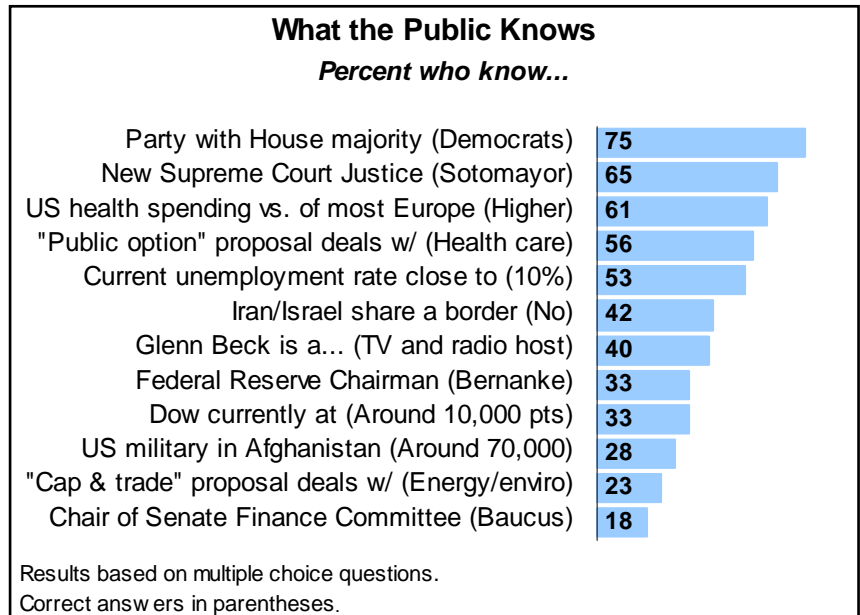---

Take the Quiz *Before* You Read the Report!

As part of the Pew News IQ Project, people are invited to test their own news IQ by taking an interactive knowledge quiz now available on the Pew Research Center website. The short quiz includes the same questions that were included in the national poll. Participants will instantly learn how they did on the quiz in comparison with the general public as well as with people like them. To take the quiz, click on this link:

http://pewresearch.org/politicalquiz/

Pew Research News IQ Quiz
WELL KNOWN: PUBLIC OPTION, SONIA SOTOMAYOR
LITTLE KNOWN: CAP AND TRADE, MAX BAUCUS

The U.S. government has a lot on its plate right now, which means that the American public has a lot to keep up with in the news. The Pew Research Center's latest News IQ Quiz finds a mixed picture of public awareness on key issues, with majorities aware of some key facts on health care and the economy. But other questions stump large segments of the public, including the current size of the U.S. military commitment in Afghanistan, the approximate level of the Dow Jones Industrial Average, and the name of a key environmental proposal being debated in Congress.

On health care, which has dominated news coverage for much of the summer, most Americans are aware that the U.S. spends more per capita on health care than most major European nations. And more than half (56%) know that

What the Public Knows
Percent who know...

Party with House majority (Democrats)	75
New Supreme Court Justice (Sotomayor)	65
US health spending vs. of most Europe (Higher)	61
"Public option" proposal deals w/ (Health care)	56
Current unemployment rate close to (10%)	53
Iran/Israel share a border (No)	42
Glenn Beck is a... (TV and radio host)	40
Federal Reserve Chairman (Bernanke)	33
Dow currently at (Around 10,000 pts)	33
US military in Afghanistan (Around 70,000)	28
"Cap & trade" proposal deals w/ (Energy/enviro)	23
Chair of Senate Finance Committee (Baucus)	18

Results based on multiple choice questions.
Correct answers in parentheses.

the debate in Congress over a "public option" pertains to health care legislation and not some other substantive policy area. By contrast, far fewer (18%) can correctly identify Max Baucus as chair of the Senate Finance Committee that has developed legislation to reform the U.S. health care system.

The current news quiz, conducted Oct. 1-4 among 1,002 adults reached on cell phones and landlines, asked 12 multiple choice questions about people, events and issues in the news. Respondents answered an average of 5.3 questions correctly.

The quiz included three items on the economy. The same proportion now as in the Pew Research Center's March news quiz were able to correctly identify the unemployment rate: 53% picked 10% out of four choices. A sizeable minority overestimated the current rate (33%), far more than the number who underestimated it (5%). A third of those interviewed (33%) could correctly name Ben Bernanke as Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board and the same percentage correctly estimated the current level of the Dow Jones Industrial Average (around 10,000 points).

Beyond health care and the economy, the survey also addressed public awareness of some facts about foreign affairs. Only about four-in-ten (42%) knew that Iran and Israel do *not* share a border; 27% said the two countries do share a border and 30% did not answer. In March, 69% knew that Pakistan and Afghanistan do share a border.

The current news quiz also touches on the subject of Afghanistan. Fewer than three-in-ten (28%) correctly estimated that the U.S. has roughly 70,000 military personnel stationed in Afghanistan, while 25% believe the U.S. has a larger military presence there and 17% think that that U.S. force is smaller.

Among the other topics on the quiz, 75% of the public knows that Democrats control the U.S. House of Representatives, about the same as in June 2009 but a little lower than in the months immediately following the 2008 election. Nearly two-thirds (65%) could correctly identify Sonia Sotomayor as the newest member of the U.S. Supreme Court. Fewer than half (40%) could identify Glenn Beck as a TV and radio talk show host; and among the most difficult questions in the survey, just 23% of Americans are aware that legislation often referred to as "cap and trade" concerns energy and environmental policy.

Knowledge and the Health Care Debate

In the debate over health care reform, there are frequent references to how much the U.S. spends per capita in comparison with other nations. A majority of Americans (61%) answered correctly that the U.S. spends more per person on health care than most major European nations. Similarly, 56% know that the "public option" is part of the debate over health care reform. Still, a third of the public (33%) does not know what policy area discussion of a "public option" refers to, and 11% guessed incorrectly.

The hardest question on the quiz asked respondents to pick from a list the name of the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee that is tasked with writing health care reform legislation. Just 18% correctly identified Montana Senator Max Baucus; another 26% chose other leading political figures (11% named Dianne Feinstein, 8% Kathleen Sibelius and 7% John McCain); more than half (56%) declined to answer.

Men generally outperformed women on the news quiz, but women held their own on two of the three questions on health care (U.S. spending vs. Europe, and the public option). More men (23%) than women (12%) could pick Max Baucus as chair of the Finance Committee.

Americans under the age of 30 were less likely than older Americans to know that the "public option" refers to health care legislation, or to correctly identify Baucus as the chair of Senate Finance. Young people were just as likely as those 50 and older to know that U.S. spends more per capita on health care than many major European nations. More than two-thirds (67%) of those between the ages of 30 and 49 got this question right.

Not surprisingly, college graduates had

Health Reform Knowledge	
Health spending in U.S. is ____	
than in major European nations	*%*
Higher	**61**
Lower	15
About the same	4
Don't know	20
	100
The "public option" discussed	
in Congress deals with…	*%*
Energy and environment	3
Health care	**56**
Banking reform	2
Unemployment	6
Don't know	33
	100
Chair of Senate committee	
working on health reform bill…	*%*
Max Baucus	**18**
Kathleen Sebelius	8
Dianne Feinstein	11
John McCain	7
Don't know	56
	100

Q.12, Q.5, Q.11. Correct answers in bold. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Who Knows Health Care

Percent who know…

	U.S. spends more on health	"Public option" deals with health care	Baucus chairs Finance Cmte
Percent correct	%	%	
Total	61	56	18
Men	59	59	23
Women	63	53	12
College grad	70	74	32
Some college	64	54	18
HS or less	55	46	9
18-29	57	40	11
30-49	67	59	18
50+	59	61	20
Republican	62	59	18
Democrat	67	59	15
Independent	60	56	21
$75k or more	72	70	30
$30k to $74,999	66	60	16
Less than $30k	51	42	8

among the best scores on the health care questions. For example, nearly three-quarters (74%) are aware that the "public option" is a health care proposal.

Partisan Knowledge Gap

Across the 12 knowledge items tested, the biggest gap between Democrats and Republicans is on the item identifying Glenn Beck as a TV and radio talk show host. About half of Republicans (49%) knew Beck's occupation, compared with 32% of Democrats.

There was a double-digit gap between Republicans and Democrats on three other items as well, but there was little difference on the items dealing with health care, the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan, or whether Iran and Israel share a border.

No Partisan Differences on Knowledge of Health Reform, But Reps More Aware in Other Areas				
	Rep	Dem	Ind	R-D Diff
Question & Answer…	%	%	%	
Glenn Beck is a… (TV and radio host)	49	32	45	+17
"Cap and trade" deal with… (Energy/enviro)	27	15	29	+12
New Supreme Court Justice (Sotomayor)	73	61	68	+12
Party with House majority (Democrats)	84	74	72	+10
Current unemployment rate (10%)	58	49	56	+9
Federal Reserve Chairman (Bernanke)	35	27	40	+8
Dow currently at… (Around 10,000 pts)	35	28	39	+7
Chair of Senate Finance Cmte (Baucus)	18	15	21	+3
Iran/Israel share a border (No)	41	39	51	+2
U.S. military in Afghanistan (Around 70,000)	29	28	29	+1
"Public option" bills deal with… (Health care)	59	59	56	--
U.S. health spending vs. Europe (Higher)	62	67	60	-5

Knowledge on Average

To measure overall news knowledge, the 12 multiple choice questions were used to create an index ranging from zero (none correct) to 12 (all correct). On average, the public correctly answered approximately five out of 12 questions (mean 5.3). The current news IQ quiz proved harder than the one conducted earlier this year. In March, the public correctly answered an average of 7.4 out of 12 possible questions.

In the current knowledge test, just 2% of the public answered all questions correctly (12 out of 12) and 6% failed to get a single question right. Fewer than half (44%) answered at least half the questions correctly.

Overall, Americans 50 and older answered an average of 5.8 questions correctly, while those younger than 30 answered an average of just four questions. College graduates got the highest

How Americans Scored on the Pew News IQ Quiz	
	Average # correct out of 12 questions
TOTAL	5.3
Sex	
Men	5.9
Women	4.7
Age	
18-29	4.0
30-49	5.4
50+	5.8
Party Affiliation	
Republican	5.7
Democrat	5.0
Independent	5.7
Education	
College grad	7.1
Some college	5.3
High school or less	4.2
Correctly answered at least…	%
2 questions	89
4 questions	67
6 questions	44
8 questions	25
10 questions	12
All 12 questions	2
Out of 12 questions.	

scores among all of the groups analyzed (7.1 correct answers), while those with some college education averaged 5.3 correct answers and those with a high school education or less got 4.2 right.

Republicans and independents each averaged 5.7 correct answers, compared with five correct among Democrats. Men correctly answered an average of 5.9 of the 12 items; women answered an average of 4.7.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Results for this report are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International among a nationwide sample of 1,002 adults, 18 years of age or older, from Oct. 1-4 (702 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 300 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 105 who had no landline telephone. Both the landline and cell phone samples were provided by Survey Sampling International.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race/ethnicity, region, and population density to parameters from the March 2008 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. The sample is also weighted to match current patterns of telephone status and relative usage of landline and cell phones (for those with both), based on extrapolations from the 2008 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size within the landline sample.

The following table shows the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Sample Size	Plus or minus…
Total sample	1002	4 percentage points
Republicans	257	7.5 percentage points
Democrats	334	6.5 percentage points
Independents	335	6.5 percentage points

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

ABOUT THE CENTER

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press is an independent opinion research group that studies attitudes toward the press, politics and public policy issues. We are sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts and are one of seven projects that make up the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

The Center's purpose is to serve as a forum for ideas on the media and public policy through public opinion research. In this role it serves as an important information resource for political leaders, journalists, scholars, and public interest organizations. All of our current survey results are made available free of charge.

All of the Center's research and reports are collaborative products based on the input and analysis of the entire Center staff consisting of:

Andrew Kohut, Director
Scott Keeter, Director of Survey Research
Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock, Associate Directors
Michael Remez, Senior Writer
Robert Suls, Shawn Neidorf, Leah Christian and Jocelyn Kiley, Research Associates
Alec Tyson, Research Analyst

READ TO ALL: Next I'd like to ask about some things that have been in the news. Please answer as best you can. If you don't know the answer just tell me and we'll move to the next question.

RANDOMIZE Q.1-Q.12 (DO NOT RANDOMIZE BY FORM)
ASK ALL:
Q.1   Do you happen to know which political party has a majority in the U.S. House of Representatives? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

	Democrats	Republicans	(VOL.) DK/Ref
October 1-4, 2009	**75**	13	12
Mid-June, 2009	**76**	12	12
March 26-29, 2009	**86**	12	2
December 4-7, 2008	**82**	11	7
February 28-March 2, 2008	**70**	26	4
August 16-19, 2007	**78**	19	3
February, 2007	**76**	10	14
TREND FOR COMPARISON:[1]			
May, 2008	**53**	15	32
Late October, 2006	4	**58**	38
April, 2006	6	**64**	30
April, 2004	8	**56**	36
June, 2001	34	**31**	35
August, 1999	8	**55**	37
December, 1998	11	**56**	33
June, 1997	6	**50**	44
April, 1996	8	**70**	22
June, 1995	5	**73**	22
July, 1994	**60**	18	22
February, 1994	**58**	42	n/a
September, 1992	**46**	9	45
June, 1992	**44**	12	44
May, 1992	**49**	12	39
May, 1989 *Political Knowledge Survey*	**68**	16	16

*Correct answers for each trend in bold

---

[1]   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?"

RANDOMIZE Q.1-Q.12 (DO NOT RANDOMIZE BY FORM)
ASK ALL:
Q.2   Do you happen to know if Iran and Israel do or do not share a border?

      27   Yes, they do
      42   No, they do not *(Correct)*
      30   Don't know/Refused **(VOL. DO NOT READ)**

TREND FOR COMPARISON:

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

	March 26-29, 2009
Yes, they do *(Correct)*	69
No, they do not	15
Don't know/Refused **(VOL. DO NOT READ)**	16

RANDOMIZE Q.1-Q.12 (DO NOT RANDOMIZE BY FORM)
ASK ALL:
Q.3   Do you happen to know if the Dow Jones Industrial Average is currently closer to **[READ IN ORDER]**?

		March 26-29, 2009		Dec 4-7, 2008		Feb 28-Mar 2, 2008	
7	3,000	20	3,000	18	2,000	16	4,000
5	6,000	14	5,000	8	4,000	9	5,000
33	**10,000** [OR]	**40**	**8,000** [OR]	**45**	**8,000** [OR]	16	10,000 [OR]
2	16,000	4	11,000	5	13,000	**31**	**12,000**
52	DK/Ref **(VOL.)**	22	DK/Ref **(VOL.)**	24	DK/Ref **(VOL.)**	28	DK/Ref **(VOL.)**

	Aug 16-19, 2007		May 2000[2]
16	2,000	5	3,000
14	4,000	4	5,000
13	8,000 [OR]	**28**	**10,000** [OR]
41	**13,000**	1	20,000
16	DK/Ref **(VOL.)**	62	DK/Ref **(VOL.)**

        Correct answers for each trend highlighted in bold

RANDOMIZE Q.1-Q.12 (DO NOT RANDOMIZE BY FORM)
ASK ALL:
Q.4   Does the so-called "cap and trade" legislation being discussed in Congress deal with… **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

      23   Energy and environment *(Correct)*
      11   Health care
      13   Banking reform
      5   Unemployment
      48   Don't know/Refused **(VOL. DO NOT READ)**

---

[2]   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-Q.12 (DO NOT RANDOMIZE BY FORM)
ASK ALL:
Q.5   Does the so-called "public option" legislation being discussed in Congress deal with… **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

    3   Energy and environment
    56   Health care *(Correct)*
    2   Banking reform
    6   Unemployment
    33   Don't know/Refused **(VOL. DO NOT READ)**

RANDOMIZE Q.1-Q.12 (DO NOT RANDOMIZE BY FORM)
ASK ALL:
Q.6   About how many U.S. military personnel are currently in Afghanistan **[READ IN ORDER]**?

    17   Around 20,000
    28   Around 70,000 *(Correct)*
    18   Around 150,000 **[OR]**
    7   Around 200,000
    29   Don't know/Refused **(VOL. DO NOT READ)**

RANDOMIZE Q.1-Q.12 (DO NOT RANDOMIZE BY FORM)
ASK ALL:
Q.7   Do you happen to know if the national unemployment rate is currently closer to **[READ IN ORDER]**?

			March 26-29, 2009
4	5%	3	4%
53	10% *(Correct)*	53	8% *(Correct)*
15	15%	24	12%
18	20%	18	16%
10	Don't know/Ref. **(VOL. DO NOT READ)**	2	Don't know/Ref. **(VOL. DO NOT READ)**

RANDOMIZE Q.1-Q.12 (DO NOT RANDOMIZE BY FORM)
ASK ALL:
Q.8   Do you happen to know who is chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve Board? Is it…
        [READ AND RANDOMIZE]

		Mar 26-29, 2009	Feb. 28-Mar 2, 2008
33	Ben Bernanke *(Correct)*	45	35
15	Alan Greenspan	16	27
3	Paul Volcker	7	8
4	Henry Paulson	12	5
45	Don't know/Refused **(VOL. DO NOT READ)**	20	25

RANDOMIZE Q.1-Q.12 (DO NOT RANDOMIZE BY FORM)
ASK ALL:
Q.9   Do you happen to know who Glenn Beck is? Is he… **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

    40   A television and radio talk show host *(Correct)*
    6   A member of the Federal Reserve Board
    5   The Secretary of Defense
    1   A Hip Hop artist
    48   Don't know/Refused **(VOL. DO NOT READ)**

RANDOMIZE Q.1-Q.12 (DO NOT RANDOMIZE BY FORM)
ASK ALL:
Q.10   Can you tell me who is the newest justice to join the Supreme Court? Is it… **[READ IN RANDOMIZE]**?

        65   Sonia Sotomayor *(Correct)*
         3   Ruth Bader Ginsburg
         1   Eric Holder **[OR]**
         2   Antonin Scalia
        29   Don't know/Refused **(VOL. DO NOT READ)**

RANDOMIZE Q.1-Q.12 (DO NOT RANDOMIZE BY FORM)
ASK ALL:
Q.11   Can you tell me who is chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, which is working on a bill to reform
        the health care system? Is it… **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

        18   Max Baucus *(Correct)*
         8   Kathleen Sebelius
        11   Dianne Feinstein **[OR]**
         7   John McCain
        56   Don't know/Refused **(VOL. DO NOT READ)**

RANDOMIZE Q.1-Q.12 (DO NOT RANDOMIZE BY FORM)
ASK ALL:
Q.12   Is health care spending per person in the U.S. higher, lower, or about the same as in most major European
        nations? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE "HIGHER AND "LOWER]**

        61   Higher in U.S. *(Correct)*
        15   Lower in U.S.
         4   About the same
        20   Don't know/Refused **(VOL. DO NOT READ)**