



THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER  
For The People & The Press

FRIDAY, AUGUST 10, 2012

Pew Research News IQ Quiz

---

## What Voters Know about Campaign 2012

Take the Latest Quiz Online!

**Before you read the report**, we invite you to test your own News IQ by taking the latest interactive knowledge quiz now available on the Pew Research Center website. The short quiz includes many of the questions that were included in a national poll. Participants will instantly learn how they did on the quiz in comparison with the voting public as well as with people like them. To take the latest quiz, click on this link:

<http://pewresearch.org/politicalquiz/>

---

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

**Andrew Kohut**

President, Pew Research Center

**Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock**

Associate Directors

**Scott Keeter**

Director of Survey Research

1615 L St, N.W., Suite 700

Washington, D.C. 20036

Tel (202) 419-4350

Fax (202) 419-4399

[www.peoplepress.org](http://www.peoplepress.org)

---

## Pew Research News IQ Quiz

# What Voters Know about Campaign 2012

As the presidential campaign enters its final three months, most voters say they already know what they need to know to form a clear impression of the candidates. But fewer say this about Mitt Romney than about Barack Obama.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the latest Pew Research Center knowledge survey finds that while voters know many key things about the candidates and their issue positions, voters are less familiar with Romney than with Obama.

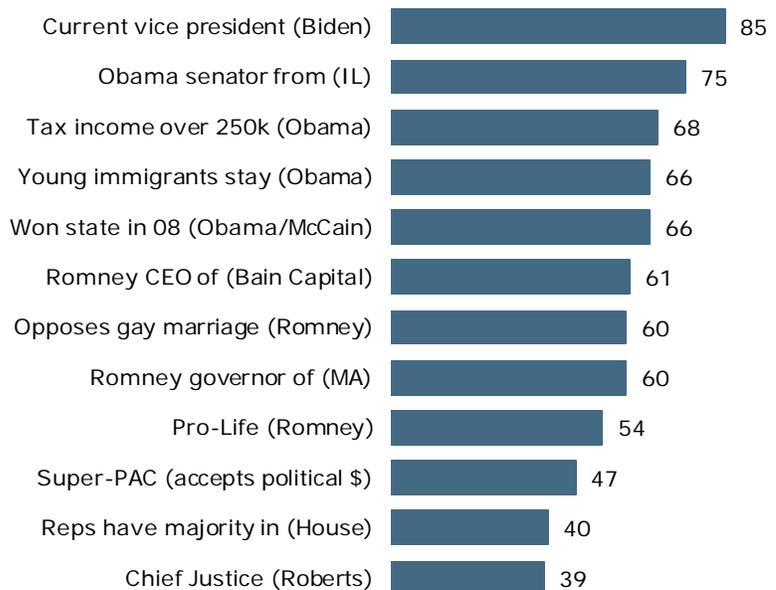
Three-quarters of voters (75%) can correctly identify Illinois as the state Obama represented in the U.S. Senate, while 60% identify Massachusetts as the state in which Romney served as governor. Roughly six-in-ten (61%) know that Bain Capital is the company Romney once headed.

About two thirds correctly identify Obama as the candidate who supports tax increases on income above \$250,000 (68%), as well as a policy to allow young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S.

as children to remain here and apply for work permits (66%). Somewhat fewer identify Romney as the candidate who opposes same-sex marriage (60%) and who supports restricting access to abortion in most cases (54%).

---

### Knowledge of the Candidates and Issues



PEW RESEARCH CENTER. Based on registered voters.

---

<sup>1</sup> See "[Most Say They Already Know Enough about the Candidates](#)," July 24, 2012.

The latest News IQ survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted July 26-29 among 1,010 adults (including 771 registered voters), finds voters to be somewhat less knowledgeable about political facts not related to the candidates. Just under half of voters (47%) can correctly identify a “Super PAC” as a group able to accept unlimited political donations. And only 40% can correctly state that the Republican Party currently has a majority of the seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. However, including those who believe that the GOP has a majority in the Senate or in both houses, 63% are aware that the party has at least a share of the power in Congress.

Awareness that Joe Biden is the vice president of the U.S. is nearly universal among voters (85%). But just 39% can correctly identify John Roberts as the current Chief Justice of the U.S.

Overall, 66% of voters know which candidate in the 2008 election – Obama or McCain – received the most votes in their current home state. Knowledge of the 2008 outcome in respondents’ home state is higher among those who live in a state Obama won (70%) than it is among those who live in a state McCain won (58%).

---

### Voters in States Obama Won More Likely to Know ‘08 State Outcome

<i>Did Obama or McCain receive more '08 votes in your state?</i>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Obama state</b>	<b>McCain state</b>
	%	%	%
Correct	66	70	58
Incorrect	11	7	20
Don't know	<u>23</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>22</u>
	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER July 26-29, 2012.  
Based on registered voters.

---

## Knowledge Differences between Voters and Non-Voters

Non-voters struggle with many of the campaign and other political knowledge questions. On average, people who are not registered to vote answer 4.9 out of 12 questions correctly compared with 7.2 among voters. Just 22% of non-voters know that Republicans control the House of Representatives and only 23% know that John Roberts is the Chief Justice of the U.S. On all twelve questions asked, voters are significantly more likely than non-voters to answer correctly.

---

### Non-Voters Unaware of Many Key Facts

	Registered	Not Registered	Diff
<i>% who answered each correctly</i>	%	%	
Romney CEO of (Bain Capital)	61	36	+25
Pro-life (Romney)	54	31	+23
Super-PAC (accepts political \$)	47	24	+23
Romney governor of (MA)	60	38	+22
Current vice president (Biden)	85	64	+21
Obama senator from (IL)	75	54	+21
Tax income over 250k (Obama)	68	47	+21
Opposes gay marriage (Romney)	60	41	+19
Reps have majority in (House)	40	22	+18
Chief Justice (Roberts)	39	23	+16
Won state in 08 (Obama/McCain)	66	55	+11
Young immigrants stay (Obama)	66	56	+10
Average number correct overall	7.2	4.9	+2.3
N	771	239	

PEW RESEARCH CENTER July 26-29, 2012.

---

## Partisan Differences in Knowledge

On average, Republican voters fare somewhat better than Democratic voters (7.8 vs. 6.9 questions correct) on the twelve question knowledge quiz. Democratic voters struggle to identify the Republican Party as the majority in the House of Representatives (29% correct) and John Roberts as the U.S. Chief Justice (31%).

On most other questions, however, there are relatively modest differences between Republican and Democratic voters. Majorities of

Republicans, Democrats and independents know campaign facts such as that Romney was the CEO at Bain Capital and Obama supports taxing income over \$250,000. Wide majorities of partisan groups also know that Obama favors allowing many illegal immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children to stay in the country, and that Romney opposes allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally.

### Few Democratic Voters Know Chief Justice, Majority Party in House of Representatives

	Rep	Dem	Ind	R-D diff
<i>% who answered each correctly</i>	%	%	%	
Reps have majority in (House)	51	29	42	+22
Chief Justice (Roberts)	47	31	42	+16
Romney governor of (MA)	66	54	64	+12
Obama senator from (IL)	80	71	76	+9
Tax income over 250k (Obama)	73	65	69	+8
Pro-life (Romney)	61	53	53	+8
Romney CEO of (Bain Capital)	65	58	63	+7
Super-PAC (accepts political \$)	49	45	51	+4
Won state in 08 (Obama/McCain)	70	67	65	+3
Opposes gay marriage (Romney)	65	63	57	+2
Current vice president (Biden)	87	86	84	+1
Young immigrants stay (Obama)	65	71	65	-6
Average number correct overall	7.8	6.9	7.3	+0.9
N	239	238	240	

PEW RESEARCH CENTER July 26-29, 2012. Based on registered voters.

## Demographic Divides in Campaign Knowledge

As in past knowledge surveys, there are substantial divides between the well-educated and those with less education. College graduates are more likely than those with no college experience to correctly answer eleven of the twelve questions asked. On average, college graduates answer 8.8 questions correctly, compared with 5.5 for those with no college experience.

Fewer than half of voters with only a high school education can answer key facts about Mitt Romney's background, including the company where he was CEO, the state he governed, and his position on abortion. Voters with no college experience generally do somewhat better on questions about Obama's positions and background. For example, 62% know he supports allowing many illegal immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children to stay in the country. And 58% know that he represented Illinois in the U.S. Senate.

### College Educated Voters More Knowledgeable than those without College Experience

	HS or less	Some coll	Coll grad+	Coll-HS diff
<i>% who answered each correctly</i>	%	%	%	
Romney CEO of (Bain Capital)	39	67	80	+41
Super-PAC (accepts political \$)	29	44	68	+39
Chief Justice (Roberts)	22	41	55	+33
Romney governor of (MA)	45	61	76	+31
Obama senator from (IL)	58	82	88	+30
Tax income over 250k (Obama)	53	75	79	+26
Opposes gay marriage (Romney)	47	63	72	+25
Pro-life (Romney)	40	59	65	+25
Reps have majority in (House)	28	39	53	+25
Current vice president (Biden)	73	90	95	+22
Won state in 08 (Obama/McCain)	57	68	76	+19
Young immigrants stay (Obama)	62	68	70	+8
Average number correct overall	5.5	7.6	8.8	+3.3
N	241	238	287	

PEW RESEARCH CENTER July 26-29, 2012. Based on registered voters.

In general, older voters are better informed about the election than are voters under the age of 35. This is consistent with the findings of previous knowledge surveys, but the gap between young and old voters is much more modest than the one seen across educational levels. Young voters are about as likely as older voters to know that Mitt Romney is pro-life and that he opposes gay marriage; 80% can correctly identify Joe Biden as the current vice president. Young voters trail older voters when it comes to questions such as the state Obama represented in the Senate and which candidate supports taxing income over \$250,000. Nonetheless, half or more of voters under age 35 are able to answer eight of the 12 questions correctly.

---

### Differences in Campaign Knowledge between Younger, Older Voters

	18-34	35-49	50+	Old- young diff
<i>% who answered each correctly</i>	%	%	%	
Romney governor of (MA)	43	62	67	+24
Obama senator from (IL)	61	83	78	+17
Tax income over 250k (Obama)	55	74	71	+16
Young immigrants stay (Obama)	56	67	71	+15
Romney CEO of (Bain Capital)	50	69	62	+12
Won state in 08 (Obama/McCain)	59	67	70	+11
Chief Justice (Roberts)	32	34	43	+11
Reps have majority in (House)	34	37	44	+10
Current vice president (Biden)	80	86	87	+7
Super-PAC (accepts political \$)	40	49	47	+7
Pro-life (Romney)	50	58	55	+5
Opposes gay marriage (Romney)	59	69	57	-2
Average number correct overall	6.2	7.5	7.5	+1.3
N	115	134	496	

PEW RESEARCH CENTER July 26-29, 2012. Based on registered voters.

---

## About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted July 26-29, 2012 among a national sample of 1,010 adults (including 771 registered voters) 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (609 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 401 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 190 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see: <http://people-press.org/methodology/>.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region to parameters from the March 2011 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status, based on extrapolations from the 2011 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 among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the sample sizes and 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	1,010	3.6 percentage points
Registered voters	771	4.1 percentage points
Not registered	239	7.4 percentage points
Republican voters	239	7.4 percentage points
Democratic voters	238	7.4 percentage points
Independent voters	240	7.4 percentage points
College grad+ voters	287	6.7 percentage points
Some College voters	238	7.4 percentage points
HS or less voters	241	7.4 percentage points
18-34 voters	115	10.6 percentage points
35-49 voters	134	9.9 percentage points
50+ voters	496	5.1 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

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.

© Pew Research Center, 2012

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER**  
**July 26-29, 2012 OMNI BUS**  
**POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE TOPLINE**  
**N=1,010**  
**VOTERS N=771**

**PEW.1-PEWWP.3 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**NO QUESTIONS PEW.3-PEW.9**

**ASK 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 PEW.10 THROUGH PEW.20**

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.10 Which presidential candidate is PRO-LIFE, that is, supports restricting access to abortion in most cases? **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS 1 AND 2 FIRST, WITH OPTIONS 3 AND 4 FOLLOWING IN ORDER]**

July 26-29, 2012<sup>2</sup>

<u>GP</u>	<u>RV</u>	
14	13	Obama
47	54	Romney (correct)
7	6	Both
9	9	Neither
23	18	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**RANDOMIZE PEW.10 THROUGH PEW.20**

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.11 Which presidential candidate supports allowing many illegal immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children to remain in the country? **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS 1 AND 2 FIRST, WITH OPTIONS 3 AND 4 FOLLOWING IN ORDER]**

July 26-29, 2012

<u>GP</u>	<u>RV</u>	
63	66	Obama (correct)
2	1	Romney
9	10	Both
7	6	Neither
19	17	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**RANDOMIZE PEW.10 THROUGH PEW.20**

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.12 Which presidential candidate opposes allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally? **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS 1 AND 2 FIRST, WITH OPTIONS 3 AND 4 FOLLOWING IN ORDER]**

July 26-29, 2012

<u>GP</u>	<u>RV</u>	
15	12	Obama
54	60	Romney (correct)
4	3	Both
10	11	Neither
18	14	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

<sup>2</sup> GP are numbers for general public, RV are numbers for registered voters. All trends are based on general public unless otherwise noted.

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.13 Which presidential candidate supports raising taxes on income over \$250,000? **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS 1 AND 2 FIRST, WITH OPTIONS 3 AND 4 FOLLOWING IN ORDER]**

July 26-29, 2012			July 12-15
<u>GP</u>	<u>RV</u>		<u>2012</u>
61	68	Obama (correct)	58
8	7	Romney	7
7	6	Both	7
5	4	Neither	8
19	15	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	20

**RANDOMIZE PEW.10 THROUGH PEW.20****ASK ALL:**

PEW.14 Was Mitt Romney governor of **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**?

July 26-29, 2012			Jan 4-8
<u>GP</u>	<u>RV</u>		<u>2012</u>
53	60	Massachusetts (correct)	46
7	7	Utah	8
5	5	Michigan	5
4	3	Texas	6
30	25	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	36

**RANDOMIZE PEW.10 THROUGH PEW.20****ASK ALL:**

PEW.15 Mitt Romney was the CEO of which of these companies...? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**?

July 26-29, 2012			
<u>GP</u>	<u>RV</u>		
53	61	Bain Capital (correct)	
3	3	American Motors	
3	2	Google	
1	1	Sears	
39	34	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	

**RANDOMIZE PEW.10 THROUGH PEW.20****ASK ALL:**

PEW.16 Do you happen to know which candidate in the 2008 election – Barack Obama or John McCain – received the most votes in the state you now live in?

July 26-29, 2012			
<u>GP</u>	<u>RV</u>		
63	66	Obama	
12	11	McCain	
25	23	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	

**RANDOMIZE PEW.10 THROUGH PEW.20****ASK ALL:**

PEW.17 Who is the current vice president of the United States? Is it... **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

July 26-29, 2012			
<u>GP</u>	<u>RV</u>		
79	85	Joe Biden (correct)	
4	3	Dick Cheney	
3	3	Hillary Clinton	
1	1	John Boehner	
12	8	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	

**TREND FOR COMPARISON**Will you tell me who the Vice-President of the United States is? **[DO NOT READ]**

	<b>-Dick/Richard Cheney-</b>			<b>----Al Gore----</b>		<b>-Dan Quayle-</b>
	Feb <u>2007</u>	April <u>2002</u> <sup>3</sup>	Mid-Nov <u>2001</u>	July <u>1994</u>	Feb <u>1994</u>	May <u>1989</u>
Yes, (correct)	69	61	67	65	70	74
Yes, names someone else	2	4	7	3	6	2
No, can't name the Vice President/DK/Ref	<u>29</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>24</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100

**RANDOMIZE PEW.10 THROUGH PEW.20****ASK ALL:**PEW.18 Does the Republican Party currently have a majority of seats in... **[READ IN ORDER]**

July 26-29, 2012			KN Sep 30- Oct 11	Oct 6-9 2011 <sup>4</sup>	Mar 17-20 2011	Nov 11-14 2010
<u>GP</u>	<u>RV</u>		<u>2011</u> <sup>4</sup>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>
34	40	The House of Representatives (correct)	43	37	38	46
10	10	The Senate	15	8	11	8
12	13	Both the House and Senate	21	14	18	14
8	7	Neither the House nor the Senate	10	8	6	5
35	30	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	11	33	27	27

**RANDOMIZE PEW.10 THROUGH PEW.20****ASK ALL:**PEW.19 Do you happen to know who is the Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court? Is it... **[READ AND RANDOMIZE?]**

July 26-29, 2012			Jul 1-5 <u>2010</u>	
<u>GP</u>	<u>RV</u>		<u>2010</u>	
34	39	John Roberts (correct)	28	John Roberts
1	1	Stephen Breyer	6	John Paul Stevens
12	12	William Rehnquist	8	Thurgood Marshall
3	3	Harry Reid	4	Harry Reid
51	45	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	53	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

**TREND FOR COMPARISON***Hearst Corporation*

Oct 20-Nov 2

1986<sup>5</sup>

43	William Rehnquist
29	Warren Burger
7	Earl Warren
4	William Brennan, Jr.
16	DK/No answer

<sup>3</sup> From April 2002 through February 1994 the question was worded: "Can you tell me the name of the current Vice-President of the United States?" In May 1989 the question was worded: "Will you tell me who the Vice-President of the United States is?"

<sup>4</sup> Sep 30-Oct 11, 2011 survey conducted online by Knowledge Networks. Surveys from 2011, question read: "Thinking about Congress, do Republicans currently have a majority in ...? For November 11-14, 2010, the question read: "When the new Congress convenes in January, will Republicans have a majority in..."

<sup>5</sup> For October 20-November 2, 1986, the Hearst Corporation question read: "Who is the current Chief Justice of the United States: William Rehnquist, Warren Burger, Earl Warren or William Brennan, Jr.?"

**RANDOMIZE PEW.10 THROUGH PEW.20****ASK ALL:**

PEW.20 What state did Barack Obama represent in the United States Senate, before he became president?  
**[READ AND RANDOMIZE]?**

July 26-29, 2012

<u>GP</u>	<u>RV</u>	
69	75	Illinois (correct)
2	1	New York
1	1	Texas
9	7	Hawaii
19	16	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.21 What does the term "super PAC" refer to **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]?**

July 26-29, 2012

<u>GP</u>	<u>RV</u>	
40	47	A group able to accept unlimited political donations (correct)
4	3	Government clean-up projects at hazardous waste sites
9	9	A Congressional committee on the budget deficit
1	1	A popular video game for smartphones
46	39	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

**NO QUESTIONS PEW.22-PEW.23**

**PEW.24 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**