

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
MAY 2003 NEWS INTEREST INDEX
FINAL TOPLINE
April 30 - May 4, 2003
N=1201

Q.1 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president? **[IF DK ENTER AS DK. IF DEPENDS PROBE ONCE WITH: Overall do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president? IF STILL DEPENDS ENTER AS DK]**

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
May, 2003	65	27	8=100
April 10-16, 2003	72	22	6=100
April 9, 2003	74	20	6=100
April 2-7, 2003	69	25	6=100
March 28-April 1, 2003	71	23	6=100
March 25-27, 2003	70	24	6=100
March 20-24, 2003	67	26	7=100
March 13-16, 2003	55	34	11=100
February, 2003	54	36	10=100
January, 2003	58	32	10=100
December, 2002	61	28	11=100
Early October, 2002	61	30	9=100
Mid-September, 2002	67	22	11=100
Early September, 2002	63	26	11=100
Late August, 2002	60	27	13=100
June, 2002	70	20	10=100
April, 2002	69	18	13=100
February, 2002	78	13	9=100
January, 2002	80	11	9=100
Mid-November, 2001	84	9	7=100
Early October, 2001	84	8	8=100
Late September, 2001	86	7	7=100
Mid-September, 2001	80	9	11=100
Early September, 2001	51	34	15=100
August, 2001	50	32	18=100
June, 2001	50	33	17=100
April, 2001	56	27	17=100
February, 2001	53	21	26=100

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=602]:

Q.2F1 Please tell me what one word best describes your impression of George W. Bush. Tell me just the ONE best word that describes him. **[OPEN-END. PROBE ONCE IF RESPONDENT ANSWERS “DON’T KNOW”. ACCEPT UP TO TWO RESPONSES, BUT DO NOT PROBE FOR SECOND RESPONSE]**

<i>Top Bush Descriptions</i>	Frequency*
	May 2003
Honest	29
Good	21
Arrogant	20
Leader/Leadership	16
Great	13
Confident	12
Courageous	12
Aggressive	11
Christian	11
Determined	11
Integrity	11
Patriot/Patriotic	10
Cowboy	9
Competent	8
Decisive	8
Idiot	8
President	8
Strong	8
Adequate	7
Excellent	7
Fair	7
Dedicated	6
Honorable	5
OK/Okay	5
Powerful	5

* The "Frequency" column is the number of respondents who offered each response; the numbers are not percentages.

ASK ALL:

Q.3a A year from now, do you expect that economic conditions in the country as a whole will be better than they are at present, or worse, or just about the same as now?

	<u>Better</u>	<u>Worse</u>	<u>Same</u>	Don't Know/ <u>Refused</u>
May, 2003	43	19	35	3=100
March 28-April 1, 2003	33	23	37	7=100
January, 2003	30	20	44	6=100
Early October, 2002	34	18	42	6=100
June, 2002	30	20	46	4=100
January, 2002	44	17	36	3=100
January, 2001*	18	33	44	5=100
June, 2000	15	24	55	6=100
Early October, 1998 (RVs)	16	22	57	5=100
Early September, 1998	18	17	61	4=100
May, 1990	18	31	45	6=100
February, 1989	25	22	49	4=100
September, 1988 (RVs)	24	16	51	9=100
May, 1988	24	20	46	10=100
January, 1988	22	26	45	7=100
January, 1984* (RVs)	35	13	49	3=100

* *Newsweek*

Q.3b In your opinion, is President Bush doing as much as he can to improve economic conditions or do you think he could be doing more?

		March 28 -					-- Bush, Sr. --	
		April 1	Jan	Early Oct	June	Jan	March	Jan
		<u>2003</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1992</u>
42	Doing as much as he can	41	33	31	33	48	21	21
53	Could be doing more	52	61	63	62	46	76	76
<u>5</u>	Can't say	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>100</u>		<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

Q.4 As best you know, is your STATE government spending more, less, or about as much as it did last year on health, education, and other social programs?

15	More
50	Less
21	About as much as last year
<u>14</u>	Don't know/Refused
<u>100</u>	

Q.5 Now I will read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past month. As I read each item, tell me if you happened to follow this news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely? [INSERT ITEM; ROTATE OBSERVE FORM SPLITS]

		Very Closely	Fairly Closely	Not too Closely	Not at all Closely	DK/Ref
a.	News about the current situation in Iraq	63	29	6	2	*=100
	April 11-16, 2003 ¹	47	40	10	2	1=100
	April 2-7, 2003	54	34	9	2	1=100
	March 20-24, 2003	57	33	7	2	1=100
	March, 2003 ²	62	27	6	4	1=100
	February, 2003	62	25	8	4	1=100
	January, 2003	55	29	10	4	2=100
	December, 2002	51	32	10	6	1=100
	Late October, 2002	53	33	8	5	1=100
	Early October, 2002	60	28	6	5	1=100
	Early September, 2002 ³	48	29	15	6	2=100
	Early January, 1991	59	31	7	2	1=100
b.	The lung disease called "SARS" that has spread from Asia	39	39	15	6	1=100

¹ From March 20 to April 16, 2003 the story was listed as "News about the war in Iraq."

² From October 2002 to March 2003, the story was listed as "Debate over the possibility that the U.S. will take military action in Iraq."

³ In Early September 2002 the story was listed as "...U.S. will invade Iraq." In Early January 1991 the story was listed as "Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and the presence of U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf."

		Very Closely	Fairly Closely	Not too Closely	Not at all Closely	DK/Ref
ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=602]:						
c.F1	The race for the Democratic presidential nomination	8	19	31	41	1=100
	January, 2003 ⁴	14	28	29	28	1=100
	March, 1992	35	40	16	9	*=100
	January, 1992	11	25	36	27	1=100
	December, 1991	10	28	32	30	*=100
	October, 1991	12	26	31	29	2=100
	November, 1987	15	28	35	21	1=100
d.F1	North Korea's nuclear weapons program	27	40	22	11	*=100
	March, 2003	34	34	19	12	1=100
	February, 2003	33	34	18	13	2=100
	January, 2003	33	34	18	14	1=100
	Late October, 2002 ⁵	25	31	23	20	1=100
	June, 1994	27	33	26	14	*=100
ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=599]:						
e.F2	George W. Bush's tax cut and economic stimulus plan	25	36	22	15	2=100
	February, 2003	26	33	23	16	2=100
	January, 2003	28	34	21	15	2=100
	February, 2002 ⁶	17	31	28	23	1=100
	April, 2001	24	38	20	18	*=100
	February, 2001	31	35	19	14	1=100
	February, 1993	49	36	10	5	*=100
	September, 1992 (RVs)	28	44	18	9	1=100
f.F2	The murder of Laci Peterson, the pregnant California woman whose husband has been charged in her death	31	31	21	16	1=100
ASK ALL:						
g.	Debate over eliminating affirmative action programs	12	24	28	34	2=100
	August, 1995 ⁷	20	32	24	23	1=100
ASKED MAY 2-4 ONLY [N=601]:						
h.	News about government budget problems in your state	26	34	19	20	1=100
	Early October, 2002	25	36	24	15	*=100

⁴ In January 2003 the story was listed as "Recent announcements by prominent Democrats about plans to run for president in 2004." In January 1992, December 1991, October 1991, and November 1987 the story was listed as "News about the Democratic candidates for the Presidential nomination."

⁵ In Late October 2002 the story was listed as "North Korea's admission that it has been secretly developing nuclear weapons." In June 1994 the story was listed as "Reports about North Korea's building of nuclear weapons and refusal to allow UN inspections."

⁶ In February 2002 and April 2001 the story was listed as "The debate in Congress over George W. Bush's budget and tax cut plan." In February 2001 the story was listed as "George W. Bush's tax-cut plan." In February 1993 the story was listed as "Bill Clinton's economic plan." In September 1992 the story was listed as "George Bush's plan to improve the economy by cutting government spending and cutting taxes?" Results are based on registered voters.

⁷ In August 1995 the story was listed as "Proposals to eliminate affirmative action programs."

Q.6 Do you think news organizations are giving too much coverage, too little coverage, or the right amount of coverage to [INSERT ITEM, ROTATE. OBSERVE FORM SPLITS]

		<u>Too much coverage</u>	<u>Too little coverage</u>	<u>Right amount coverage</u>	<u>Don't Know/Refused</u>
a.	News about the current situation in Iraq	34	8	55	3=100
	April 2-7, 2003 ⁸	39	4	55	2=100

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=602]:

b.F1	The lung disease called "SARS" that has spread from Asia	18	18	59	5=100
	April 2-7, 2003	8	33	55	4=100

ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=599]:

c.F2	The Laci Peterson murder	39	11	39	11=100
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ASK ALL:

G.2 - G.5 See Global Attitudes Double Back Questionnaire.

On a different subject...

Q.7 When it comes to national policy, who do you think George W. Bush is listening to more... [READ, ROTATE]

		<u>Jan 2003</u>	<u>Jan 2002</u>	<u>Jan 2001</u>
49	Conservative members of his party	41	38	48
	OR			
32	Moderate members of his party	35	40	37
<u>19</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>24</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>15</u>
100		100	100	100

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=602]:

Q.8F1 In order to overcome past discrimination, do you favor or oppose affirmative action programs designed to help blacks, women and other minorities get better jobs and education?

		<u>Aug 1995</u>
63	Favor	58
29	Oppose	36
<u>8</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>3</u>
100		100

ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=599]:

Q.8F2 In order to overcome past discrimination, do you favor or oppose affirmative action programs, which give special preferences to qualified blacks, women and other minorities in hiring and education?

		<u>Aug 1995</u>
57	Favor	46
35	Oppose	46
<u>8</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>8</u>
100		100

⁸

In April 2003 the story was listed as "News about the war in Iraq."

ASK ALL:

Q.9 George W. Bush has proposed a major tax cut package that is currently being discussed in Congress. How much, if anything, have you heard about the kinds of taxes he has proposed cutting? **[READ, IN ORDER]**

19	A great deal
34	Some
27	Not much
19	Nothing at all
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused [DO NOT READ]
100	

Q.10 Do you approve or disapprove of George W. Bush's tax proposal?

		April <u>2001</u> ⁹	Feb <u>2001</u>
40	Approve	60	43
37	Disapprove	34	34
<u>23</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>6</u>	<u>23</u>
100		100	100

Q.11 Do you think the tax cuts will generally be fair to everyone, OR will the tax cuts mainly benefit some people much more than others?

IF 2 "BENEFIT SOME MORE THAN OTHERS" IN Q.11 ASK:

Q.12 Who will mainly benefit from the tax cuts: the wealthy, the middle class, or the poor?

		<u>Feb 2001</u> ¹⁰	<u>Sept 1999</u>
21	Will be fair	26	12
70	Benefit some people much more than others	65	82
56	Wealthy	51	66
8	Middle class	8	7
3	Poor	2	5
1	Other (VOL.)	1	1
2	Don't know/Refused	3	3
1	Other (VOL.)	1	2
<u>8</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>8</u>	<u>4</u>
100		100	100

ASK ALL:

Q.13 Regardless of whether you favor or oppose the tax cut proposal, do you think the tax cut is likely to **[INSERT ITEM; ROTATE]** or not? Do you think the tax cut is likely to **[NEXT ITEM]** or not?

		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
a.	Significantly reduce the taxes you yourself pay	23	70	7=100
b.	Boost the economy and create jobs	44	48	8=100
c.	Force the government to reduce domestic spending	42	46	12=100
d.	Increase the federal budget deficit	51	36	14=100

G.6 - G.11 See Global Attitudes Double Back Questionnaire.

⁹ In April 2001 the question was worded "As you may know, George W. Bush has proposed a 1.6 trillion dollar tax cut. Do you approve or disapprove of this proposal?"

¹⁰ In February 2001 the question was preceded by "If George W. Bush's tax bill becomes law..." In September 1999 the question was preceded by "As you may know, there has been discussion in Washington recently about a major tax cut that would take place over the next 10 years. If this bill becomes law..."

G.11a Do you think the war in Iraq has helped the war on terrorism, or has it hurt the war on terrorism?

		April 8-9 <u>2003</u> ¹¹	Early Oct <u>2002</u>
65	Helped	63	52
22	Hurt	22	34
6	No effect (VOL)	--	--
<u>7</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>15</u>	<u>14</u>
100		100	100

G.12 - G.18 See Global Attitudes Double Back Questionnaire.

On a different subject...

Q.14 How much, if anything, have you heard about a recent Supreme Court case dealing with the University of Michigan's admissions program that takes RACE into account, as well as grades, activities and other factors when deciding who to admit. Have you heard a lot, a little, or nothing at all about this case?

18	A lot
36	A little
46	Nothing at all
*	Don't know/Refused
<u>100</u>	

Q.15 All in all, do you think affirmative action programs designed to increase the number of black and minority students on college campuses are fair, or unfair?

		<u>Form 1</u> *	<u>Form 2</u>
47	Fair	46	49
42	Unfair	41	42
<u>11</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>13</u>	<u>9</u>
100		100	100

* On Form 1 Q.15 preceded Q.16. On Form 2 Q.16 preceded Q.15.

Q.16 All in all, do you think these programs are a good thing or a bad thing? **[IF RESPONDENT NEEDS QUESTION REPEATED, ASK IN FULL: All in all, do you think affirmative action programs designed to increase the number of black and minority students on college campuses are a good thing or a bad thing?]**

		<u>Form 1</u>	<u>Form 2</u>
60	Good thing	59	60
30	Bad thing	30	30
<u>10</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>11</u>	<u>10</u>
100		100	100

¹¹ In April 2003 the question was worded "Do you think the war in Iraq will help the war on terrorism, or will it hurt the war on terrorism?" In Early October 2002 the question was worded "If the U.S. uses military force in Iraq, do you think this will help the war on terrorism, or will it hurt the war on terrorism?"

ASK ALL:

Q.17 In your own personal career and education, have you ever been helped or hurt by an affirmative action program, or has this never affected you? [IF "YES", PROBE: "Helped or hurt?" IF "DON'T KNOW" ENTER AS DK WITHOUT PROBING]

16	Yes
4	Helped
11	Hurt
1	Both (VOL.)
82	No, not personally affected
2	Don't know (VOL.)
0	Refused (VOL.)
<u>100</u>	

Q.18 When a member of a minority group achieves success in business or education ... just your impression ... do most people think they got ahead because of racial preferences, or do most people think they got ahead because of their skills and abilities?

27	Because of racial preferences
62	Because of their skills and abilities
4	Both / Mixed (VOL.)
7	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
<u>100</u>	

And a few last questions about international issues...

G.19 - G.20 See Global Attitudes Double Back Questionnaire.

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=602]:

G.21F1 As you may know, people in several countries in Asia and Canada have recently died from a 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 worried at all?

		<i>Gallup</i>
		April
		<u>2003</u>
9	Very worried	10
28	Somewhat worried	27
29	Not too worried	39
34	Not worried at all	24
*	No opinion (VOL)	*
<u>100</u>		<u>100</u>

ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=599]:

G.22F2 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 worried at all?

12	Very worried
23	Somewhat worried
31	Not too worried
32	Not worried at all
2	No opinion (VOL)
<u>100</u>	