

MASS MEDIA

AP AMERICAN GOVERNMENT STUDY GUIDE
LINKAGE INSTITUTIONS
MASS MEDIA

TYPES OF MEDIA

| MEDIA TYPE | DESCRIPTION |
|--|---|
| PRINT MEDIA | -Local Newspapers (Ex: Las Vegas Sun) & National Magazines (Ex: Time Magazine) - yellow journalism : newspaper publishing (late 19th century) featured sensationalized and oversimplified news coverage. - muckraking : (early 20th century) journalism concerned with reforming government and business conduct. |
| RADIO NEWS (BROADCAST MEDIA) | FDR use to inform Americans directly with “fireside chats”. Invention of television made it less popular. 12% of Americans reported getting their news from talk radio in 1997. By 2005 it was up to 22% of Americans. This media is currently used much more by conservatives. |
| TELEVISION NEWS (BROADCAST MEDIA) | Most homes had televisions by the 1960’s. In 2007, 65% of Americans claimed to get their news from television whereas only 27% read newspapers. C-SPAN AND C-SPAN 2 cover Congress. Nightly and weekly news programs inform viewers on events. Saturday Night Live and the Daily Show entertain and inform viewers. |
| INTERNET (THE NEW MEDIA) | In 2007, 29% of American claimed to receive news from the Internet which was up from 9% in 2000. (Examples: blogs, news websites, and social media) |
| -Mass media : the entire array of organizations through which information is collected and disseminated to the general public. -News media : media providing the public with new information about subjects of public interest. | |

FUNCTIONS OF THE MEDIA

| FUNCTION | SHORT DESCRIPTION | LONG DESCRIPTION |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| GATEKEEPER | DECIDING WHAT MAKES THE NEWS | Producer, anchors ,editors, and writers set the news agenda. They have to decide what is news worthy. There is not enough air time or space to give all the news that happened. They have to pick and choose. If the American people are aware of something the government is more likely to get involved. |
| SCOREKEEPER | REPORTING SUCCESSES & FAILURES | The media tracks political successes and failures. During campaign season they update their readers and viewers on the success of the competing candidates (AKA: Horse race journalism). Scorekeeping does continue onward after the election is over judging and reporting on opinion polls of sitting presidents. |
| WATCHDOG | REPORT SCANDALS & CORRUPTION | Reporters look for corruption, scandal, or inefficiency. The media has an obligation to report american abuses and mistakes of its officials. |

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MEDIA INFLUENCE

| POSSIBLE EFFECTS | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|
| IGNORANT PEOPLE | Reporting can sway those who are uncommitted and have not strong opinion in the first place. |
| EXOTIC TOPICS | The media is likely to have a greater impact on topics far removed from the lives and experiences of readers and viewers. |
| AGENDA SETTING | News organizations can influence what we think about, even if they cannot determine what we think. |
| FRAMING | The process by which a news organization defines a political issue and consequently affects opinion on the issue. (Example: A ku klux klan story could be framed as a civil rights story exercising the freedom of speech, or it could be framed as a law and order story in which they were disturbing the peace. Both stories would interpreted very differently by the audience) |
| INDIRECT | The media has the power to indirectly influence the way the public views politicians and government. (Example: Presidential elections are often related to the voters assessment to the economy. So if the news chose not to highlight the bad economy for a while the sitting president might do better) |
| Media effects: The influence of news sources on public opinion. | |

GOVERNMENT'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MEDIA

| BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|
| PRESIDENTS (EXECUTIVE BRANCH) | <p>-Bully pulpit: a stage from which a president can persuade the public who then would persuade Congress.</p> <p>-Press Secretaries hold (almost daily) press conferences in which they have rehearsed answers to likely questions.</p> <p>-This briefing room has 60 reporters to cover the president daily and another 2,000 have White House press credentials. The president's communication team can alter or revoke press credentials or seating assignments to discipline hostile reporters.</p> |
| CONGRESS (LEGISLATIVE BRANCH) | <p>-<i>Roll Call</i> and <i>The Hill</i> are two notable papers that cover Congress.</p> <p>-In the late 1970's, C-SPAN (Cable-Satellite Public Affairs Network) which is a privately funded, nonprofit public service. (C-SPAN 2 came in 1986 to cover Senate at same time).</p> |
| COURTS (JUDICIAL BRANCH) | Cameras are generally not allowed in federal court, which is why we see drawings of people on the stand on the news. There are reporters covering these stories and they do go into court to view the proceedings. They are often seen reporting from outside the courthouse. |

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FREEDOM OF PRESS

| ITEM | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|
| PRIOR RESTRAINT | In <i>New York Times v. United States</i> (1971) the Supreme Court assured that the haty cry of national security does not justify censorship in advance and that the government does not have to power of prior restraint. |
| ANONYMOUS SOURCES | In <i>Branzburg v. Hayes</i> (1972) the Supreme Court ruled that knowledge a reporter collects is “everyman’s evidence” and cannot be legally withheld. Some States have created shield laws to protect journalists from this, but federally there is not law. |
| LIBEL & SLANDER | If a publication or broadcast lies about an individual and defames them. That individual has the right to sue the publican or reporter. |
| REGULATING AIRWAVES | The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulates electronic media. It currently commissions licenses to stations, assures equal time to political candidates, balanced coverage of controversial issues, facilitates non commercial public broadcasts, prevented rigged game shows, and assured decency on radio and television. |
| CORPORATE VS. PUBLIC MEDIA | <p>-In the late 1960’s Congress passed the Corporation for Public Broadcasting Act which created the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) to develop noncommerical television and radio. It subsidizes a TV Network, Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and a radio network, National Public Radio (NPR).</p> <p>-In 1996, Telecommunications Act deregulated ownership and allowed large corporations to purchase more media outlets.</p> |
| The first amendment allows for the freedom of the press. Anyone can print anything, but the government can punish the publishing of “improper, mischievous, or illegal” material. | |

MEDIA BIAS

| BIAS IN FAVOR OF LIBERALS | BIAS IN FAVOR OR CONSERVATIVES |
|--|--|
| <p>Network Evening News PBS Newshour CNN MSNBC</p> | <p>Fox News Majority of talk radio shows</p> |
| There is a lot of data about negative reporting on candidate coverage. There is definitely biases in the media. In the 2008 presidential election only 9% of the stories examined issues positions and candidate qualifications. | |