

F.6

The English-speaking world – Media

The impact of the media – Information, entertainment, manipulation

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Die Medien können zahlreiche Zwecke erfüllen – Nachrichten verbreiten, Menschen bilden oder beeinflussen. Sie bieten eine Plattform für den Austausch von Ansichten und Erfahrungen und können Ungerechtigkeiten oder Missstände aufzeigen. Medien, egal ob traditionell oder digital, haben sowohl positive als auch negative Seiten. So können sie beispielsweise auch *fake news* verbreiten. Zudem werden soziale Medien zunehmend genutzt, um die Meinungsfreiheit einzuschränken. In dieser Einheit setzen sich die Lernenden anhand von Texten und Videos mit den unterschiedlichen Seiten der Medienwelt auseinander.

COMPETENCES

Competences:	1. Reading comprehension: understanding and analysing texts; 2. Listening/viewing comprehension: understanding and analysing videos; 3. Writing: composing texts and expressing opinions; 4. Speaking: engaging in discussions, presenting results
Methods:	discussion, reading comprehension, research, text analysis, video analysis, writing
Themes:	media, social media, politics, society, fake news, manipulation, entertainment

Facts

The media plays various roles. It is a news source, it informs and influences. It is a channel through which views and experiences can be exchanged. It can highlight unfairness or put the spotlight on atrocities. The media, whether traditional or digital, has positive qualities. However, it has a dark side, too. It is an outlet for fake news and "infotainment", turning news into entertainment at the expense of facts and objectivity. Furthermore, social media has become a tool used to discredit opinions some people disagree with; thus, limiting freedom of speech. Looking for sinister undertones is just one of the many issues dealt with in this unit leaving the question whether the media is impacting on society or whether society is impacting on the media open for discussion.

Notes on the material

Topic 1 shows how the news directly and indirectly affects people. A BBC article explains how witnesses to the 2013 Boston marathon bombings were less affected by the scenes than those who watched the atrocity on the news. The lyrics, "You must be evil" by Chris Rea, similarly concern the effects of the news, criticising television news broadcasters for allowing heinous scenes to be aired early in the evening when children may be watching.

The power of visual images is a theme in **topic 2**. The article explains how Americans were suddenly awakened to the reality of having shocking things happening in their own country.

Students read about how protests because of news footage can open people's eyes to the reality. The lyrics, "Give the people what they want" by The Kinks, give students a different perspective on visual images in the media. Ray Davis, the singer-songwriter, criticises television's increasing treatment of abhorrent events as entertainment and remarks that viewers are just as guilty of wanting this entertainment due to their morbid fascination. Social media is an integral part of today's society. However, there is concern about its usage, which **topic 3** explores. The video reveals the negative effects of social media on daily life, its addictiveness and that digital interaction is replacing real-life contact.

Topic 4 considers whether TikTok is a friend or a foe for journalists. Instead of prejudging the platform either way, the writer of the article gives a historical overview of how each new development regarding news providers has been critically received in its time. Students subsequently assess whether TikTok is a legitimate news source or not.

The public have been receiving images of war since the mid-19th century. **Topic 5** details how wartime information was presented in the past and the role social media plays in this today. The article looks at how reports, visual images and social media have revealed the truth about conflicts and how these realities have aroused people's emotions and responses.

Topic 6 concerns the media and politics. The video explains how these two interacted in the past and continue to do so. The further activity relates to statistics from an American research group on how Americans regard various aspects of the media. Students match the statistics to statements, compare their perceptions to the realities and comment on this.

The question arising in **topic 7** is whether society has become more aware of injustices and offensive language or whether there is an over-sensitivity concerning these issues influenced by minority voices. The class needs to be divided into two groups, A and B, and then subdivided into pairs. The pairs have work cards to complete; each one concerns an aspect of their group's designated material. There is a wide range of study areas involved in the work cards, for example why some classic children's literature is being altered, why elements in Disney films are being criticised, the woke trend and cancel culture.

Overview

Topic 1: The influence of the news

- M 1 Worksheet – “How the news changes the way we think and behave”
M 2 “You Must Be Evil” by Chris Rea
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Topic 2: Growing immunity

- M 3 “The protests are great television. That’s important.”
M 4 “Give The People What They Want” by The Kinks
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Topic 3: Social media and its effects

- M 5 Worksheet – “How Social Media is Destroying Society”
M 6 “Social media and its effects on employee productivity”
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Topic 4: TikTok– Friend or foe?

- M 7 “TikTok is not the enemy of journalism.”
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Topic 5: Bringing war into homes

- M 8 “The big idea: can social media change the course of war?”
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Topic 6: The media and politics

- M 9 Worksheet – “The impact of media evolution on politics”
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Topic 7: Awareness or over-sensitivity?

- M 10 “Roald Dahl rewrites”
M 11 “How Disney became embroiled in the culture wars”
-

Topic 1: The influence of the news

Worksheet – “How the news changes the way we think and behave”

M 1

Pre-reading discussion

1. Discuss the topic “news reporting” in small groups. Incorporate where possible the following terms:

bias – relevance – repetition – fake – truthfulness – live – topic domination – reality

Reading comprehension

2. Read the article “How the news changes the way we think and behave”:
<https://raabe.click/bbc-news>
3. Explain why Alison Holman refocused her original study and what her subsequent findings and conclusions were.

Working with the text

4. Examine the approaches to current affairs adopted by the news agencies and comment on whether the public have become vulnerable consumers.
5. Identify how global events are made available to anyone worldwide and express your opinion about the advantages and disadvantages of this.

M 2 “You Must Be Evil” by Chris Rea

I come home from work
I see my little girl
She's crying on the floor
She's been watching that TV

- 5 This ain't late no, this ain't even dinner time
To show them things on that screen
What's wrong with you

You must be evil

Oh I know why you do it

- 10 You're just looking for sensation
You got a hold of something
You tell us that it's news
You don't have to show that stuff
Can't you show us some respect
15 You can tell us we don't need to see it
We don't need those cheap effects

You must be evil
You must be evil
I wish you were here

- 20 You don't have to show that stuff
You ain't fooling no-one
You made my little girl cry
I wish you were here
We all know why you do it
25 Sometimes you even slow it down
You're giving out some bad ideas here
I can't believe that you don't realize

You must be evil

You must be evil, Music and Lyrics: Chris Rea © 1989 Magnet Music Ltd/Hanseatic Musikverlag GmbH

“Social media and its effects on employee productivity”

M 6



[...] Social media impacts at work

Social media may be impacting productivity, in the most subliminal¹ way. The average time spent on a phone is 2.3 hours per day and half of the US population considers themselves to be addicted to their phones. As a result, social media can impact work productivity and is a key reason why some companies block their employees from using social media in the workplace. The average employee spends 12% of the working day using social media apps, and research has suggested that social media can reduce an individual's attention span, with dopamine²-filled apps like TikTok cramming up to 20 videos into 10 minutes – as average videos are approximately 30 seconds long. As well as reducing attention span, social media can also negatively affect sleep, as some may find scrolling through apps before bed habitual. Even worse, social media can promote what psychologists refer to as “herd mentality”, whereby those who spend prolonged durations on social media, conform to popular opinions as the correct opinions, rather than taking time out to develop their own.

Distraction and time wasting

Social media can be a major source of distraction for employees. Constant notifications and the allure of checking updates can divert their attention from work tasks, leading to reduced focus and productivity. Moreover, excessive time spent on social media can result in time-wasting behaviours, where employees browse through social feeds, watch videos, or engage in discussions, all of which eat into valuable work hours. Such frequent interruptions can disrupt workflow and decrease efficiency as it takes time for employees to regain focus and get back on track. Additionally, exposure to negative or distressing content on social media can adversely affect employees' emotional well-being, resulting in decreased morale and productivity.

The benefits of social media

Despite these challenges, social media can also have positive impacts in the workplace. It can of course facilitate communication and collaboration, especially with the use of platforms like Teams and Slack. These platforms can increase team communication and information sharing, leading to more efficient workflows and enhanced productivity. Furthermore, social media can even serve as a valuable source of knowledge sharing and professional development. Employees can access industry news, updates, and best practices, ultimately improving their skills and knowledge, which can positively impact their work performance.

Organisations may be able to mitigate the negative effects of social media on productivity by implementing certain strategies. Developing