

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

*After studying Chapter 7, you should be able to:*

1. Describe the characteristics of the mass media today.
2. Explain the development of the print and broadcast media from a historical perspective.
3. Understand how news is found and reported by the media.
4. Describe how the news media affect public opinion.
5. Discuss what is meant by the concepts of policy agenda and policy entrepreneur and the media's importance to them.
6. Understand how the media affect the scope of government and the democratic process.

*The following exercises will help you meet these objectives:*

Objective 1: Describe the characteristics of the mass media today.

1. Explain the purpose of a media event.
2. List the seven principles of news management as practiced in the Reagan White House.
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
  - 5.
  - 6.

7. . . .

Objective 2: Explain the development of the print media and the broadcast media from a historical perspective.

1. Explain two media techniques used most effectively by President Franklin Roosevelt.

- 1.

- 2.

2. What is meant by investigative journalism?

3. Explain the significance of the era of the "penny press," and the era of "yellow journalism," as they relate to the print media.

Era of Penny Press:

Era of Yellow Journalism:

4. Explain how television affected the political career of Richard Nixon.

5. What effect did television have on the war in Vietnam?

6. Explain the three ways in which the Federal Communications Commission has regulated the airwaves.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
7. What impact has cable TV and the Internet had on news reporting?
8. Explain two consequences of private control of the media in the United States.
  - 1.
  - 2.

Objective 3: Understand how news is found and reported by the media.

1. Where does most news come from?
2. What is meant by a "sound bite" and what does it tell us about news coverage?
3. Explain how the news media tend to be biased.

Objective 4: Describe how the news media affect public opinion.

1. In the experiments by Shanto Iyengar and Donald Kinder, what effect did manipulating T.V. stories have on viewers?
2. Give examples of how the media has had an effect on how the public evaluates specific events.

Objective 5: Discuss what is meant by the concepts of policy agenda and policy entrepreneur, and the media's importance to them.

1. Define the term "policy agenda."
2. List five items in the policy entrepreneurs' "arsenal of weapons."
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
  - 5.

Objective 6: Understand how the media affect the scope of government and the democratic process.

1. How do the media act as a "watchdog"?
2. What is the difference between the "information society" and the "informed society"?

### **KEY TERMS**

*Identify and describe:*

high-tech politics

mass media

media event

press conferences

investigative journalism

print media

broadcast media

narrowcasting

chains

beats

trial balloons

sound bites

talking head

policy agenda

policy entrepreneurs

*Compare and contrast:*

high-tech politics and mass media

media event and press conferences

print media and broadcast media

sound bites and talking head

policy agenda and policy entrepreneur

*Name that term:*

1. It reaches the elite as well as the masses.  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. These are staged primarily for the purpose of being covered.  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. This tends to pit reporters against political leaders.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. These control newspapers with most of the nation's circulation.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. The primary mission of cable and Internet news.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Specific locations from where news frequently emanates.  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Information leaked to see what the political reaction would be.  
\_\_\_\_\_

### USING YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Choose one of the three major networks, CBS, NBC, or ABC, and watch the evening news every day for a week. While watching, write down the topic of each news story, the amount of time spent on the story, and an assessment of the story's content and the issues it raises. Read a daily newspaper (preferably the *New York Times* or another major paper) for the same days. Compare the television and newspaper coverage of the same news stories. Analyze the differences between these media in terms of how the stories were presented, depth of coverage, and issue orientation. Evaluate how the print media and the broadcast media might differ in their influence on public opinion.
2. Based on your understanding of the role of the media in the agenda-building process, critique a news item or article that concerns a policy issue. Your critique should begin by asking how well the item identified the policy issue, the policy entrepreneurs, and people in government concerned about the issue. Assess the news item as both a source of information and a source of influence on your perceptions of politics, government, and policy. Consider how policymakers might use the news item as well. Put yourself in the position of the reporter and consider how the story might have been improved. In light of your critique, discuss your impressions of the media as unofficial but important sources of influence on public opinion and the policy agenda.

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

Check ☒ the correct answer:

1. The American political system has entered a new period of high-tech politics.  
☐ True  
☐ False
2. Television, radio, newspapers, and other means of popular communication are called  
☐ a. chains.  
☐ b. high-tech politics.  
☐ c. mass media.  
☐ d. public relations.
3. The influence of the mass media is limited to the elites in the United States.  
☐ True  
☐ False
4. Media events are spontaneous circumstances that get the media's attention.  
☐ True  
☐ False
5. A president who was particularly successful in playing to the media was  
☐ a. George Bush.  
☐ b. Ronald Reagan.  
☐ c. Richard Nixon.  
☐ d. Jimmy Carter.
6. News management in the Reagan White House operated on each of the following principles EXCEPT  
☐ a. staying on the offensive.  
☐ b. controlling the flow of information.  
☐ c. speaking in one voice.  
☐ d. spontaneity.
7. Today, for a president to ignore the power of image and the media would be perilous.  
☐ True  
☐ False



8. (bonus) Who said, "The President of the United States will not stand and be questioned like a chicken thief by men whose names he does not even know"?
- ☐ a. Herbert Hoover
  - ☐ b. Franklin D. Roosevelt
  - ☐ c. Lyndon Johnson
  - ☐ d. Richard Nixon
9. The president who held numerous press conferences and practically created media politics was
- ☐ a. Herbert Hoover.
  - ☐ b. Franklin Roosevelt.
  - ☐ c. John F. Kennedy.
  - ☐ d. Ronald Reagan.
10. Prior to the 1960s, the relationship between politicians and the press was one of skepticism and distrust.
- ☐ True
  - ☐ False
11. The press soured on government as a result of the events of the
- ☐ a. Vietnam War.
  - ☐ b. Watergate scandal.
  - ☐ c. Korean War.
  - ☐ d. Both a and b.
12. News coverage of presidential candidates has become increasingly
- ☐ a. focused on the issues.
  - ☐ b. limited.
  - ☐ c. favorable.
  - ☐ d. less favorable.
13. Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst were
- ☐ a. inventors of the printing press.
  - ☐ b. strong opponents of yellow journalism.
  - ☐ c. turn-of-the-century newspaper magnates.
  - ☐ d. presidential candidates.
14. (bonus) Who said, "The essence of American journalism is vulgarity divested of truth"?
- ☐ a. Joseph Pulitzer
  - ☐ b. Horace Greeley
  - ☐ c. William Randolph Hearst
  - ☐ d. Winston Churchill

15. Gradually, the broadcast media have replaced the print media as our principal source of news and information.  
☐ True  
☐ False
16. The political career of Richard Nixon was made and unmade by television.  
☐ True  
☐ False
17. Richard Nixon's experiences during the 1960 presidential campaign illustrate the  
☐ a. power of television in American politics.  
☐ b. insignificance of presidential debates.  
☐ c. greater importance of print media.  
☐ d. friendly relationship between the media and political candidates.
18. Using the broadcast media, Lyndon Johnson was successful in persuading the public that America was winning the war in Vietnam.  
☐ True  
☐ False
19. Which of the following statements is TRUE?  
☐ a. Newspapers are the main source of news for Americans.  
☐ b. Most of the news originates from correspondents.  
☐ c. In-depth analyses of policy issues are common in the media.  
☐ d. People think television reports are more believable than newspaper stories.
20. News on cable TV and the Internet  
☐ a. is not available to most people.  
☐ b. appeals to a rather narrow and specific audience.  
☐ c. does not go into much depth.  
☐ d. is widely used by most Americans.
21. Newspaper chains  
☐ a. are organizations loosely linked by the wire services.  
☐ b. are controlled by conglomerates that often control broadcast media as well.  
☐ c. began to disappear with the advent of television.  
☐ d. are local papers owned by fearless local editors.

22. The news media avoid odd events in favor of reporting only objective conditions.  
☐ True  
☐ False
23. The bottom line that shapes how journalists define news, where they get news, and how they present news is  
☐ a. objectivity.  
☐ b. truth.  
☐ c. profits.  
☐ d. comprehensiveness.
24. Most news organizations assign their best reporters to particular beats.  
☐ True  
☐ False
25. Trial balloons are used by politicians to  
☐ a. put issues on the policy agenda.  
☐ b. see their constituents.  
☐ c. test political reactions.  
☐ d. take public polls.
26. If you had to pick a single word to describe news coverage by the print and broadcast media, it would be  
☐ a. comprehensive.  
☐ b. biased.  
☐ c. misleading.  
☐ d. superficial.
27. Which of the following statements is FALSE?  
☐ a. Television analysis of news events rarely lasts more than a minute.  
☐ b. In-depth attention to the issues is given only during presidential campaigns.  
☐ c. Newspapers rarely reprint the entire text of important political speeches.  
☐ d. Snappy soundbites of fifteen seconds or less are more common than full speeches on television.
28. Studies on bias in the news have found that the news media tend to  
☐ a. favor the Democratic Party.  
☐ b. be politically conservative.  
☐ c. be politically neutral.  
☐ d. favor the Republican Party.

29. Which of the following statements is FALSE?
- ☐ a. Most reporters strongly believe in journalistic objectivity.
  - ☐ b. Most news stories are presented in a "point/counterpoint" format.
  - ☐ c. The news media do not want to lose their audience by appearing biased.
  - ☐ d. Most studies have shown that the media are systematically biased toward a conservative ideology.
30. The news media tend to do all of the following EXCEPT
- ☐ a. mirror reality.
  - ☐ b. show more bad news than good news.
  - ☐ c. focus on stories that generate good pictures.
  - ☐ d. overemphasize dramatic events.
31. A "talking head" is a media term referring to a shot of a person's face talking directly to the camera.
- ☐ True
  - ☐ False
32. To which of the following news stories did Americans pay closest attention?
- ☐ a. Arrest of O.J. Simpson.
  - ☐ b. Terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon.
  - ☐ c. 2000 presidential election outcome.
  - ☐ d. Congressional debate over NAFTA.
33. Studies have shown that the news media
- ☐ a. have only a marginal effect on public opinion.
  - ☐ b. directly affect how people vote.
  - ☐ c. affect what Americans think about.
  - ☐ d. can conceal problems that actually exist.
34. By increasing public attention to specific problems, television news can influence the criteria by which the public evaluates political leaders.
- ☐ True
  - ☐ False
35. Research indicates that public opinions remain constant even when news coverage changes.
- ☐ True
  - ☐ False

36. Issues on the policy agenda are always defined by government officials, but not by people outside of government.  
☐ True  
☐ False
37. Which of the following characteristics is NOT common among policy entrepreneurs?  
☐ a. commitment to a single policy issue  
☐ b. investment of personal political capital  
☐ c. avoidance of the media  
☐ d. concern about government's priorities
38. Which of the following people would NOT qualify to be a policy entrepreneur?  
☐ a. an elected official  
☐ b. an interest group leader  
☐ c. an academic researcher  
☐ d. none of the above
39. The media act as key linkage institutions between the people and the policymakers, having a profound impact on the policy agenda.  
☐ True  
☐ False
40. The watchdog function of the media  
☐ a. contributes to the growth of government.  
☐ b. can be characterized as reformist.  
☐ c. has a liberal political orientation.  
☐ d. is no longer a central concern of the media.
41. When the media focus on injustice in society, they inevitably help keep government small.  
☐ True  
☐ False
42. The American institutional agenda has changed dramatically because television finds it easier to focus on groups than on individuals.  
☐ True  
☐ False

43. Which of the following statements is TRUE?
- ☐ a. The media are at their best when reporting stories about complex, high-tech issues.
  - ☐ b. The amount of information available through the news media has decreased.
  - ☐ c. The rise of the information society has brought about a rise in the informed society.
  - ☐ d. The media attempts to appeal to the maximum number of people.
44. The news media's defense for being superficial is to say that this is what the people want.
- ☐ True
  - ☐ False

### ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Using examples from presidential politics, explain why image and the use of the media are so important in the American political system.
2. Explain the historical development of the print and broadcast media in the United States. Use examples to illustrate your answer.
3. How does television define what is newsworthy? Explain where television finds its news stories and how they are presented to the American public.
4. Describe how the media shape public opinion. What are the consequences of the media's influence on public opinion?
5. What is the policy agenda? Who are the policy entrepreneurs and how do they utilize the media to get their issues on the policy agenda?
6. Explain how the news media affect the scope of government and American individualism. How have they helped and hindered the growth of democracy in the United States?