

How far the press should be free to report

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Discuss how far the press should be free to report what they want There are obvious reasons for restrictions on the freedom of the press. Many of these are to do with the fact that clearly there are many stories which are damaging to individuals and will have a negative effect on the life of a person or group of people. The argument that is often put forward that it is in the public interest to know what is going on and that secrets should not be kept from the public is a valid one, but there has to be a line drawn between the public interest and what the public are interested in.

That line was not necessarily crossed in the publication of the photos of prince William, as it is not inconceivable that he might be the future king of England and therefore it can almost be seen as a warning of how it is and isn't acceptable to behave for somebody in the public eye. Although there are occasions when the press report stories that they shouldn't, it must be taken into account that newspapers organisations have to makemoney, and therefore they have to be able to write stories which will sell copies and, if they are not given that right, the general public could become bored by newspapers.

The Sun's dominance in the journalism world of Britain is all the evidence needed to prove that the public are not looking to be informed, but to be entertained, and the most entertaining stories are usually the sensational ones. Another reason why the press should not be restricted is that Britain is a democracy and so the people at the top of society should not have omnipotent powers over what can and cannot be reported to the public.

If you look at the fascist dictatorships of the past, one of the greatest crimes has been the lack of freedom of speech and this is what oppresses people

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more than anything. I am not saying that this is a position which Britain is nearing, but we must bear in mind that one of the fundamental components of a democracy is the freedom of speech, and as such you cannot justify taking this right away from anybody, whether they are talking to a friend or writing it in a newspaper.