

Mass media assignment

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The term mass media refers to the channels of communication (media) that exists to reach a large public audience. Mass media includes newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and more recently, the Internet. It informs people about events that they would otherwise know little about. Mass media communication is usually rapid, because the media will report an important event as quickly as possible after it happens. In fact, some television reporting is live; that is, the viewers can see the events as they happen. It is also transient; that is, the focus on one event does not last long.

This is captured in the expression ‘There is nothing as old as yesterday’s news.’² The mass media is an important part of life in the United States and most Americans are exposed to the media daily in the form of print, sound waves, and pictures. Over 55 million newspapers are circulated each day. There are over five radios per household, and it is estimated that radio reaches 77 percent of people over the age of 12 every day. The radio listening time for those over 12 is more than three hours each day. Most households also have two or more television sets. The total viewing time is about seven hours per day. The amount of time that people spend in front of their television sets varies with age, gender, and education, but on average it amounts to three to four hours a day.³ While most of us make use of some form of the media on a daily basis, we may not think about the functions and purposes the media serves in our society. One important function is entertainment. On television, in particular, the variety of entertainment programs is extensive, ranging from soap operas, to comedy, to talk shows, to sports.

Even advertising, here the main purpose is to sell things to the public may sometimes be seen as entertainment. A 4. Another function is education. A quick look through a television or radio guide will reveal many programs with an educational focus. These include documentaries on a wide range of topics, such as animal behavior, geography, history, or art. They also include a wide variety of instructional programs such a cooking, home decoration, or investing. Some children's programs are also educational. Teaching children to count to recognize words, or introducing them to deferent societies and cultures