

# Expository essay: reflect upon media's role as the fourth estate

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



Write an One year with Donald Trump as president has gained and weakened the fourth estate's role in the United States. Journalism is being revitalized, but the "press" is missing the trust of the American people. In this essay, I'm going to write about the fourth estate, what a fourth estate is, why it's so relevant and the huge role it has to the common population. The Fourth Estate has always been a form for social power, force or institution that the influence they possess is not consistently or officially recognized by everyone. The word 'Fourth Estate' commonly refers to the journalism, media, or 'the press'. The term 'Fourth Estate' gives an reference to an earlier historical part of the "big three" legislative, executive and judicial powers. The fourth estate isn't controlled by the "big three" making it unique. All significant democracies have a fourth estate or free press.

The power the first amendment of the United States Constitution has can give you an insight on the specific role the fourth estate has and how it should be used. The first amendment is among several things, the right to freedom of speech and free press. Even though this "frees" the press it still carries the responsibility that the press should be the people's watchdog. However, the newspaper is threatened by a considerable amount of shrinking readership. Television is nowadays more interested in entertainment, even with a fair amount of news channels it seems that the purpose is to entertain. The giants of the fourth estate, "the press" were all confronted with the distribution caused by the world wide web. None of the big media outlets have figured out a business model that pays for content at today's rates. For example, the New York Times has had to cut down on staff and workspace because of the internet taking there commercial funding.

More specifically Facebook and Google that have almost taken over the entire market. This is a big problem especially for the newspapers as mention the New York Times and the Washington Post. They now rely on private funding like the Washington Post that is owned by Jeff Bezos founder of Amazon. So, the critical content given to the people from the fourth estate is getting harder to create. When they also really on private funding the people funding the news, outlets could in a worst-case scenario shape the information given to the population which is a massive problem if you truly want a free press. The content coming out from some media outlets can be wrong or very one-sided this is a big problem. This is because the purpose of the media as a “ Fourth estate” is to inform with hard facts to the general population. When a fair amount of the population in the United States don’t have the knowledge that you should be critical to some media outlets. They often have a belief that every news station is genuinely representing the fourth estate.

The role that these news outlets have is then very critical. If they abuse their role as a watchdog for the population and use it to form elections and other major political happenings is their role as the fourth estate gone? The role the fourth estate has gotten in modern society may be less dominant or seem less plausible than in the past. This has several causes, one of them being the united states presidential election in 2016. This is the first time in a long while where the excellent reputation of the fourth estate as we know it has been decreased among a lot of the population in the US. As menaced earlier the word “ fake news” was a big topic under US election. This came

from Trump attacking the left media outlets that either wrote or talked about him. They had never or at very few occasions proceed with false claims or accusations against him or his campaign. Trump still portrayed the left-wing media as if they were attacking him at all times with “fake news”: This influenced the role of the fourth estate in a big way, this is because a lot of the Republicans in the United States shared the same views as Trump even though that a very few amounts of them actually looked in to the left wing media articles and cases about Trump. Their only media outlets were Trumps Twitter account and Fox-news which is to give a kind description a bit more to the right in the political stands in the US. This has created a very divided fourth estate, meaning that a lot of the content that is supposed to inform the people are divided in groups. People consume the information they agree with and are very critical to each other's political stands.

The importance of the well collaborated and independent fourth estate is still crucial especially if you look at the political hell in the United States right now. The fourth estate has been and is still to this day a significant part of a well-functioning democracy. This is because The Fourth Estate keeps the government, legislators and other business under the hold by informing society or the public. Investigative journalism has a huge role in discovering corruption, human rights violations and other political scandals. So, the importance and the need for a fourth estate is still there. The role the fourth estate has is dominant and it's essential that this power is used in the right way, this means the people shouldn't always trust the fourth estate and at sometimes be critical to what is true and what is false. Personally, I think the

fourth estate is as big and important as the “ big three” legislative, executive and judicial powers. Especially in times like these where the fourth estate is under attack from its own government and with Trump in office it’s going to be rough 2 years, this is still depending on the United States Senate elections, in November.