

# [The media distort our understanding of the world essay](https://assignbuster.com/the-media-distort-our-understanding-of-the-world-essay/)

The media distort our understanding of what is happening in the world? Discuss. Justify your answer with the use of examples. Discussing whether the media distorts our understanding of the world creates the question of what the actual role of the media is. In a democratic society, the role of the media is to provide the public with enough information for them to be able to elect a government. As well as this, the role of the media is supposed to be to represent the public and act as a watchdog to inform the people of any issues which they would need to act on (www.

ommunicationism. org). The title of this essay is vital for one to think about because the media affects our lives in many ways. One may decide to read the newspaper on a daily basis whilst on the train to work and what they read may have a positive or negative impact on their day.

The media is used to send messages to people, through television, newspapers, radio and the internet, just to name a few of the main ones. However, today??? s media delivers a lot more than just political news to the public; it has developed a culture which convinces the ordinary man to purchase more materialistic items than they are capable of acquiring, exaggerating news about crime and violence to the extent where people are frightened. In a particular case, an article written by the Ilford recorder reported about children with anti-social behaviour issues that are causing problems for local residents, it mentions, ??? Police also confirm a mobile phone was stolen from Hainault community centre in Manford Way two weeks ago, which is thought to be linked to the other crimes??? (www. lfordrecorder. co.

uk). The key terms used here are ??? thought to be linked???. This example shows that without stating any sufficient evidence to support a statement, the media has alleged that one crime is linked to another, thus distorting the story to the reader. Providing some of the details can only create assumptions in the mind of the reader, which cannot be good for anyone. It could lead them to believe that the area is a dangerous place to be and that it should never be visited, because of a small number of children. This essay comments on the language used by people working in the media and how it can change a person??? s view on the world or even develop a totally different image to the truth.

Could it be possible that organisations with large sums of money have the ability to control what the audience is informed about through the media? Journalists are the people that collect the news from events that occur in the world, they then pass the news stories into newsrooms where editors of news programmes can select what they feel will attract attention from viewers. Editors tend to have ??? tick lists??? of a sort to identify which stories will meet their news values. News values are in three categories: Impact, Audience identification, Pragmatics of media coverage (www. btinternet.

com). It is through this process that the quality and purpose of the news that the public receive has changed over time. A chapter in a book written by Curran J (2000: 20-21), supports the fact that journalism is affected by ??? corporate elites because they are key shareholders or even directors of media organisations. The way in which these corporate elites affect journalism is by putting financial pressure to censor texts and gain advantageous coverage or even just to attract a specific audience???.

Television is a form of media which creates audiences instead of programmes, according to a chapter written by Seaton J (2003: 179) in the book Power without Responsibility. This chapter agrees that advertisers tend to control commercial television and what goes on it with the use of their financial power; a few seconds of an advertisement can buy into thousands of people??? s minds. While we live in a society where there is free press, which means that the media has the right to publicise any type of information, it is remarkable how the original use of the media has been somewhat forgotten and is now being used for completely different activities such as advertising. As readers of newspaper articles, listeners of the radio, audiences of news channels and internet surfers we have the right to understand what is currently happening in our country and in the world, in terms of the progress of the recovery and if the changes that the political parties promised before the election are going ahead. However, it appears that with the level of competition and increasing amount of companies wanting to advertise, it has become difficult for the media to play its original role in this democratic society, thus leaving the public uninformed about the events that are occurring in the world. A supporter of advertisements could argue that advertising through the media is good for the economy because it generates profits for businesses and increases demand.

Although this is true to a certain extent it isn??? t fair when advertising conflicts with media stories which leads to news reporters and journalists having to monitor the way they give some reports as it may ruin the reputation of a particular company. The whole point of the media is to inform the public of truth about the events that are occurring in the world and this shouldn??? t be restricted by any advertising company. Another view of the media distorting our understanding of what is going in the world occurs when the media and news channels in particular have a tendency to report on the bad news more than any good news. An article written on the website ??? www. getpaidtowriteonline. com??? backs up this statement.

According to the article the reason for the bad news being reported more is because it sells more than good news does. To oppose this argument one may say that the truth has to be reported and that the news channels, newspapers and radio stations are just doing their job when reporting these issues, however, what people need to understand is the fact that the information which the media publicises can have drastic effects on society. The press and broadcasting media both have influences on the public, which is often to do with the bias technique used to deliver a message to the audience. Street J (2001: 83-85) discusses that surveys have shown that readers of The Sun news paper aren??? t fond of information about political parties and they know that this is an untrustworthy newspaper for this sort of information. However, Street also mentions that readers of tabloids trust what they read don??? t rely much on television to tell them about the politics of the country, as much as readers of The Sun may have to.

This goes to show that the media definitely does affect the way people think about politics. Seaton J (2010: 314) discusses the way that the media chooses to report what it wants to and ignores everything else. Supporting evidence is given in the book where the author talks about the cholera outbreak in Zimbabwe in 2009. There was no mention of it in the media and if there was then it was very little. The second example mentioned is the long running war in Goma, which has more casualties than any other modern day conflicts but this story has still had very little or no attention given to it by the media.

Without any reporting, we do not realise some of the disasters going on in the world at the moment. The final point that Seaton mentions is that even after twenty years after the end of communism in Europe, the media still threatens us with information that can end up controlling how we think. Based on the evidence shown through this essay it is quite simple to say that, although the media has the power to create success for businesses, it does not do what it was originally supposed to, hich is to provide the public with enough information to enable to them to elect a political party. The media is a power tool used by large scale organisations to promote products and services to consumers that are sometimes incapable of purchasing such products yet find that they buy them anyway because they??? ve been dragged into the cycle. This cycle is created by the media in order to make us acquire products which we don??? t really need. It is quite unrealistic to say that the media can deliver the truth to the public when it is being dictated to a certain extent by advertisers, as mentioned earlier.

This leaves the people distort about the truth, it??? s almost to say that instead of feeding us the correct information that we as the public of a democratic society require, we are being restricted from this information which in turn doesn??? t give us the truthful information about the political parties of the country. Using the news values means that only a selection of stories get mentioned on the news channels, which is decided by the editor, and as mentioned earlier, if the news channels want to be successful they would choose the bad news before any good news. Competition has caused conflict between media organisations and this distorts our understanding of what??? s going on in the world. Bibliographyhttp://www. ilfordrecorder. co. uk/news/news/hainault\_10\_year\_olds\_terrorising\_residents\_1\_725326http://www. getpaidtowriteonline. com/why-should-i-care-the-values-of-news/