

Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation
MIREA – Russian Technological University

R. I. Dyatlova

THE WORLD OF MASS MEDIA

Teaching aid

Cheboksary
Publishing House “Sreda”
2026

Министерство науки и высшего образования Российской Федерации
МИРЭА – Российский технологический университет

Р. И. Дятлова

МИР СРЕДСТВ МАССОВОЙ ИНФОРМАЦИИ

Учебно-методическое пособие

Чебоксары
Издательский дом «Среда»
2026

UDC 811.111:004(075.8)
LBC 81.2Англ-9я73
Д98

Author:

Dyatlova Radmila Igorevna
Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences (PhD in Education), Senior Lecturer,
Department of Foreign Languages, RTU MIREA

Reviewers:

Yu. S. Ivanova
Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor,
M.Ya. Blokh Department of English Grammar,
Institute of Foreign Languages, Moscow State Pedagogical University (MPGU);
A. V. Filipetskaya
Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Senior Lecturer,
Department of Foreign Languages, RTU MIREA

Д98 Dyatlova R. I.
The World of Mass Media : teaching aid / R. I. Dyatlova. –
Cheboksary : Sreda, 2026. – 62 p. – 1 CD-ROM. – Title from the title
screen. – Text : electronic.

ISBN 978-5-908172-22-6

The teaching aid is intended for 1st- and 2nd-year students of the Institute of Information Technologies and Law (ITU) at RTU MIREA. The present teaching aid comprises supplementary materials to the main textbook New Total English: Pre-Intermediate by J. J. Wilson, Antonia Clare, and Rachael Roberts (2013). The texts selected by the author are designed to expand and reinforce the terminological foundation of the language of scientific communication, while the control and training exercises are intended to consolidate skills in monologue and dialogue speech.

UDC 811.111:004(075.8)
LBC 81.2Англ-9я73

ISBN 978-5-908172-22-6

© Dyatlova R. I., 2026
© MIREA – Russian Technological University, 2026
© Publishing House “Sreda”, typography, 2026

УДК 811.111:004(075.8)
ББК 81.2Англ-9я73
Д98

Автор:

Дятлова Радмила Игоревна
канд. пед. наук, старший преподаватель
кафедры иностранных языков РТУ МИРЭА

Рецензенты:

Ю. С. Иванова
канд. филол. наук, доцент
кафедры грамматики английского языка им. М.Я. Блоха,
Институт иностранных языков ФГБОУ ВО МПГУ;
А. В. Филиппская
канд. пед. наук, старший преподаватель
кафедры иностранных языков РТУ МИРЭА

Д98 **Дятлова Р. И.**
Мир средств массовой информации : учебно-методическое
пособие / Р. Л. Дятлова. – Чебоксары : Среда, 2026. – 62 с. –
1 CD-ROM. – Загл. с титул. экрана. – Текст : электронный.

ISBN 978-5-908172-22-6

Учебно-методическое пособие предназначено для студентов I и II курсов института ИТУ РТУ МИРЭА. Представленное учебно-методическое пособие включает материалы, дополняющие основной учебник New Total English: Pre-Intermediate by J. J. Wilson, Antonia Clare, Rachael Roberts, 2013. Подобранные автором пособия тексты направлены на расширение и закрепление терминологической базы языка научной коммуникации, а контрольно-тренировочные задания предназначены для закрепления навыков монологической и диалогической речи.

УДК 811.111:004(075.8)
ББК 81.2Англ-9я73

ISBN 978-5-908172-22-6

© Дятлова Р. И., 2026
© МИРЭА – Российский технологический
университет, 2026
© Издательский дом «Среда», оформление, 2026

CONTENTS

Functions and Theories of Mass Communication.....	6
Media, Technology and Communication.....	12
Freedom of the Press.....	20
Censorship	23
Political Correctness	27
The Media	31
Social Sphere	39
Polls and Polling	49
Assisting and Monitoring Elections.....	54
References.....	60

Functions and Theories of Mass Communication

Task 1:

- a) identify key functions of the mass media;
- b) explain how the media functions as a gatekeeper;
- c) discuss theories of mass communication, including hypodermic needle theory, media effects, and cultivation theory.

How does mass communication function differ from interpersonal communication? Do we have relationships with media like we have relationships with people? To answer these questions, we can look at some of the characteristics and functions of mass communication. One key characteristic of mass communication is its ability to overcome the physical limitations present in face-to-face communication. The human voice can only travel so far, and buildings and objects limit the amount of people we can communicate with at any time. While one person can engage in public speaking and reach one hundred thousand or so people in one of the world's largest stadiums, it would be impossible for one person to reach millions without technology.

Another key characteristic of mass communication in relation to other forms of communication is its lack of sensory richness. In short, mass communication draws on fewer sensory channels than face-to-face communication. While smell, taste, and touch can add context to a conversation over a romantic dinner, our interaction with mass media messages rely almost exclusively on sight and sound. Because of this lack of immediacy, mass media messages are also typically more impersonal than face-to-face messages. Actually being in the audience while a musician is performing is different from watching or listening at home. Last, mass media messages involve less interactivity and more delayed feedback than other messages. The majority of messages sent through mass media channels are on way. We don't have a way to influence an episode of *The Walking Dead* as we watch it. We could send messages to the show's producers and hope our feedback is received, or we could yell at the television, but neither is likely to influence the people responsible for sending the message. Although there are some features of communication that are lost when it becomes electronically mediated, mass communication also serves many functions that we have come to depend on and expect.

Functions of Mass Media

The Mass Media serves several general and many specific functions. In general, the mass media serves information, interpretation, instructive, bonding, and diversion functions.

1. Information function. We have a need for information to satisfy curiosity, reduce uncertainty, and better understand how we fit into the world. The amount and availability of information is now overwhelming compared to forty years ago when a few television networks, local radio stations, and newspapers competed to keep us informed. The media saturation has led to increased competition to provide information, which creates the potential for news media outlets, for example, to report information prematurely, inaccurately, or partially.

2. Interpretation function. Media outlets interpret messages in more or less explicit and ethical ways. Newspaper editorials have long been explicit interpretations of current events, and now cable television and radio personalities offer social, cultural, and political commentary that is full of subjective interpretations. Although some of them operate in ethical gray areas because they use formats that make them seem like traditional news programs, most are open about their motives.

3. Instructive function. Some media outlets exist to cultivate knowledge by teaching instead of just relaying information. Major news networks like CNN and BBC primarily serve the information function, while cable news networks like Fox News and MSNBC serve a mixture of information and interpretation functions. The in-depth coverage on National Public Radio and the Public Broadcasting Service, and the more dramatized but still educational content of the History Channel, the National Geographic Channel, and the Discovery Channel, serve more instructive functions.

4. Bonding function. Media outlets can bring people closer together, which serves the bonding function. For example, people who share common values and interests can gather on online forums, and masses of people can be brought together while watching coverage of a tragic event like 9/11 or a deadly tornado outbreak.

5. Diversion function. We all use the media to escape our day-to-day lives, to distract us from our upcoming exam, or to help us relax. When we are being distracted, amused, or relaxed, the media is performing the diversion function.

The Media as Gatekeeper

In addition to the functions discussed previously, media outlets also serve a **gatekeeping function**, which means they affect or control the information that is transmitted to their audiences. This function has been analyzed and discussed by mass communication scholars for decades. Overall, the mass media serves four gatekeeping functions: relaying, limiting, expanding, and reinterpreting.

(Adapted from John R. Bittner,
Mass Communication, 6th ed. Boston, 1996)

In terms of relaying, mass media requires some third party to get a message from one human to the next. Whereas interpersonal communication only requires some channel or sensory route, mass media messages need to “hitch a ride” on an additional channel to be received. For example, a Sports Illustrated cover story that you read at SI.com went through several human “gates”, including a writer, editor, publisher, photographer, and webmaster, as well as one media “gate” – the Internet. We also require more than sensory ability to receive mass media messages. While hearing and/or sight are typically all that’s needed to understand what someone standing in front of you is saying, you will need a computer, smartphone, or tablet to pick up the SI.com cover story. In summary, relaying refers to the gatekeeping function of transmitting a message, which usually requires technology and equipment that the media outlet controls and has access to, but we do not. Although we relay messages in other forms of communication such as interpersonal and small group, we are primarily receivers when it comes to mass communication, which makes us depend on the gatekeeper to relay the message.

In terms of the gatekeeping function of limiting, media outlets decide whether or not to pass something along to the media channel so it can be relayed. Because most commercial media space is so limited and expensive, almost every message we receive is edited, which is inherently limiting. A limited message doesn’t necessarily mean the message is bad or manipulated, as editing is a necessity. But a range of forces including time constraints, advertiser pressure, censorship, or personal bias, among others, can influence editing choices. Limiting based on bias or self-interest is not necessarily bad as long as those who relay the message do not claim to be objective. In fact, many people choose to engage with media messages that have been limited to

match their own personal views or preferences. This kind of limiting also allows us to have more control over the media messages we receive. For example, niche websites and cable channels allow us to narrow in on already-limited content, so we don't have to sift through everything on our own.

Gatekeepers also function to expand messages. For example, a blogger may take a story from a more traditional news source and check it or do additional research, interview additional sources, and post it on his or her blog. In this case, expanding helps us get more information than we would otherwise so we can be better informed. On the other hand, a gatekeeper who expands a message by falsifying evidence or making up details either to appear more credible or to mislead others is being unethical.

Last, gatekeepers function to reinterpret mass media messages. Reinterpretation is useful when gatekeepers translate a message from something too complex or foreign for us to understand into something meaningful. In the lead-up to the Supreme Court's June 2012 ruling on President Obama's health-care-overhaul bill, the media came under scrutiny for not doing a better job of informing the public about the core content and implications of the legislation that had been passed. Given that policy language is difficult for many to understand and that legislation contains many details that may not be important to average people, a concise and lay reinterpretation of the content by the gatekeepers (the media outlets) would have helped the public better understand the bill. Of course, when media outlets reinterpret content to the point that it is untruthful or misleading, they are not ethically fulfilling the gatekeeping function of reinterpretation.

In each of these gatekeeping functions, the media can fulfill or fail to fulfill its role as the "fourth estate" of government – or government "watchdog."

"Getting Critical" The Media as "Watchdog"

While countries like China, North Korea, Syria, and Burma have media systems that are nearly if not totally controlled by the state regime, the media in the United States and many other countries is viewed as the "watchdog" for the government. This watchdog role is intended to keep governments from taking too much power from the people and overstepping their bounds. Central to this role is the notion

that the press works independently of the government. The “freedom of the press” as guaranteed by our First-Amendment rights allows the media to act as the eyes and ears of the people. The media is supposed to report information to the public so they can make informed decisions. The media also engages in investigative reporting, which can uncover dangers or corruption that the media can then expose so that the public can demand change.

Of course, this ideal is not always met in practice. Some people have critiqued the media’s ability to fulfill this role, referring to it instead as a lapdog or attack dog. In terms of the lapdog role, the media can become too “cozy” with a politician or other public figure, which might lead it to uncritically report or passively relay information without questioning it. Recent stories about reporters being asked to clear quotes and even whole stories with officials before they can be used in a story drew sharp criticism from other journalists and the public, and some media outlets put an end to that practice. In terms of the attack-dog role, the twenty-four-hour news cycle and constant reporting on public figures has created the kind of atmosphere where reporters may be waiting to pounce on a mistake or error in order to get the scoop and be able to produce a tantalizing story. This has also been called being on “scandal patrol” or “gaffe patrol”. Media scholars have critiqued this practice, saying that too much adversarial or negative reporting leads the public to think poorly of public officials and be more dissatisfied with government. Additionally, they claim that attack-dog reporting makes it more difficult for public officials to do their jobs.

(Sheila S. Coronel, “The Media as Watchdog”,
Harvard-World Bank Workshop,
May 19, 2008, accessed September 19, 2012.
URL: [http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/conference%
20papers/Coronel%20Watchdog.pdf](http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/conference%20papers/Coronel%20Watchdog.pdf))

Task 2

Be ready to answer the following questions.

1. In what ways do you think the media should function in a democratic society?
2. Do you think the media in the United States acts more as a watchdog, lapdog, or attack dog? Give specific examples to support your answer.

3. In an age of twenty-four-hour news and instant reporting, do you think politicians' jobs are made easier or more difficult? Do you think reporters' jobs are made easier or more difficult? Support your answers.

Theories of Mass Communication

Theories of mass communication have changed dramatically since the early 1900s, largely as a result of quickly changing technology and more sophisticated academic theories and research methods. A quick overview of the state of the media in the early 1900s and in the early 2000s provides some context for how views of the media changed. In the early 1900s, views of mass communication were formed based on people's observation of the popularity of media and assumptions that something that grew that quickly and was adopted so readily must be good. Many people were optimistic about the mass media's potential to be a business opportunity, an educator, a watchdog, and an entertainer. For example, businesses and advertisers saw media as a good way to make money, and the educator class saw the media as a way to inform citizens who could then be more active in a democratic society. As World War I and the Depression came around, many saw the media as a way to unite the country in times of hardship. Early scholarship on mass media focused on proving these views through observational and anecdotal evidence rather than scientific inquiry.

Fast forward one hundred years and newspapers are downsizing, consolidating to survive, or closing all together; radio is struggling to stay alive in the digital age; and magazine circulation is decreasing and becoming increasingly more focused on microaudiences. The information function of the news has been criticized and called "infotainment," and rather than bringing people together, the media has been cited as causing polarization and a decline in civility.

(Charles C. Self, Edward L. Gaylord, and Thelma Gaylord,
"The Evolution of Mass Communication Theory
in the 20th Century", *The Romanian Review of Journalism
and Communication* 6, no. 3 (2009): 29)

Media, Technology and Communication

Task 1

Read the following texts and be ready to accomplish the task which follows them.

The Media

We live in a media-saturated world and rely on a variety of old and new media for information, entertainment, and connection. The beginnings of mass media and mass communication go back 560 years to the “print revolution” that occurred in Europe in the fifteenth century. As we progressed through the centuries, mass communication evolved from a mechanical process to electronic transmission, which paved the way for the digitized world of today. While technological advances are an important part of the narrative regarding media, the effects of media are also important to consider.

Technological Advances: From the Printing Press to the iPhone

It is only through technology that mass media can exist. While our interpersonal interactions are direct, our interactions with mass media messages are indirect, as they require technology or a “third party” to facilitate the connection. Mass communication involves transmitting messages to many people through print or electronic media. While talking to someone about a movie you just watched is interpersonal communication, watching the Academy Awards on a network or in clips on the Internet is mass communication. In this section, we will trace the development of various forms of technology that led to new channels of communication and overview the characteristics of some of the most common mass media.

As we trace the development of different forms of mass media, take note of how new technologies and competition among various media formats have made media messages more interpersonal and personalized. In short, the mass media that served large segments of the population with limited messages evolved into micromedia that serve narrow interest groups.

(Charles C. Self, Edward L. Gaylord, and Thelma Gaylord,
“The Evolution of Mass Communication Theory
in the 20th Century”, *The Romanian Review of Journalism
and Communication* 6, no. 3 (2009): 29)

Print Mass Media

The printing press and subsequent technological advances related to paper manufacturing and distribution led to the establishment of print as the first mass medium. While the ability to handwrite manuscripts and even reproduce them existed before the print revolution, such processes took considerable time and skill, making books and manuscripts too expensive for nearly anyone in society except the most privileged and/or powerful to possess. And despite the advent of many other forms of mass media, print is still important as a channel for information and as an industry. For example, in the United States, about 3.1 billion books, 1.400 daily newspapers, and 19.000 magazines are published a year.

(Marshall T. Poe, *A History of Communications: Media and Society from the Evolution of Speech to the Internet* (New York: Cambridge, 2011), 133)

Now let us look back at how we progressed from writing to print and trace the birth of the first mass medium.

The “manuscript age” is the period in human history that immediately predated the advent of mass media and began around 3500 BCE with the introduction of written texts and lasted until the printing revolution of 1450. Of course, before writing emerged as a form of expression, humans drew cave paintings and made sculptures, pottery, jewelry, and other forms of visual expression. The spread of writing, however, as a means of documenting philosophy, daily life, government, laws and business transactions was a necessary precursor to the print revolution. Physical and technical limitations of the time prevented the written word from becoming a mass medium, as texts were painstakingly reproduced by hand or reproduced slowly using rudimentary printing technology such as wood cutouts. The high price of these texts and the fact that most people could not read or write further limited the spread of print.

The German blacksmith and printer Johannes Gutenberg, often cited as the inventor of the printing press, did not actually invent much, as most of the technology needed to print, such as movable type, already existed and had been in use for many years. In fact, the mass reproduction and distribution of texts began in East Asia around 700 CE, more than 700 years before Gutenberg, as the Chinese used a wood-block printing method to produce short Buddhist texts. However, Gutenberg’s use of a press to mash the paper against the typeset, as opposed to the

Chinese method of manually rubbing the paper against the typeset, made the process faster and more effective. Additionally, the rise of printing in East Asia did not become a “print revolution,” because the audience for the texts was so limited, given low literacy rates.

Increasing literacy rates in Europe in the two centuries before Gutenberg undoubtedly contributed to the success of his printing efforts, since literacy creates a market for printed texts. The impact of the printing press, as introduced to Europe by Gutenberg starting with his first printing shop in 1439, should not be underestimated. His press helped usher in the Age of Enlightenment and the Scientific Revolution that swept Europe during the 1600s. This spread was aided by aristocratic and religious leaders who turned to the printing press as a way to both spread Christian thought and seek to improve society by educating individuals. In 1454, Gutenberg’s famous forty-two-line Bible was the first book that was mass produced by modern methods and not transcribed by hand, which had been the practice for thousands of years. With this, the “print age” began, which extended from 1450 to 1850 and marked the birth and rise of the first mass medium.

(Marshall T. Poe, *A History of Communications: Media and Society from the Evolution of Speech to the Internet* (New York: Cambridge, 2011), 116 p.)

Books

The explosion of printing following 1450 definitely proves that print was the first mass medium. Books of the time were often shorter than today, but they were still the earliest form of communication to be distributed to the masses, which led to significant cultural and social transformation. Between 1454 and 1500, 30 000 books and pamphlets were published in Europe. In the 1500s, between 150 000 and 200 000 separate titles were printed. Remember, these numbers represent each separate book and not the total copies of each of those titles that were printed. The total number of copies is much more staggering. Between 1450 and 1500, 20 million individual books were printed. During the 1600s, between 150 and 200 million books were printed in Europe. Given that Europe’s population at the time was only 78 million, that is about three books for each person.

(Marshall T. Poe, *A History of Communications: Media and Society from the Evolution of Speech to the Internet* (New York: Cambridge, 2011), 110–111 p.)

Of course, books were not evenly distributed, since most people could not read or write and had no use for them. At the same time, though, cheaper, shorter materials were printed that included content that catered more to the “common” person. These early publications were similar to tabloids in that they were sold as news items but featured stories about miracles, monsters, and other sensational or fantastical events. Although not regarded for their content or positive effect on society, these publications quickly grew into what we would recognize today as newspapers and magazines.

The printing and distribution of books led to cultural transformation, just as radio, television, and the Internet did. The rise of literacy and the availability of literature, religious texts, dictionaries, and other reference books allowed people to learn things for themselves, distinguish themselves from others by what they read and what they knew, and figuratively travel beyond their highly localized lives to other lands and time periods. Before this, people relied on storytellers, clergy, teachers, or other leaders for information. In this way, people may only be exposed to a few sources of information throughout their lives and the information conveyed by these sources could be limited and distorted. Remember, only a select group of people, usually elites, had access to manuscripts and the ability to read them. Publishers still acted as gatekeepers, just as mass media outlets do today, which limited the content and voices that circulated on the new medium. But despite that, the world was opened up for many in a way it had never been before.

Demand for books quickly expanded in the United States in the late 1700s and early 1800s. Technological advances in the manufacturing of paper and cheaper materials for binding books – for example, using cloth covers instead of leather – helped reduce the cost of books. Dime novels were very popular in the United States in the mid to late 1800s. These books, also called pulp fiction, had content that was appealing to mass audiences who enjoyed dramatic, short fiction stories. During this time, publishing became more competitive and profit driven – characteristics that still apply to the industry today. While radio and magazines flourished in the first half of the twentieth century, the book industry did not fare as well. Many people turned to these new media over books, since radio and magazines were generally cheaper and provided more timely information about major world events like the World Wars and the Great Depression.

Newspapers

Newspapers, more than books, serve as the chronicle of daily life in our society, providing regular coverage of events, both historic and mundane, and allowing us to learn about current events outside of our community and country. While radio, television, and online news serve that function for most people now, newspapers were the first mass medium to collect and disseminate such information. The first regularly (weekly) published newspapers emerged in Paris in 1631, and others popped up in Florence, Rome, and Madrid over the next few decades. The first daily newspaper was published in Leipzig, Germany, in 1660. In just a little over a hundred years, in the late 1700s, large European cities like London and Paris had around two hundred newspapers, some published daily, some weekly, and some at other intervals. Not surprisingly, literacy rates also increased during this time.

(Marshall T.Poe, A History of Communications:
Media and Society from the Evolution of Speech
to the Internet (New York: Cambridge, 2011), 112 p.)

Also around 1700, newspapers were published in the colonies that would later become the United States. The following timeline marks some of the historical developments in newspaper publishing from colonial times to the Internet age.

Timeline of Events in Newspaper Publishing

1690. First newspaper in North America is published in Boston. Due to its anti-British tone, it is banned after the first issue is printed.

1704. The Boston News-Letter is the first newspaper in the colonies to be published regularly. Its content is not timely, since its focus on European events means the information is weeks to months old by the time it is published.

1721. James Franklin, Benjamin Franklin's older brother, publishes the New England Courant in Boston, which caters to business and political leaders.

1729. Benjamin Franklin runs the Pennsylvania Gazette which is well respected for the quality of its contents and also generates revenue through advertisements.

1784. The first daily newspaper is published in the United States – The Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser.

1955. The Village Voice is published in Greenwich Village, New York, which marks the beginning of the rise of underground and alternative newspapers.

1980. The Columbus Dispatch is the first newspaper to publish content online.

1982. USA Today is launched, which challenges long-standing newspaper publishing norms and adopts a more visual style. The size, layout, use of colour and images, and content is designed to attract a new newspaper audience, on used to watching television news.

1998. The Drudge Report, an online gossip and news aggregation site.

Magazines

Although newspapers were the first record of daily life in the United States, magazines were the first national mass medium, reaching people all over the growing nation of the late 1700s and into the 1800s. Although the reach of magazines made them the first national medium, they were generally unsuccessful, and the content of the early magazines was not highly regarded.

The high cost of transportation and delivery made magazine subscriptions unaffordable for most people, and the content consisted mostly of stories reprinted from newspapers with the occasional essay on the arts or current events. Toward the middle of the 1800s, magazines began to play a more central role in society. At the time, magazines devoted more content to important issues such as slavery and women's right to vote.

(Richard Campbell, Christopher R. Martin,
and Bettina Fabos, *Media & Culture: An Introduction
to Mass Communication*, 5th ed., 2007, 307 p.)

Magazines as a mass medium overcame early challenges to enjoy a period of relative success in the early 1900s and then met one of their biggest challenges, the rise of television, in the mid-1900s. The following timeline traces some of the most important developments and changes in magazines.

Timeline of Events in Magazine Publishing

1741. Colonial magazines are published. As with colonial newspapers, Benjamin Franklin plays a central role getting them started. Unlike newspapers, magazines face more challenges in terms of postage rates and finding an audience. Over the next thirty years, about one hundred magazines are published and go defunct.

Early 1800s. The number of magazines increases to about one hundred in circulation by 1825. Although they generate some revenue through advertising, they still face financial struggles. Most magazines serve a specific community or area and still consist of content that is mostly reprinted from other sources.

1820s. Specialized magazines catering to niche audiences begin to emerge. For example, literary magazines feature the writing of people like Mark Twain and Waldo Emerson, and magazines focus on specific professions or topics such as farming, law, education, or science.

1821. The Saturday Evening Post is founded and becomes the longest-published magazine in the United States and the first general-interest magazine to be successfully marketed to a national audience.

1828. The first women's magazine, Ladies' Magazine, is founded and marks the beginning of the trend toward targeting women as a distinct audience.

1850s. Magazines pioneer the use of images in printed texts, reproducing high-quality illustrations and sketches, though not photographs.

1865. The Nation is published, which focuses on political opinion and caters toward a more educated and liberal readership.

1879 – early 1900s. The Postal Act of 1879 is passed, which lowers the cost of postage for magazines. This, along with improvements in rail transportation and mass-production printing, leads to a surge in the number of magazines and the number of subscribers. These changes attract more advertisers, which allows magazine publishers to drop the price per issue below what it actually costs to produce the magazine. This attracts more readers, which attracts more advertisers and allows publishers to make up the loss between subscription and production rates with ad revenue.

1900–1960. This is a peak time for magazine success. The early 1900s see a rise in investigative journalism that goes into much more depth than newspaper coverage. The 1920s and 1930s see the rise of general-interest magazines such as Reader's Digest, Time, and Life. Magazines play a key role in providing in-depth coverage of the World Wars and start to cover the cultural revolutions of the 1960s when they run into new challenges.

1960s and 1970s. As television explodes as the new mass medium of choice, national magazines lose advertisers to the new audiovisual medium. Audiences (now viewers instead of readers) turn to nightly

news programs to follow the civil rights movement, the sexual revolution, and the Vietnam War.

1970s – present day magazines adapt to changing times by devoting pages or entire publications to the covering of television and movies. Magazines like *People*, launched in 1974, provide news on a wide range of celebrities. Magazines also adapt by becoming more specialized, trying to appeal more to niche rather than general-interest audiences.

While television forced magazines to adapt to an increasingly popular visual medium, radio and magazines coexisted relatively well. But the clash between print, audio and visual media in the early 1900s marks an interesting time in the history of mass media. The growth and spread of print as a mass medium took hundreds of years, which seems like an eternity when compared to the spread of audiovisual media. The lack of and resistance to literacy made the printed medium spread less quickly than audio and visual media, which is not surprising from an evolutionary perspective. Humans evolved to talk, look and listen, as evidenced by the fact that we have body parts/organs that help us do these things. We did not evolve to read and write, which is why the process of teaching those things is so difficult and time consuming.

(Marshall T. Poe, *A History of Communications: Media and Society from the Evolution of Speech to the Internet* (New York: Cambridge, 2011), 114 p.)

In general, people enjoy watching and listening more than reading and writing. While we had to adapt our brains to decode written language and our arms, hands and fingers to be able to produce written text, the turn to listening to the radio and watching and listening to television and movies was much more comfortable, familiar and effortless.

Task 1. Be ready to answer the following questions.

1. What does mass communication involve?
2. What are the new channels of communication?
3. In brief, answer how we progressed from writing to print and trace the birth of the first mass medium.
4. Who is often cited as the inventor of the printing press?
5. What are the main functions of newspapers?
6. Where did the first regularly (weekly) published newspapers emerge?

Freedom of the Press

Freedom of the press is the **guarantee** by a government of free public press for its citizens, extended to members of **news gathering organizations**, and their published **reporting**. It also extends to news gathering, and processes involved in **obtaining information for public distribution**. In the USA this right is guaranteed by the First Amendment to the US Constitution. Not all countries are **protected by a bill of rights** or the constitution pertaining to the freedom of the press.

Ideally, the press is free when:

- there is no official **censor** (someone who removes parts of articles or the whole articles for political or religious reasons);
- there are no **government-controlled** newspapers;
- there is no **government shareholding** in any newspaper (owing shares in a newspaper by the government);
- the press is not **aided by the government** (the government does not provide the press with money);
- there is a **constitutional guarantee of freedom of the press**.

State Control of the Press

Breaches of code by the press:

- **inaccuracy** (a statement or detail that is not true or accurate);
- **intrusion into privacy** (illegally finding information about someone's private life);
- **discrimination**;
- **contempt of court** (disobedience of or disrespect towards a judge, court of law);
- **disclosing official secrets**;
- **defamation** (false information presented in oral or written form).

Actions taken by the State

- **limiting press freedom**;
- **imposing statutory control** (introducing governmental control);
- **cracking/clamping down on the press** (stopping a particular activity of the press).

The Official Secrets Act and D Notices

Not many know that in the UK they have **The Official Secrets Act**. By the Act, the British government has the power, throughout the UK, to order that certain subjects **are** absolutely **forbidden** to be discussed.

Further than that, any discussion is forbidden about how the Official Secrets Act exactly works. When there is a subject that an editor, publisher, or station manager believes would be **covered by the Official Secrets Act**, they must immediately **inform** the British government. And if the British government **issues** what they call a “**D Notice**,” then these **media outlets** throughout the UK are not only forbidden to go forward with any story that they are working on, but also the **D Notice** serves as a **potential seizure**; it **authorizes** the government, through their various operatives, to immediately **seize and close down** any printing plant that is in the process of printing such a story, or any radio station. They are immediately seized by the British government, closed down, and the publisher, the editor and the key personnel are immediately **put under arrest**. And the worst part of it is, the rest of the media is not even allowed to mention that these people have been arrested and their **publishing facilities** seized. In other words, it is forbidden to discuss the D Notice and also forbidden to discuss the technical operation of The Official Secrets Act. So, there is **censorship regarding the instruments of censorship**.

(Based on www.conservapedia.com)

Exercises

1. Match the following words with the corresponding definitions.

1) censor; 2) contempt of court; 3) intrusion into privacy; 4) to impose statutory control; 5) government shareholding; 6) defamation; 7) inaccuracy.

a) false statement or detail; b) government owns shares in a newspaper; c) to establish control of the government; d) legal offence of giving false information; e) invasion of privacy; g) someone who removes parts of articles for political and other reasons.

2. Choose a word from the row to complete the sentences below.

intrusion; defamation; statutory; control; inaccuracy; shareholding; disclosing

1. Privacy has got a new meaning with the emergence of Mobile Phones with cameras.

2. Historically, consisted of slander, saying something bad about someone that is untrue, and libel – giving false information by means of writing.

3. If the press does not regulate its actions the government has the right to impose

4. In many developed countries or owning shares in a newspaper by the government is forbidden.

5. Censorship is justified when it prohibits official secrets of the country.

6. If the information about celebrities is printed without their consent and there is some, they have the right to sue the publishers.

3. Choose the appropriate words in the correct form. The first letter is given.

Invasion of privacy

Invasion of privacy is the 1. i..... into the personal life of another, without just cause, which can give the person whose privacy has been 2. i..... a right to bring a 3. l..... for damages against the person or entity that intruded. It encompasses workplace monitoring, Internet privacy, data collection, and other means of disseminating 4. p..... information.

Celebrities are not protected in most situations, since they have voluntarily placed themselves already within the public eye, and their activities are considered newsworthy. However, an otherwise non-public individual has a 5. r..... to privacy from: a) intrusion on one's solitude or into one's private affairs; b) public disclosure of embarrassing private information; c) publicity which puts him/her in a false light to the public; d) appropriation of one's name or picture for personal or commercial advantage.

4. Work with a partner. Discuss the following questions.

1. Why is freedom of the press essential to democratic development and progress?

2. Look at the map of the world. What factors do you think affect the status of press freedom in different countries?

3. Make a list of factors affecting the status of press freedom and discuss their interrelations.

4. Research the status of press freedom in the country of your interest. Find out what publications exist and what TV and radio stations are currently in operation in the country; if there is any political bias in mass media reporting; what legal or constitutional guarantees of free public press are in existence.

Report on the results of your research to your partners.

Censorship

What is censorship?

Censorship is the practice or system of censoring something. It comes from the Latin word “censor.” In Ancient Rome the censor had two duties: to count the citizens and supervise their morals.

How censorship is practised

Censorship is the control of speech and other forms of human expression. In many cases, it **is exercised** by governing bodies. The visible motive of censorship is often to stabilize or improve society. It is most commonly applied to acts that occur in public circumstances, and most formally involves the **suppression of ideas** (preventing information from being published) by criminalizing or regulating expression. **Sanitization** (taking out offensive parts from information) and **whitewashing** (hiding the truth, making bad seem good) are almost interchangeable terms that refer to a particular form of censorship via **omission**, which seeks to “clean up” the portrayal of particular issues that are already known, but that may be in conflict with the point of view of the censor.

Most public speech depends on an organized forum such as a court or town meeting, or on technologies such as paper, the printing press, radio, television, or the Internet. In each case, only a minority of people have initially had **free access to the medium of public communication**. Most often, censorship does not seek to **ban** (forbid) certain ideas, but rather **to restrict** (keep something within limits) what may be said in particular media of communication.

In England, for example, censorship began with the introduction of copyright laws, which gave the Crown the permission **to license publishing** (allow publishing something). Without government approval, printing was not allowed. For a court or other governmental body to prevent a person from speaking or publishing before the act has even taken place is sometimes called **prior restraint** (limiting or controlling information before publishing), which may be viewed as worse than punishment received after someone speaks, **in libel suits** (claims concerning untrue information made in a court of law).

Censorship can be explicit, as laws passed to prevent select positions from being published or **propagated** (being spread about), or it can be implicit, taking the form of **intimidation** (making someone feel fright-

ened) **by government**, where people are afraid to express certain opinions for fear of losing their jobs, their credibility or even their lives.

(Based on articles.gourt.com, Wikipedia)

Types of censorship

Moral censorship is the means by which any material that contains what the censor deems **to be of questionable morality** is removed. The censoring body disapproves of what it deems to be the values behind the material and **limits to access to it**.

Military censorship is the process of **keeping** military intelligence and tactics **confidential** and **away from** the enemy. This is used to **counter espionage**, which is the process of gleaning military information. Additionally, military censorship may involve a **restriction on information or media coverage** that can be **released to the public**.

Political censorship occurs when governments **hold back secret information from** their citizens. The logic is to prevent the free expression needed to rebel. Any **dissent against** the government is thought to be a “weakness” for the enemy to exploit.

Campaign tactics **are** also often **kept secret**.

Religious censorship is the means by which any material **objectionable to** a certain faith is removed. This often involves a dominant religion **forcing limitations on** less prevalent ones. Alternatively, one religion may **shun** (keep something away from somebody) the works of another when they believe the content **is not appropriate for** their faith.

Corporate censorship is the process by which editors in corporate media outlets intervene **to halt the publishing of information** that **portrays** their business or business partners **in a negative light**. Privately owned corporations in the business of reporting the news also sometimes refuse **to distribute information** due to the potential loss of advertiser revenue or shareholder value which **adverse** (unfavourable) **publicity** may bring.

Defamation, libel, slander, etc.

In law, **defamation** (also called **calumny**, **libel**, **slander**, and **vilification**) is the communication of a statement that makes a false claim, expressly stated or implied to be factual, that may give an individual, business, product, group, government or nation a negative image. **Slander** refers to a malicious, false, and defamatory spoken statement or report, while **libel** refers to any other form of communication such as written words or images. Most jurisdictions allow legal actions, civil

and/or criminal, **to deter** (prevent from occurring) **various kinds of defamation** and retaliate against groundless criticism.

Some other words and phrases relating to censorship:

– **to silence** – to prevent someone from giving an opinion **to gag** – to officially prevent a newspaper or a person from talking about or publishing something;

– **libel laws** – laws that protect people from being libeled;

– **libel damages** – money that a court orders you to pay because you have said something untrue about something;

– **contempt of court** – (in reference to mass media) publishing something about a court trial or hearing that might prevent fair trial;

– **biased** – having groundless prejudices against someone or something;

– **impartial** – not influenced by any particular person or group;

– **political bias** – supporting this or that political party;

– **statutory control** – government control or control by law;

– **watchdog** – a person or organization that prevents people from doing illegal things in a particular area;

– **media ethics** – the subdivision of applied ethics dealing with the specific ethical principles and standards of media;

– **invasion of privacy** – intruding into private life.

Exercises

1. Read the information presented above and answer the following questions.

1. What is censorship?
2. What is the visible motive of censorship?
3. What does censorship seek in a majority of cases?
4. How did censorship begin in England?
5. What does explicit and implicit censorship mean?
6. What sort of information can be censored?
7. What is defamation?

2. Use the words *libel* and *slander* in the text given below.

..... is a publication made in a permanent form or in a broadcast or as a part of theatrical performance. is made public in a transitory manner of form – usually orally. The most important difference between and is that the law presumes that some damage will result from the publication of a, whereas for a to be actiona-

ble, some special damage must be proven to have been caused from the (unless it falls within certain specified categories).

3. Choose a word from the row to complete the sentences below.

libel to gag; bias; libel damages; unbiased

1. The use of the word, as relating to defamatory writings, seems to have originated early in the sixteenth century.

2. Seventy million Americans rely on broadcast television for their news. However, nowadays the information on which they depend is distorted, it is vital to American democracy that television news and other media be fair and

3. With the political of the press no longer secret, members of the media argue that while personally liberal, they are professionally neutral.

4. The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines opposes the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board's move to Philippine broadcast media by imposing prior restraint on all public affairs programs, news documentaries, socio-imposing prior restraint on all public affairs programs, news documentaries, socio-political editorials and similar programs.

5. Associated Newspapers, publishers of The Mail On Sunday, agreed to pay Edmonds "substantial" costs incurred by the libel action.

4. Use derivatives of the words given below to complete the gaps in the following headlines.

intimidate; censor; impartial; gag; silent; bias

1. White House Campaign to Congress on Iraq will backfire.

2. Potential jurors at Neil Entwistle trial charged with

3. Paper appeals against fine for food review.

4. Plan for more women judges "could damage"

5. High Court lifts order on Iraqi abuse case.

6. Moscow revives long and bloody history of its enemies.

5. Work with a partner. Discuss the following questions.

1. To what extent do you think public speech can be censored?

2. Do you think censorship prevents anarchy?

3. Find arguments to support or refute the following debatable statements.

Implicit censorship is typical of non-democratic states only.

Any type of censorship is evil.

Political Correctness

Political correctness (also politically correct or PC) is a term used to describe language which is claimed to be calculated to provide a minimum of offense, particularly to the racial, cultural, or other identity groups being described.

Political correctness endangers languages

Critics of political language choice argue the new terms are often awkward, **euphemistic words and expressions** (used to speak about unpleasant events without directly mentioning them) that substitute for the original **stark language** (language used to describe unpleasant situations) concerning differences such as race, gender, disability, religion, and political views. Politically correct language has often been compared to George Orwell's invented language Newspeak. It is often argued that political correctness amounts to censorship and **endangers free speech** (causes danger to free speech), as limits are placed on public debate, especially in universities and political forums. It is also often argued that politically correct terminology (such as "collateral damage," for example) can be misappropriated **to soften concepts** (make some concepts less severe) that would be unacceptable in normal language, and as such is a key technique employed by **spin doctors** (people who make a politician or an organization seem as good as possible) to manipulate the masses.

Conservatives often view many politically correct terms as being linguistic for an **evasion of personal responsibility** (avoiding or shifting responsibility), for instance when "juvenile delinquents" become "children at risk."

Critics allege that political correctness can often **detect offensive language** (draw attention to offensive language when it is not obvious) when there is none. One example is the feminised "herstory" instead of "history".

Liberal and progressive commentators, however, sometimes argue that the term "political correctness" was fabricated by United States conservatives around 1980 and Defined as a way to **reframe** (look at, present or think of ideas, beliefs, relationships, etc. in a new or different way) the political arguments in the United States. Some commentators say that there never was a "Political Correctness movement" in the

United States, and that many who use the term are attempting to **distract attention from substantive debates** over discrimination and unequal treatment based on race, class, and gender.

Some words and phrases used to talk about political correctness:

- **to infringe on people's rights** – to limit someone's legal rights;
- **to clutter the language** – to give so many facts that it becomes difficult to understand;
- **social engineers** – people who use theories from social science to develop policies in order to improve society;
- **to hinder understanding** – to make the understanding of something more difficult;
- **to promote stereotypes** – to support the existence of stereotypes;
- **to shun offensive words** – to avoid deliberately offensive expressions;
- **to shy away from painful facts** – to avoid unpleasant facts;
- **to camouflage reality** – to hide reality;
- **to homogenize the language** – to incorporate particular lexical units in the language so that everyone used them;
- **discriminatory words** – words that make people feel discriminated against;
- **unfair rectifiable conditions** – a difficult life situation people can be found in, which they do not deserve and which can be improved.

Exercises

1. Read the text again and answer the following questions.

1. What are the spheres in which the language of political correctness is used?
2. What is politically correct language often compared to?
3. Why does political correctness endanger free speech?
4. How can political correctness shift responsibility?
5. Can you give an example of the use of the language of political correctness when it sounds ridiculous?

2. Choose a word from the row to complete the sentences below. Think of the form of the word. If necessary, use derivatives. Some words can be used twice.

clutter; infringe on; evasion; promote; hinder; social engineer; endanger

1. After four and a half years, we have come to expect the Bush administration to refuse to hold anyone of stature accountable for errors, misdeeds or even potential violations of the law. But the inspector general's report on the failures of the CIA before the Sept.11 attacks elevates of responsibility to a new level.

2. Lack of knowledge in this sphere of maths will you from successfully understanding the concept.

3. The PC crowd regularly complains that all those evil non-leftists stereotypes about all sorts of groups of people.

4. The majority of Europeans believe that prohibiting smoking outside cafes people's rights.

5. Though PC words make communication between representatives of different cultures easier, they the language.

6. In criminal activity, is the art of manipulating people into performing disclosure actions or divulging confidential information.

7. Some local governments have legitimate rights and interests of the people.

8. There is an opinion that PC language prevents people from discrimination.

9. Critics argue that political correctness is censorship and it free speech by limiting what is considered acceptable public discourse.

3. Complete the gaps with necessary words in the correct form. The first letter is given.

Political Correctness

Today people are obsessed with political correctness and euphemism which are often called "linguistic smile buttons." These feel-good euphemisms which part with accuracy and unambiguity in the interest of feeling and sympathy simply 1. c..... or in other words hide reality rather than change it.

Advocates of political correctness attempt to 2. h..... our language and thought not only to enhance the self-esteem of minorities, women, and beneficiaries of the welfare state but also to preserve the moral image of the welfare state itself. One approach to reaching this goal is to eliminate disparaging. 3. d..... or offensive words and phrases at the expense of economy, clarity, and logic. 4. S..... engineers who advocate and implement the ideas of political correctness fail to understand that language is the result of an evolved social process that corresponds

to a systematic order achieved without the use of a deliberate overall plan. No one intended to exclude women when generic terms like “he” or “mankind” were used.

With respect to human beings, the male gender was used to denote the species. On the other hand, both countries and ships are referred to as “she.” Using “he or she” or “him or her” simply 5. c..... the language and conveys no further information.

Political Correctness often 6. i..... on people’s right to express their ideas freely, 7. p..... existing stereotypes and compels people to 8. s..... from painful reality instead of solving problems.

4. Work with a partner. Give arguments to support or refuse the following debatable statements.

Political correctness is equal to censorship.

Political correctness hinders understanding.

Political correctness makes people hypocrites.

The Media

Task 1. Read the texts presented below and be ready to do the tasks after.

As in many other European countries, Britain's main newspapers and main TV channels are both in long-term decline; fewer and fewer people are reading the former or watching the latter. In the last quarter of the twentieth century, people became richer, so that they were able to pursue alternative forms of leisure activity. In addition, cheaper means of production and distribution meant that the main papers and the main channels found themselves with more rivals. More recently, there is the Internet, which gives people not only a further form of leisure activity but also an alternative source for news. Nevertheless, the main papers and channels remain a central part of everyday national life.

The importance of the national press

Newspaper publication in the country is dominated by the national press – an indication of the comparative weakness of regional identity in the country. There are more than seventy local and regional daily papers, but the total circulation of all of them together is less than the combined circulation of the handful of national “dailies.” The only non-national papers with significant circulations are published in the evenings, when they do not compete with the national papers, which always appear in the mornings. The only exception to this pattern is in Scotland, where a number of Scotland-only papers (most notably The Sunday Post, The Sunday Mail and the Daily Record) sell more copies than most of the UK-wide papers in Scotland (which usually produce special Scottish editions anyway).

Most local papers do not appear on Sundays, so on that day the dominance of the national press is absolute. The “Sunday papers” are so-called because that is the only day on which they appear. Some of them are sisters of a daily (published by the same company) but employ different editors and journalists.

The morning newspaper is a British household institution – such an important one that, until the laws were relaxed in the early 1990s, newsagents were the only shops that were allowed to open on Sundays. People could not be expected to do without their newspapers for even one day, especially a day when there is more free time to read them. The

Sunday papers are generally thicker than the dailies and some of them have six or more sections, making up a total of well over 200 pages.

Another indication of the importance of “the papers” is the morning “paper round.” Most newsagents organize these, and more than half of the country’s readers get their morning paper delivered to their door by a teenager who gets up at around 5.30 a.m. every day in order to earn a bit of pocket money.

The two types of national newspaper

Conventionally, the national papers are divided into two distinct types. The quality papers cater for the better educated readers. The popular papers sell to a much larger readership. They contain far less print than the “qualities” and far more pictures. They use larger headlines and write in a simpler style of English. While the qualities devote much space to politics and other “serious” news, the popular papers concentrate on “human interest” stories, which often means sex and scandal.

However, this method of classification has a hint of snobbery about it. It implies that a newspaper can’t be both high quality and popular at the same time. Perhaps this is why the two types have also been known by other names: the broadsheets and the tabloids. Not so long ago in Britain, if you saw someone reading a newspaper, you could tell what kind it was without even checking the title. This was because the quality newspapers were all printed on terribly large-sized paper known as broadsheet, so that to be able to read more than one page without looking like you had just taken up origami, you had to have expert page turning skills. The popular papers, on the other hand, were all tabloids; that is, they were printed on much smaller pages (which were therefore much easier to turn). But in 2004, two quality newspapers, *The Times* and *The Independent*, successfully adopted the tabloid format. And then, a year later, another quality, *The Guardian*, broke with tradition even more radically by adopting the Berliner format, which is halfway between broadsheet and tabloid and often used in continental Europe but never before in Britain. Again, the move was a success. And so, the tabloid/broadsheet distinction no longer fits the facts. However, it is still often used, in order to avoid the snobbery of the other method of distinction.

In any case, the differences between the two types can be exaggerated. The “qualities” do not completely ignore sex and scandal or any other aspect of public life. Both types of paper devote equal amounts of attention to sport. Moreover, some people make a three-way distinc-

tion (The Daily Mail and The Express being in the middle). The differences are in the treatments of the topics covered in which topics are given the most prominence.

The characteristics of the national press: politics

The way politics is presented in the national newspapers is an example of the fact that British political parties are essentially parliamentary organizations, not countrywide ones. Although different papers have differing political outlooks, none of the large newspapers is an organ of a political party. Many are often obviously in favour of the policies of this or that party (and even more obviously against the policies of another party) but none of them would ever use “we” or “us” to refer to a certain party. What counts for the newspaper publishers is business. All of them want first and foremost to make money. Their primary concern is to sell as many copies as possible and to attract as much advertising as possible. The British press is mostly controlled by a rather small number of extremely large multinational companies. This fact helps to explain two notable features. One of these is its freedom from interference from government influence, which is virtually absolute. The press is so powerful in this respect that it is sometimes referred to as “the fourth estate” (the other three being the Commons, the Lords and the monarch). This freedom is assisted by a general feeling in the country that “freedom of speech” is a basic constitutional right.

The rest of the press

If you go into any well-stocked newsagent in Britain, you will not find only newspapers. You will also see rows and rows of magazines catering for almost every imaginable taste and specializing in almost every imaginable pastime. There are around 3, 000 consumer magazines published in the country and about four million copies are sold every month. The vast majority of these sales are of “women’s interest” magazines and (even more so) magazines which list all the TV and radio programmes for the coming week. The best known of these is the Radio Times, which also contains some fifty pages of articles. (Note the typically British appeal to continuity in the name “Radio Times.” The magazine was first produced before television existed and has never felt compelled to update its title).

There are also a few publications dealing with news and current affairs. Partly because the national press is so predictable (and often so

trivial), some of these periodicals, such the *New Statesman* and *The Spectator*, are quite widely read. In terms of sales, two of them in particular stand out. One is the *Economist*, which is of the same type as *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Der Spiegel* and *L'Express*. It is fairly obviously right of centre in its views, but the writing is very high quality and that is why it has the reputation of being one of the best weeklies in the world. (In fact, it sells five times as many copies abroad as it does in Britain itself).

The other is very different. *Private Eye* is a satirical magazine which makes fun of all parties and politicians, and also makes fun of the mainstream press. It also has a serious side, unearthing corruption in public life. Because of this combination of, often rather “school-boyish,” humour and investigative journalism, it is forever defending itself in legal actions.

The BBC

Just as the British Parliament has the reputation for being “the mother of parliaments,” so the BBC might be said to be “the mother of information services.” Its reputation for impartiality and objectivity in news reporting is, at least when compared to news broadcasting in many other countries, largely justified. Whenever it is accused of bias by one political side, it can always point out that the other side has complained of the same thing at some other time – so the complaints are evenly balanced. In fact, the BBC is rather proud of the fact that it gets complaints from both sides of the political divide, because this testifies not only to its impartiality but also to its independence.

Interestingly, though, this independence is as much the result of habit and common agreement as it is the result of its legal status. It is true that it depends neither on advertising nor (directly) on the government for its income. It gets this from the license fee which everybody who uses a television set has to pay. However, the government decides how much this fee is going to be, appoints its board of governors and its director-general, has the right to veto any BBC programme before it has been transmitted and even has the right to take away the BBC’s licence to broadcast. In theory, therefore, it would be easy for a government to influence what the BBC does.

Nevertheless, partly by historical accident, the BBC began, right from the start, to establish its effective independence and its reputation for impartiality. This first occurred through the medium of radio

broadcasts to people in Britain. Then, in 1932 The BBC World Service was set up, with a licence to broadcast first to the empire and then to other parts of the world. During the Second World War, it became identified with the principles of democracy and free speech. In this way the BBC's fame became international. Today, the World Service still broadcasts around the globe, in English and several other languages. The BBC also runs ten national radio stations inside Britain and several local ones.

Television: organization

TV channels in general are also independent of government interference. This again is largely a matter of tacit agreement. There have been occasions when the government has successfully persuaded the BBC not to show something. But there have also been many occasions when the BBC has refused to bow to government pressure. Similarly, when the government or some other public body criticizes the BBC for its behaviour, the BBC sometimes accepts the criticism and apologizes (and one or more of its top people resign), and sometimes successfully argues its case and refuses to apologize.

There is no advertising on the BBC. But Independent Television (ITV), which started in 1954, gets its money from advertisements. ITV is a network of commercial companies, each of which is responsible for programming in different parts of the country on the single channel given to it. In practice, these companies cannot afford to make all their own programmes, and so they generally share those they make. As a result, it is common for exactly the same programme to be showing on the ITV channel throughout the country (just like on the BBC).

When commercial television began, it was feared that advertisers would have too much control over programming and that the new channel would exhibit all the worst features of tabloid journalism. Over the years, however, these fears have proved to be unfounded. Although commercial TV has recently adopted the habit of allowing programmes to be "sponsored" by other commercial companies, as a form of advertising for them, these advertisers do not have the influence over programming that they have often had in the USA. Most importantly for the structure of commercial television, ITV news is not made by the individual companies. Independent Television News (ITN) is a separate company. For this and other reasons, it has always been protected from commercial influence. There is no significant dif-

ference between the style and content of ITN news and BBC news. The same fears that had been expressed about the quality of television when ITV started are now heard with regard to satellite and cable television. To some extent, these fears may be more justified, as the companies that run channels in this way are in exactly the same position as those which own the major newspapers (and in some cases actually are the same companies). In any case, new technology has meant that, instead of just the few channels they had been used to, British households now have access to a vast number of channels, so they just have to become more discriminating themselves.

BBC radio

Radio 1 began in 1967. Devoted almost entirely to pop music, its birth was a signal that popular youth culture could no longer be ignored by the country's established institutions.

Radio 2 also broadcasts popular music but less contemporary than that on Radio 1. At the time of writing it is Britain's most popular radio station.

Radio 3 is devoted to classical music.

Radio 4 broadcasts a variety of programmes, from plays and comedy shows to consumer advice programmes and in-depth news coverage. It has a small but dedicated following.

Radio 5 is largely given over to sports coverage and news. Because of all the sport, it is sometimes referred to as "Radio Bloke." ("Bloke" is an informal word for a man which emphasizes male interests).

Two particular radio programmes should be mentioned. Soap operas are normally associated with television, but the Archers is actually the longest-running soap in the world. It describes itself as "an everyday story of country folk." Its audience, which is mainly middle-class with a large proportion of elderly people, cannot compare in size with the television soaps, but it has become so famous that everybody in Britain knows about it and tourist attractions have been designed to capitalize on its fame.

The traditional TV channels

Although British households can now receive tens of channels, there are still five main channels. They are: BBC1 (founded 1936), ITV (1954), BBC2 (1964), Channel 4 (1982), Five (1997).

They are “big” because everybody with a TV has access to them and they have been broadcasting for the longest, so that people are used to them. Their popularity is reflected in viewing figures and in magazines with programme listings such as the Radio Times (where more space is given to them than other channels).

Glued to the TV

As long ago as 1953, it was estimated that 20 million viewers watched the BBC's coverage of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. By 1970, 94% of British households had a television set, mostly rented rather than bought. Now, 99% of households have one (mostly bought). Moreover, television broadcasting in Britain has expanded to fill every part of every day of the week. The main channels are never off air.

A survey reported in early 1994 that 40% of British people watched more than three hours of television every day. By 2005, this figure had fallen to 23%. But since then, with so many more channels and interactive services available, the percentage has been rising again. Television news is watched every day by more than half of the population. As a result, its presenters are among the best-known names and faces in the whole-country – one of them once boasted that he was more famous than royalty!

Television style

Although the advent of ITV did not affect television coverage of news and current affairs, it did cause a change in the style and content of other programmes shown on television. The amount of money that a television company can charge an advertiser depends on the expected number of viewers at the time when the advertisement is to be shown. Therefore, there was pressure on ITV from the start to make its programmes popular. In its early years, ITV captured nearly three-quarters of the BBC's audience. The BBC then responded by making its own programming equally accessible to a mass audience.

Ever since then, there has been little significant difference in the programming of the BBC and the main commercial television channels. All show a wide variety of programmes, including news, documentaries, drama, films, light entertainment, comedies, and sports. They are in constant competition with each other to get the largest audience (this is known as the ratings war). But this competition does not

mean that they each try to show a more popular type of programme than the other. Rather it means that each tries to do the same type of programme “better.”

Of particular importance in the ratings wars are the performances of the channels’ various soap operas. These are also of interest because of what they can show about British attitudes and taste. The two most popular and long-running of these, which are shown at least twice a week, are not glamorous American productions showing rich and powerful people. They are ITV’s *Coronation Street*, which is set in a working-class area near Manchester, and BBC1’s *EastEnders*, which is set in a working-class area of London. They and other British-made soaps certainly do not paint an idealized picture of life. They depict relatively ordinary lives in relatively ordinary circumstances. The same is largely true of British situation comedies (known as “sitcoms”). These are usually about people less fortunate and less able and less popular than the average. These people often have plans to be especially successful and popular, but the plans always fail.

It became obvious in the 1960s that the popularity of soap operas and light entertainment shows meant that there was less room for programmes which lived up to the original educational aims of television.

(Britain for learners of English by James O’Driscoll,
Oxford University Press 2009, p. 158)

Be ready to answer the following questions.

1. What is the difference between the Sunday papers and the dailies?
2. What do you understand under the notion “the fourth estate?”
3. What is the title of a satirical British magazine which makes fun of all parties and politicians?
4. What is the “mother of information services” in Britain?
5. Why are English soap operas so popular? What makes them trendy?

Social Sphere

Social and everyday contacts

British people give a relatively high importance to the everyday personal contacts that they make. Some writers on Britain have talked about the British desire to “belong,” and it is certainly true that the pub, or the working man’s club, or the numerous other clubs devoted to various sports and pastimes play an important part in many people’s lives. In these places, people forge contacts with other people who share some of the same interests and attitudes. For many people, these contacts are an important part of their social identity. Another factor is work, which is how many people make their social contacts. Partly as a result of this, some people’s profession or skill is also an important aspect of their sense of identity.

However, since British people do not spend their free time out the house any more than they do in most other European countries, these means of self-identification should not be overemphasized. On the other hand, the widespread use of the internet means that they don’t need to.

(Britain for learners of English by James O’Driscoll,
Oxford University Press 2009, p. 54)

Religion and politics

In comparison to some other European countries, and with the exception of Northern Ireland, some people in Scotland and in the Islamic community, neither religion nor politics is an important part of a person’s social identity in modern Britain. This is partly because the two do not, as they do in some other countries, go together in any significant way.

Of course, there are many people who regard themselves as belonging to this or that religion, church or party. Some people among the minority who are actively religious and the very small minority who are active members of political parties feel this sense of belonging strongly and deeply. It may form a very important part of their own idea of themselves as individuals. But even for these people it plays little part in determining other aspects of their lives such as where they work, which trade union they belong to, who their friends are or who they would like their neighbours to be. For the vast majority of parents in the country (some ethnic groups excepted), the religion of voting habits of their future son-in-law’s or daughter-in-law’s family are of

only passing interest and rarely the major cause of objection to the proposed marriage.

(Britain for learners of English by James O'Driscoll,
Oxford University Press 2009, p.54)

Personal identity: a sense of humour

Finally, how do British people think of themselves as individuals? What sort of a person does he or she like to think of himself or herself as? It is difficult to generalize. But if there is one personal quality which most British people cling to above all others, it is a sense of humour. Of course, most people in Britain, like most people in the world, would not like to be thought of as dishonest, cowardly, unkind, ugly, stupid, or just generally insignificant. But perhaps the worst shame of all for them would be to be regarded as a person with no sense of humour.

In Britain, you do not have to tell the best jokes to be humorous. Nor is there a proper time and place for humour. A mildly funny remark is appreciated in all but the most formal situations. It does not have to be especially clever. It is just an everyday way of talking. People expect it. Raising a smile or getting a laugh is a good enough reason for saying anything, even if it is something you don't mean. (It is for this reason that some people see the British as hypocritical). And if the "joke" is at your own expense, so much the better. The ability to laugh at yourself and to "take a joke" is highly prized. The imperative to present yourself as having this quality is amazingly strong. A doctor was once asked how patients reacted to being told they had cancer. He said that, after the initial shock, their most common reaction was to make a joke out of it!

You may notice in the above comments two other personal qualities which are generally highly prized in Britain: bravery in the face of misfortune (sometimes known as the "stiff upper lip") and modesty. The quality which connects these two is the sense of humour.

Making contact and finding your roots

Britain is a geographically mobile society. People's lives take them in such different directions that they meet and talk to thousands of people in their lives. Some of them become friends, but often only temporarily, as they then move on again. And, because extended family gatherings are rare, even family members can lose touch.

Doesn't this make British people lonely? Perhaps it does, if we are to believe evidence from the Internet. In the year 2000, in the spare room of their north London house, Julie and Steve Pankhurst set up a website called Friends Reunited. They only did it because Julie was pregnant and wanted to trace any old school friends who had already had babies. But they had tapped into something big. The website took off like a rocket. Five years later, it had 12 million registered users and the Parkursts set up Genes Reunited, which rapidly became the country's largest ancestry site.

Websites of this kind have become enormously popular in Britain. In particular, tracing family roots is a booming activity. From being an arcane pastime for a few amateur historians, genealogy has entered the mainstream. It is so popular that when, in 2001, the complete data for the 1901 British census went online, the huge number of visitors made the site crash!

(Britain for learners of English by James O'Driscoll,
Oxford University Press 2009, p. 54)

Stereotypes and change

Societies change over time while their reputations lag behind. Many things which are often regarded as typically British derive from books, songs or plays which were written a long time ago and which are no longer representative of modern life.

One example of this is the popular belief that Britain is a "land of tradition." This is what most tourist brochures claim. It is a reputation based on what can be seen in public life, on centuries of political continuity and on its attendant ceremonies. And at this level – the level of public life – it is true. The annual ceremony of the state opening of Parliament, for instance, carefully follows customs which are centuries old. So does the military ceremony of "trooping the colour." Likewise, the changing of the guard outside Buckingham Palace never changes.

However, in their private everyday lives, the British are probably less inclined to follow tradition than the people of most other countries. There are very few age-old customs that are followed by the majority of families on certain special occasions. The country has fewer local parades of processions with genuine folk roots than most other countries. The English language has fewer sayings or proverbs in common everyday use than many other languages. The British are too individualistic for these things.

There are many examples of supposedly typical British habits which are simply not typical any more. For example, the stereotyped image of the London “city gent” includes the wearing of a bowler hat. In fact, this type of hat has not been commonly worn for a long time. Food and drink provide other examples. The traditional “British” (or “English”) breakfast is a large “fry-up” plus cereal with milk and also toast, butter and marmalade, all washed down with tea. In fact, very few people in Britain actually have this sort of breakfast. Most just have the cereal, tea and toast, or even less. What the vast majority of British people have in the mornings is therefore much closer to what they call a “continental” (i.e. mainland European) breakfast than it is to a British one. The image of the British as a nation of tea-drinkers is also somewhat outdated. And the tradition of afternoon tea with biscuits, scones, sandwiches, or cake has always been a minority activity, confined to retired people and the leisured upper-middle class (although preserved in tea shops in tourists resorts).

Even when a British habit conforms to the stereotype, the wrong conclusions can sometimes be drawn from it. The British love of queueing is an example. Yes, British people do form queues when they wait for something, but this does not mean that they enjoy it. In 2007, supermarkets reported that no less than 65% of shoppers in Britain had personally witnessed, or even been victims of, “queue rage”; that is people being abusive or violent about a delay or a perceived unfairness in a queue (because, for example, the person in front is not ready to pay when the cashier has finished, or has left goods on the conveyor belt while looking for more items). Research suggests that eight minutes is the “tipping point.” It would therefore seem wrong to conclude that their habit of queueing shows that the British are a patient people.

(Britain for learners of English by James O’Driscoll,
Oxford University Press 2009, p. 59)

Why the British (or English?) queue

The Hungarian humourist George Mikes once wrote that “An Englishman, even if he is alone, forms an orderly queue of one.” This implies a love of queueing for its own sake. But the British journalist A.A.Gill believes there is a more practical reason: “The English queue because they have to. If they didn’t, they’d kill each other.” In a book published in 2005, Gill argues that the English care about (un) fairness more than anything else and that therefore they are always angry about

something. It is this anger, he says, which motivated so many great English engineers, inventors and social reformers in the past few centuries. And rather than let this anger turn to useless violence, he says, the English have developed “heroic self-control.” Queueing is just one small example.

Gill’s book brings up the English/British confusion again. Like many people who live in England, Gill considers himself to be not English but Scottish – and it is specifically the English that he is writing about. But in fact, many of those great engineers, inventors and reformers he mentions were Scottish! Even the title of Gill’s book shows the confusion. It’s supposed to be about the English but it’s called *The Angry Island*. As you know, England is not an island.

English versus British

Because English culture dominates the cultures of the other three nations, everyday habits, attitudes, and values among the peoples of the four nations are very similar. However, they are not identical, so that sometimes it is hard to know whether one is describing the British as a whole or just the English. The reason why people queue so much is one example. Another example is notable because it is so unusual – anti-intellectualism.

Among many people in Britain, there exists a suspicion of education and “high culture.” This is manifested in a number of ways. For example, teachers and academic staff, although respected, do not have as high a status in society as they do in most other countries. Nobody normally proclaims their academic qualifications or title to the world at large. No professor would expect, or want, to be addressed as “professor” on any but the most formal occasion.

Traditionally, large sections of both the upper and working class in Britain were not interested in their children getting to university. This strange lack of enthusiasm for education has certainly decreased. Nevertheless, it is still unusual for parents to arrange extra private tuition for their children, even if they can easily afford it. And among the upper classes, too much intelligence and academic prowess in a person is still viewed with suspicion because it suggests this person might not be a “team player”; among the working class, such attributes in a man are still sometimes regarded as effeminate (which is probably why girls generally do better than boys at school in England).

Such attitudes are held consciously only by a small proportion of the population. And it isn't that people in Britain don't like to know things. They are, for example, passionate about quizzes, which are among the most popular of all TV programmes. Almost every pub and social club in the country holds regular "quiz nights." Factual knowledge is something to be proud of. But abstract thinking and scholarship is not. Many everyday words and expressions in the English language testify to this anti-intellectual tendency.

Anti-intellectual attitudes can be found in all four nations of the Isles. However, they are probably better seen as a specifically English characteristic, and not a British one. The Scottish have always placed a high value on education for all classes. The Irish of all classes place a high value on being quick, ready, and able with words. The Welsh have long exported teachers to other parts of Britain and beyond.

A multicultural society

The third reason for caution about generalizations relates to the large-scale immigration to Britain from places beyond the four nations since the Second World War. In its cities at least, Britain is a multicultural society. There are areas of London, for example, in which a distinctively Indian way of life predominates, with Indian shops, Indian clothes, and Indian languages.

These "new British" people have brought widely differing sets of attitudes with them which sometimes diverge greatly from more traditional British ones. In some cases, clashes of values become apparent. However, there is a limit to these divergences in comparison with those in the USA. There, the numbers in ethnic communities are larger and the physical spaces between them and other communities greater, so that it is possible for people to live their whole lives in such communities without ever really learning English. This hardly ever happens in Britain.

It is therefore still possible to talk about British characteristics in general. In fact, the new British have made their own contribution to British life and attitudes. They have, for example, probably helped to make people more informal in their behaviour and they have changed the nature of the "corner shop."

Big Brother is watching you

It is a curious fact that, for a people who value privacy, the British have allowed themselves to become one of the most spied-upon nations in the world. In 2007, there were around four and a half million closed-circuit TV (CCTV) cameras in Britain. That's one for every 14 people in the country. One estimate claims that Britain now has more of them than the rest of Europe combined. In London, the average person is caught on one of these cameras about 300 times a day.

(Britain for learners of English by James O'Driscoll,
Oxford University Press 2009, p. 61)

Being different

The British can be stubbornly conservative about anything which is perceived as a token of Britishness. In these matters, their conservatism can combine with their individualism – they are rather proud of being different. It is, for example, very difficult to imagine that they will ever change from driving on the left-hand side of the road to driving on the right. It doesn't matter that nobody can think of any intrinsic advantage of driving on the left. Why should they change just to be like everyone else? Britain has so far resisted pressure from business people to adopt Central European Time, remaining stubbornly one hour behind; and it continues to start its financial year not, as other countries do, at the beginning of the calendar year but rather at the beginning of April.

Systems of measurement are another example. For decades now, British authorities have been promoting the scales that are used nearly everywhere else in the world (which in Britain are known collectively as the “metric system”). But they have had only partial success. It is only in the twenty-first century that people in Britain have become accustomed to buying petrol for their cars in litres or have started to understand the TV weather forecasters when they mention a temperature on the Celsius scale. British people continue to measure distances and themselves using scales of measurement that are not used anywhere else in Europe. British manufacturers are obliged to give the weight of their packaged goods in kilos and grams, but many also give the equivalent in pounds and ounces because they know that the latter are more likely to mean something to people.

In fact, this last aspect of measurement has become a celebrated public issue in Britain. In 2001, two greengrocers in the north-east of

England were prosecuted by their local government authority for selling their fruit and vegetables by the pound. The case attracted huge national publicity. They became known as the “metric martyrs.” A Metric Martyrs Fund was set up and received so many donations that it was able to hire the country’s best lawyers. Since then, the fund has supported many other traders who have fallen foul of the law regarding weights and measures. But the issue at stake for the fund is not just pounds and ounces. In 2002, it defended a restaurant which was threatened with prosecution for the opposite reason – not for refusing metric measures but for using them! British law stipulates that draught beer must be sold in pints or parts thereof, but this was an Austrian themed restaurant and so the beer was sold in one litre mugs. In 2006, the fund supported a brewing company over the same matter. What drives the Metric Martyrs Fund and its supporters, then, is not principally a love of British habits of measurement or a hatred of EU regulations in particular; it is a (characteristically British) hatred of conformist regulations in general.

Attitudes to multiculturalism

In the twenty-first century, Britain is experiencing record levels of both immigration and emigration. This means that the cultural backgrounds of people living in Britain are changing fast and becoming increasingly varied. This is one reason why “multiculturalism” is a hot topic of debate in Britain these days.

In fact, people are often unclear about what is meant when this word is used. Does it suggest a “salad bowl,” in which the different ingredients, although mixed together and making an appetizing whole, are still distinct? Or does it suggest a “melting pot,” in which the ingredients all blend together, each making their contribution to a single overall taste?

The dominant perception seems to be that it is the “salad-bowl” model that has been applied in Britain and there is a growing perception that it has gone too far. In 2004, Trevor Phillips, the chairman of the official Commission for Racial Equality, himself a black Caribbean, suggested that policies designed to recognize and respect different cultural groups may tend to keep these groups separate (so that they are not even in the same bowl). And of course separation leads to lack of understanding, which can lead to hostility. (Although overt racism is less common that it used to be, and probably less common than in

many other parts of Europe, there are still thousands of racially or ethnically motivated attacks on people each year).

Some members of mainstream British culture interpret “multiculturalism” in yet another way. They seem to think it means their own cultural ingredients are simply excluded from the bowl or pot. Around Christmas time, for example, the press is full of horror stories of the cancellation of school nativity plays and the banning of appearances of Father Christmas or of “Merry Christmas” signs in town centres. These things happen because some people in positions of authority believe that public celebration of a Christian festival would offend non-Christians, and would also perhaps be against the law.

In most cases, both beliefs are wrong. But in response to fears of this kind – and more general concerns about the nature of “Britishness”, the government has changed the procedure for becoming a British citizen. Previously, applicants simply had to be resident for five years and have a record of good behaviour, at which point they received a naturalization certificate through the post. Now they have to study an official book called *Life in the UK* and then pass a “citizenship test” based on it. After that, they attend a formal ceremony at which their citizenship is conferred upon them. (Interestingly, when *Life in the UK* was first published, it emerged that most British born-and-bred people could not achieve the required 75% pass mark!)

A hundred ways to say “sorry”

People from other countries often comment on how polite the English (or do they mean the British?) are. And it is true that they say “thank you” more often than the people of other countries. They also say “sorry” a lot. But “sorry” can mean an awful lot of different things. Here is a list (adapted) from A.A. Gill.

I apologize.

I don’t apologize.

You can take this as an apology but we both know it isn’t one.

Excuse me.

I am sad for you.

I can’t hear you.

I don’t understand you.

You don’t understand me.

I don’t believe you.

I’m interrupting you.

I am angry.

I am very angry.

It all depends on the way you say it. But why are there so many ways? Gill comments:

Being able to apologize without meaning it – and so without losing face – but at the same time allowing the other person, having got their apology, to back down is a masterfully delicate piece of verbal engineering.

(Britain for learners of English by James O'Driscoll,
Oxford University Press 2009, p. 67)

Answer the following questions.

1. What are the bright examples of the British will “to belong?”
2. What are the aspects of the British sense of identity?
3. What is the worst shame for the British people to be thought of?
4. What does the author understand under the term “city gent?”
5. Tell a few words on the traditional “English” breakfast.
6. Whom the quote “An Englishman, even if, he is alone forms an orderly queue of one belong to?” Explain it.
7. Give your reasons why “multiculturalism” is a hot topic of debate in Britain these days.

Polls and Polling

Opinion polls

A **poll** is an occasion when a lot of people are asked their opinions about something, e.g. their political or electoral preferences. People or organizations that **prepare** and **carry out/conduct/take polls** are called **pollsters**. People who answer questions are called **respondents**. **Poll results/data/figures** are **released** (published) by media organizations.

Polling methods: face-to-face polls, telephone polls, mailed surveys, Internet/web-based surveys, short message service (SMS) surveys.

Some other types of polls

Polling can take place at the local or national level, so there are **local** and **national/nationwide polls**.

Pre-election poll is an opinion poll aimed at projecting the outcome of an election. It is carried out during the run-up to an election.

Exit poll is a way of guessing the results of an election by asking people who have just finished voting who they voted for.

Straw poll/ballot/vote is an unofficial test of opinions before an election to see what the result is likely to be.

Popularity poll is a survey of public opinion aimed at measuring people's approval of a political leader, i.e. his/her **approval rating** or **opinion poll rating**.

Note: straw poll/ballot/vote – this idiom alludes to a straw used to show in what direction the wind blows, in this case the wind of public opinion.

Expressions to describe

a party's/candidate's standing/position in the polls

A lead/success in the polls – have a good/high standing, be well placed to win, be ahead (of a rival)/be in the lead/to lead, have a narrow, big/clear/strong/commanding lead over a rival, have a big edge (advantage) over a rival, do better than a rival (on an issue).

Weakness in the polls – have a low standing, be at one's lowest ebb (in a very weak or unsuccessful state), be/run/lag behind a rival, trail a rival (to be losing).

Examples:

With a week to go until polling day, the Conservatives **are still behind in the polls**.

A tougher budget might have widened Labour's **lead in the polls**.

A recent poll shows the Democrats **trailing** the Republicans.

The influence of opinion polls

By providing information about **voting intentions**, opinion polls can sometimes **influence/affect the behaviour of electors/electoral choice**. A **bandwagon effect** occurs when the poll prompts voters to back the candidate shown to be winning in the poll. In this case voters are said **to be or jump on/aboard the bandwagon**. The opposite of the bandwagon effect is the **underdog effect** which occurs when people vote, out of sympathy, for the party perceived to be “losing” the elections.

Grammar Tip

The noun **poll** has different meanings.

As a countable noun **a poll** means “public opinion survey.”

Example:

Political polls have become increasingly popular.

Used in the singular with the definite article, **the poll** means “the total number of votes in an election or referendum.”

Example:

Wilson came away with 64% of **the poll**.

Used in the plural with the definite article, **the polls** usually refers to “the process of voting.”

Example:

The Socialist party candidate was defeated **at the polls**.

Exercises

1. Choose the appropriate words.

Polling methods

For many years, opinion polls were conducted mainly, either in the street or in people’s homes. This method, called (1) polls, remains widely used, but in some countries it has been overtaken by some other types of polls, which can be conducted faster and more cheaply. The techniques available to pollsters include (2) polls (cold-calling members of the public over the phone), (3) surveys (sending questionnaires by mail), which have become the data collection method of choice among local governments. In recent years, (4) surveys (contacting people through websites and email) and (5) surveys (sending a text message to a mobile phone) have become increasingly popular.

Types of polls

Since actual votes are cast anonymously, (1) is the only way of collecting demographic data about voters and finding out their elec-

toral preferences. Unlike (2) an poll, which asks who the voter plans to vote for, (3) an poll asks who the voter actually voted for. (4) A poll is a survey of public opinion aimed at finding out how popular or unpopular a politician is. An unofficial vote or poll indicating how people feel about a candidate or issue is referred to as (5) a poll or vote.

2. Fill in the gaps with suitable verbs. Use each verb only once. You may need to change the form of the verb.

1. In Iraq, polls soon after the 2003 war helped to measure the true feelings of Iraqi citizens to Saddam Hussein, post-war conditions and the presence of US forces.

2. In 1936, the week before the election day, the Literary Digest that Alf Landon was far more popular than Franklin D. Roosevelt. At the same time, Gallup correctly Roosevelt's landslide victory.

3. In the US, television networks voluntarily adopted a course of not the presidential victor until after polls closed in the West.

4. In the 2000 Presidential election, it was alleged that media organizations

exit poll results for Florida before the polls closed there.

5. Exit polls a big Labour majority, but the true picture will only be known after the count.

6. In the UK general election of 1992, virtually all the polls a lead for the opposition Labour party but the actual vote gave a clear victory to the ruling Conservative party.

7. Leaks of exit poll figures for the 2004 presidential election, mainly via the Internet, appeared a victory for John Kerry.

8. A Gallup poll the Democrats 23 points ahead, while a Washington Post poll them only a 13-point lead.

3. Complete the sentences with suitable words.

1. The latest USA Today/Gallup Poll shows a Capitol Hill scandal has reinforced public doubts about Republican leadership and pushed Democrats to **a huge** in the race for control of Congress four weeks before election day.

2. The latest polls show that President Bush's Republican Party **is at its lowest** for a decade, and the Democrats **are well** to take control of the Congress.

3. Nearly three in 10 registered voters said their representative doesn't deserve reelection – the highest level since 1994. President

Bush's **rating** was 37% in the new poll, down from 44% in a September 15–17 poll. And for the first time since the question was asked in 2002, Democrats **better** than Republicans on who would best handle terrorism, 46–41%.

4. Democrats **had a 23-point** **over** Republicans in every group of people questioned – likely voters, registered voters and adults.

5. Four separate opinion polls show Democratic candidates **have a big** **over** Republicans just four weeks before election day.

6. Gore's **in the polls** is reminiscent of former Vice President George Bush 12 years ago when he **behind** several Democratic contenders at this point.

7. A **in the polls** may prove to be misleading as **in the polls** does not necessarily translate into electoral success and **low** **in the polls** does not inevitably mean electoral defeat.

8. A party or a candidate who **ahead in the polls** may finally lose an election while those who **behind in the polls** may eventually win the contest.

4. Complete the texts below with suitable words. Think of the form of the verb.

(a)

Poll results generally serve as a reliable indication of public support of a particular party of a leader. All opinion polls by nature (1) **i..... a m..... of error**. A famous example of (2) **e..... poll error** occurred in the 1992 UK General Election, when two exit polls (3) **p..... a hung parliament**. The actual vote (4) **r..... that Conservative Party Government under John Major held their position**, though with a significantly reduced majority.

A number of factors make polls (5) **s..... to errors**. Survey results may (6) **be a..... by response bias**, where the answers given by (7) **r.....s** do not reflect their true beliefs. This may be deliberately engineered by unscrupulous (8) **p.....s** in order to generate a certain result or please their clients. It is well established that the wording of the questions, the order in which they are asked and the number and form of alternative answers offered can influence the results of (9) **p.....s**. In addition, declining response rates pose dangers to the accuracy of estimates.

Polling organizations have recently adjusted their methodologies to reduce the margin of error and achieve more (10) **a..... predictions** in elections.

(b)

Many researchers argue that opinion polls directly (1) **a..... political choices** of the electorate. There are various theories that explain how opinion polls influence the (2) **b..... of electors**. However, the measurement of polling effects is problematic since there are several ways in which the publication of a poll can change a voter's (3) **e..... ch.....**. The famous (4) **u..... effect** assumes that a political party or candidate who is expected to lose in an electoral contest gains by a positive polling trend. (5) **A b..... effect** is achieved when voters begin to support an apparently successful candidate, cause, or movement. In this case they (6) **j..... aboard the b.....**. There are other effects, linking polling results with (7) **v..... reaction**. Polls can lead to citizen apathy, a sense that it is useless to champion a point of view if a vast majority of the nation feels differently.

(8) **Exit p.....** has been subject to severe criticism, particularly where exit-poll results have appeared and have provided a basis for (9) **p..... winners** before all real polls have closed, thereby possibly influencing (10) **election r.....s**. Thus some countries, such as the UK or Germany, have made it a criminal offence (11) **to r..... exit poll f.....s** before the polling stations have closed, while others, such as New Zealand and Singapore, have banned them altogether.

5. Work with a partner. Discuss the following questions.

1. What is the main purpose of polling? How have polls evolved? What new technologies have been embraced by polling organizations recently as a way to cut costs and speed data collection?

2. Nowadays public opinion polls are distrusted by most people in many countries as they think that polling primarily deals with interpretation of the data rather than its collecting. Do you believe that polls give a reasonably accurate picture of public attitudes?

3. Do you know the results of the latest poll in your country? Do they accurately reflect the public mood? Do they have a large margin of error?

4. Do you agree that polls don't just reflect opinion, but can sway opinion, perhaps leading people into group think?

Assisting and Monitoring Elections

Electoral assistance and election monitoring

Electoral assistance means preparing, conducting, and monitoring/observing an election.

Example:

Since 1989, the UN has received over 140 **requests for electoral assistance** from member states.

Election monitoring is the observation of an election by one or more **independent parties**, typically from another country or a **non-governmental organization** (NGO), primarily to **ensure the fairness of the election process** (guarantee that the election is free and fair).

Adjectives that are used with monitoring:

careful, close, systematic, frequent, regular, constant, continuous, short-term, long-term, independent

Examples:

International observers were invited for **systematic election monitoring** in Macedonia and Kenya.

The UN Secretary-General called for **continuous monitoring** of the impoverished country.

The ambiguity in the government's statements shows that **independent monitoring** of the electoral process is crucial.

People, groups and organizations involved in election monitoring:

observers/monitors, election experts, election officials/officers, poll watchers, electoral commissions

monitoring agency, body, committee, group, network, organization, team, unit

Adjectives that go with observers/monitors:

international, foreign, external, outside, national, domestic, local, long-term, short-term

Foreign/external/outside observers rarely speak the language or understand the culture of the country where the election is being monitored.

Long-term observers are sent into the field several weeks before an election, in order to properly evaluate developments leading up to the election.

partisan, biased, non-partisan, unbiased, independent, impartial, detached, neutral

Monitors are supposed to be **non-partisan** (not supporting any political party) and **unbiased** (objective) in order to enhance the legitimacy of election monitoring missions. Countries seem to prefer international observers to regional bodies, as they are more likely to be seen as **impartial** (not connected to or influenced by a particular person/group) and **detached from** (not involved in) regional and local politics.

Informed, experienced/seasoned.

The UN Electoral Assistance Division is the foremost election monitoring organization, and maintains a permanent staff of **seasoned** (experienced) **monitors** and election experts who attend elections around the world.

What do monitors do?

Monitors/observers

(a)

observe/monitor/supervise/oversee/scrutinize (examine very carefully) **elections/campaigning/voter registration efforts** **provide technical expertise/training for locals**

(b)

make surprise visits to polling stations

take independent vote tallies (count the vote)

evaluate the vote

verify elections (officially certify the results)

(c)

prevent, record, report, male public abuses/irregularities/malpractice/fraud/ voter inaccuracy

(d)

enhance (increase), remove, challenge the credibility/legitimacy/validity of elections

(e)

declare elections legal/illegal/legitimate/illegitimate/free and fair, well-organized, transparent, etc.

Example:

Where elections present fears of vote rigging and other irregularities, the presence of **election monitors** may serve **to prevent malpractice** and give greater confidence that the vote was free and fair.

Some other useful expressions:

The OSCE reported that the elections **fell** (significantly) **short of/failed international standards for** democratic elections.

The UN monitoring mission **concluded** that the parliamentary elections **complied with/conformed to/were** (generally) **in compliance with** international standards (the elections met international standards).

Exercises

1. Which terms are defined below?

1. is an organization that is not part of a government, but may work collaboratively with government departments.

2. are people, groups or organizations that participate in certain activities and are not influenced or controlled by others in matters of opinion or conduct.

3. are representatives of a political party running a candidate who are assigned to the polls on an election day to watch for violations of the laws that regulate voting.

4. is the activity or process of supervising elections.

5. is a large system of organizations, bodies, agencies, groups, etc. involved in observing voting in an election. They work closely together and share information and support.

6. are people who have special knowledge and experience in the conduct of elections.

2. What adjectives can be used to describe *monitoring* if it:

1) recurs at fixed times or periodically;

2) is fair because it is not influenced by or controlled by some interested people or groups;

3) involves many countries or organizations;

4) lasts for a short period of time;

5) is done according to a careful plan and in a thorough way.

3. What adjectives can be used to describe monitors/observers if they:

1) show strong and usually unfair support for one particular political party;

2) have prejudice favouring a particular candidate in a way that is not fair;

3) do not give special favour or support to any one side;

4) have or show knowledge;

5) are not involved in regional or local affairs;

6) have a lot of experience.

4. Use prefixes to change the meaning of the adjectives listed below to the opposite.

partisan

biased

dependent

experienced

fair

Now sort the adjectives according to the connotations they have.

Adjectives with positive connotations.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Adjectives with negative connotations.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

5. Paraphrase the italicized part of each sentence below using words and word combinations from the theoretical part.

1. International observers' major task is *to examine elections* very carefully.

2. That was the first time ever that the observation team *said that the election should be considered illegitimate*.

3. Outside observers are often ignorant of local circumstances related to history, culture, and the like, which prevents them from *making an accurate judgement about quality of the vote*.

4. Monitors are not entirely independent, but have a number of limitations. It has been tempting, particularly for intergovernmental organizations, *to officially certify* most elections as to do otherwise would be destabilizing.

5. External observers are generally concentrated in areas that may be subject to problems, *appearing unexpectedly* at polling stations.

6. The UN observer mission accused the authorities of rigging the ballot and reported that the elections *failed to meet* international standards for democratic elections.

7. The monitoring team *gave optimistic assessment of the presidential elections and said that they were* legal, free and transparent.

6. Choose suitable verbs. Think about the form of the verb.

1. Monitors can do little to abuses, but in case of electoral fraud they are to and such abuses and them public.

2. Some monitors arrive long before the vote to campaigning and voter registration efforts.

3. Monitors independent vote tallies, which prevents governments from manipulating the vote.

4. Observers surprise visits to polling stations with cameras and recording devices.

5. Foreign monitoring teams can technical expertise and training for locals who may never have conducted an election before.

6. Monitoring can (increase) the credibility and legitimacy of elections, thereby helping to (decrease) electoral violence.

7. Individual governments also in monitoring efforts, generally under the umbrella of international organizations.

8. Criticisms by monitors can an election's legitimacy.

7. Work with a partner. Discuss the following questions.

1. What is election monitoring? How does it differ from election assistance? What is the main purpose of election monitoring?

2. Who serves as election monitors? Give examples of modern intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations actively involved in monitoring efforts.

3. Do you agree that international election monitoring always provides a cast-iron guarantee of truly legitimate, fair and democratic elections? Why/why not?

8. Work with a partner. Answer the following questions.

1. What electoral problems are most modern states confronted with?

2. What is electoral fraud? What abuses and irregularities in elections are typically categorized as electoral fraud? What are the people who commit electoral fraud called?

3. What measures can be taken to prevent electoral fraud?

4. Do you agree that all polling methods are potentially open to abuse? Why/why not?

Keys

- Task 1, p. 18. 1 – g. 2 – f. 3 – e. 4 – c. 5 – b. 6 – d. 7 – a.
- Task 2, p. 18. 1. intrusion. 2. defamation. 3. statutory control. 4. shareholding. 5. disclosing. 6. inaccuracy.
- Task 3, p. 19. 1. intrusion. 2. intruded. 3. lawsuit. 4. private. 5. right.
- Task 2, p. 23. libel, slander, libel, slander, libel, slander, slander.
- Task 3, p. 23. 1. libel. 2. unbiased. 3. bias. 4. gag. 5. libel damages.
- Task 4, p. 23. 1. censor. 2. intimidation. 3. biased. 4. impartiality. 5. silence. 6. gagging.
- Task 2, p. 25. 1. evasion. 2. hinder. 3. promote. 4. infringes on. 5. clutter. 6. social engineering. 7. infringed on. 8. promoting. 9. endangers.
- Task 3, p. 26. 1. camouflage. 2. homogenize. 3. discriminatory. 4. social. 5. clutters. 6. infringes. 7. promotes. 8. shy away.
- Task 1, p. 46. (a) 1. face-to-face. 2. telephone. 3. mailed. 4. Internet. (b) 1. polling. 2. opinion. 3. exit. 4. popularity. 5. straw.
- Task 2, p. 47. 1. conducted. 2. revealed; predicted/projected. 3. projecting/revealing. 4. released. 5. suggest/indicate. 6. showed. 7. to indicate. 8. put; gave.
- Task 3, p. 48. 1. a huge lead. 2. at its lowest ebb; are well placed. 3. approval rating; did better. 4. a 23-point lead. 5. a big edge. 6. standing in the polls; was/lagged/ran behind. 7. a lead in the polls; success in the polls; low standing in the polls. 8. is ahead in the polls; lag behind/are behind in the polls.
- Task 4, p. 48. (a) 1. include a margin. 2. exit. 3. predicted/projected. 4. revealed. 5. succumb to. 6. affected. 7. respondents. 8. pollsters. 9. polls. 10. accurate. (b) 1. affect. 2. behaviour. 3. electoral choice. 4. underdog. 5. bandwagon. 6. jump aboard the bandwagon. 7. voter. 8. polling. 9. projecting/predicting. 10. results. 11. release exit poll figures.
- Task 1, p. 53. 1. NGO. 2. independent parties. 3. poll watchers. 4. election monitoring. 5. monitoring network. 6. election experts.
- Task 2, p. 53. 1. frequent/regular. 2. independent. 3. international. 4. short-term. 5. systematic/close/careful.
- Task 3, p. 53. 1. partisan. 2. biased. 3. impartial/neutral/unbiased. 4. informed. 5. detached. 6. seasoned/experienced.
- Task 4, p. 53. 1. partisan – non-partisan. 2. biased – unbiased. 3. dependent – independent. 4. experienced – inexperienced. 5. fair – unfair.
- Task 5, p. 54. 1. to scrutinize elections. 2. challenged/removed the validity/credibility/legitimacy of the election. 3. effectively evaluating the vote. 4. to verify. 5. making surprise visits to. 6. fell short of. 7. praised.
- Task 6, p. 54. 1. prevent; record and report; make. 2. observe/monitor/supervise/oversee. 3. take. 4. make. 5. provide. 6. enhance; reduce. 7. participate. 8. remove/challenge.

References

1. O'Driscoll, J. Britain for learners of English / J. O'Driscoll. – Oxford University Press, 2009. – P. 59.
2. O'Driscoll, J. Britain for learners of English / J. O'Driscoll. – Oxford University Press, 2009. – P. 158.
3. Self, Ch. C. The Evolution of Mass Communication Theory in the 20th Century / Ch. C. Self, E. L. Gaylord, T. Gaylord // The Romanian Review of Journalism and Communication. – 2009. – Vol. 6. No. 3. – P. 29.
4. Bittner, J. R. Mass Communication / J. R. Bittner. – 6th ed. – Boston, 1996.
5. Poe, M. T. A History of Communications: Media and Society from the Evolution of Speech to the Internet / M. T. Poe. – New York: Cambridge, 2011. – 133 p.
6. Campbell, R. Media & Culture: An Introduction to Mass Communication / R. Campbell, Ch. R. Martin, B. Fabos. – 5th ed. – 2007. – P. 307.
7. Coronel, S. S. The Media as Watchdog / S. S. Coronel // Harvard – World Bank Workshop. – May 19, 2008.
8. Conservapedia. – URL: <https://www.conservapedia.com> (date of access: 08.07.2026).

Electronic educational publication

Dyatlova Radmila Igorevna

THE WORLD OF MASS MEDIA

Teaching aid

Cheboksary, 2026

Computer layout by *E. A. Malysheva*

Approved for use on September 10, 2026.

File size: 1,35 MB. Print run: 20 copies.

Conventional printer's sheets: 3.03.

Publishing House "Sreda"

428023, Cheboksary, 75 Grazhdanskaya Street, office 12

+7 (8352) 655-731

info@phsreda.com

<https://phsreda.com>

Учебное электронное издание

Дятлова Радмила Игоревна

МИР СРЕДСТВ МАССОВОЙ ИНФОРМАЦИИ

Учебно-методическое пособие

Чебоксары, 2026 г.

Компьютерная верстка *Е. А. Малышева*

Подписано к использованию 10.09.2026 г.

Объем 1,35 Мб. Тираж 20 экз.

Уч. изд. л. 3.03.

Издательский дом «Среда»
428023, Чебоксары, Гражданская, 75, офис 12
+7 (8352) 655-731
info@phsreda.com
<https://phsreda.com>