

## F.6

### The English-speaking world – Media

# The impact of the media – Information, entertainment, manipulation

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Die Medien können zahlreiche Zwecke erfüllen – Nachrichten verbreiten, Menschen bilden oder beeinflussen. Sie bieten eine Plattform für den Austausch von Ansichten und Erfahrungen und können Ungerechtigkeiten oder Missstände aufzeigen. Medien, egal ob traditionell oder digital, haben sowohl positive als auch negative Seiten. So können sie beispielsweise auch *fake news* verbreiten. Zudem werden soziale Medien zunehmend genutzt, um die Meinungsfreiheit einzuschränken. In dieser Einheit setzen sich die Lernenden anhand von Texten und Videos mit den unterschiedlichen Seiten der Medienwelt auseinander.

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## COMPETENCES

<b>Competences:</b>	1. Reading comprehension: understanding and analysing texts; 2. Listening/viewing comprehension: understanding and analysing videos; 3. Writing: composing texts and expressing opinions; 4. Speaking: engaging in discussions, presenting results
<b>Methods:</b>	discussion, reading comprehension, research, text analysis, video analysis, writing
<b>Themes:</b>	media, social media, politics, society, fake news, manipulation, entertainment

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## Facts

The media plays various roles. It is a news source, it informs and influences. It is a channel through which views and experiences can be exchanged. It can highlight unfairness or put the spotlight on atrocities. The media, whether traditional or digital, has positive qualities. However, it has a dark side, too. It is an outlet for fake news and “infotainment”, turning news into entertainment at the expense of facts and objectivity. Furthermore, social media has become a tool used to discredit opinions some people disagree with; thus, limiting freedom of speech. Looking for sinister undertones is just one of the many issues dealt with in this unit leaving the question whether the media is impacting on society or whether society is impacting on the media open for discussion.

## Notes on the material

**Topic 1** shows how the news directly and indirectly affects people. A BBC article explains how witnesses to the 2013 Boston marathon bombings were less affected by the scenes than those who watched the atrocity on the news. The lyrics, “You must be evil” by Chris Rea, similarly concern the effects of the news, criticising television news broadcasters for allowing heinous scenes to be aired early in the evening when children may be watching. The power of visual images is a theme in **topic 2**. The article explains how Americans were suddenly awakened to the reality of having shocking things happening in their own country.

## Overview

### Topic 1: The influence of the news

- M 1 Worksheet – “How the news changes the way we think and behave”  
M 2 “You Must Be Evil” by Chris Rea

### Topic 2: Growing immunity

- M 3 “The protests are great television. That’s important.”  
M 4 “Give The People What They Want” by The Kinks

### Topic 3: Social media and its effects

- M 5 Worksheet – “How Social Media is Destroying Society”  
M 6 “Social media and its effects on employee productivity”

### Topic 4: TikTok– Friend or foe?

- M 7 “TikTok is not the enemy of journalism.”

### Topic 5: Bringing war into homes

- M 8 “The big idea: can social media change the course of war?”

### Topic 6: The media and politics

- M 9 Worksheet – “The impact of media evolution on politics”

### Topic 7: Awareness or over-sensitivity?

- M 10 “Roald Dahl rewrites”  
M 11 “How Disney became embroiled in the culture wars”

## Topic 1: The influence of the news

### Worksheet – “How the news changes the way we think and behave”

M 1

#### Pre-reading discussion

1. Discuss the topic “news reporting” in small groups. Incorporate where possible the following terms:

bias – relevance – repetition – fake – truthfulness – live – topic domination – reality



#### Reading comprehension

2. Read the article “How the news changes the way we think and behave”:  
<https://raabe.click/bbc-news>
3. Explain why Alison Holman refocused her original study and what her subsequent findings and conclusions were.



#### Working with the text

4. Examine the approaches to current affairs adopted by the news agencies and comment on whether the public have become vulnerable consumers.
5. Identify how global events are made available to anyone worldwide and express your opinion about the advantages and disadvantages of this.



## M 2 “You Must Be Evil” by Chris Rea



I come home from work  
 I see my little girl  
 She's crying on the floor  
 She's been watching that TV  
 5 This ain't late no, this ain't even dinner time  
 To show them things on that screen  
 What's wrong with you

You must be evil

Oh I know why you do it  
 10 You're just looking for sensation  
 You got a hold of something  
 You tell us that it's news  
 You don't have to show that stuff  
 Can't you show us some respect  
 15 You can tell us we don't need to see it  
 We don't need those cheap effects

You must be evil  
 You must be evil  
 I wish you were here

20 You don't have to show that stuff  
 You ain't fooling no-one  
 You made my little girl cry  
 I wish you were here  
 We all know why you do it  
 25 Sometimes you even slow it down  
 You're giving out some bad ideas here  
 I can't believe that you don't realize

You must be evil

*You must be evil, Music and lyrics: Chris Rea © 1989 Magnet Music Ltd/Hanseatic Musikverlag GmbH*

## Worksheet – “You Must Be Evil” by Chris Rea

### Pre-task

1. In small groups, express your taste in music. Explain why you have this liking and what it is that captures your interest.



### Working with the lyrics

2. Read the lyrics, then respond to the following questions. You may write short answers.
  - a) Whose point of view is being expressed in the song?
  - b) At whom is the song aimed?
  - c) What is the message that is being conveyed?
  - d) What is the tone of the song?
3. Study the timelines. Tick the one that most likely reflects the events.
  - Chris Rea drives home and finds his daughter crying after watching the late news and that is why he writes the song.
  - Rea’s daughter watches the news, which upsets her and makes her cry. When her father arrives, he is angry and writes his song.
  - Chris Rea arrives home and finds his daughter watching TV and crying. He then writes a song about this.
  - Rea’s daughter watched the news which made her cry. When her father enters the house, he finds his daughter crying. This makes him angry and later he writes the song about this experience.
  - Rea is angry when he finds his daughter crying because of images she has seen on the news. He confronts the producers by writing the song about this.
4. Comment on Chris Rea’s criticism and his reaction.



### Further activity

5. Listen to the song and comment on its arrangement.





### Topic 3: Social media and its effects

#### Worksheet – “How Social Media is Destroying Society”

M 5

Vido – “How Social Media is Destroying Society”  
<https://raabe.click/social-media>

#### Pre-viewing activity

- The words and expressions (1–8) appear in the video and might be new to you. Match each to its explanation a)–h) by reading carefully: look at nouns, verbs and adjectives for example. One explanation is already given.



1 (to) slingshot	a) rapidly increasing; becoming faster
2 nuance	b) an experiment that proved that an automatic response happens when a specific stimulus is given (and often results in moving on to do something else)
3 crux (of the matter)	c) having done or completed a certain thing
4 exponential	d) to do something that looks good initially but by doing it problems are caused which were not foreseen or known about at that time; reversing the situation cannot be done
5 Pavlov’s dogs	e) the most important point
6 under one’s belt	f) to catapult; to move forward very quickly
7 (to) pull the plug	g) a very fine or small difference
8 (to) open Pandora’s box	h) to stop something from continuing

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
			a)				

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## “Social media and its effects on employee productivity”

M 6



### [...] Social media impacts at work

Social media may be impacting productivity, in the most subliminal<sup>1</sup> way. The average time spent on a phone is 2.3 hours per day and half of the US population considers themselves to be addicted to their phones. As a result, social media can impact work productivity and is a key reason why some companies block their employees from using social media in the workplace. The average employee spends 12% of the working day using social media apps, and research has suggested that social media can reduce an individual's attention span, with dopamine<sup>2</sup>-filled apps like TikTok cramming up to 20 videos into 10 minutes – as average videos are approximately 30 seconds long. As well as reducing attention span, social media can also negatively affect sleep, as some may find scrolling through apps before bed habitual. Even worse, social media can promote what psychologists refer to as “herd mentality”, whereby those who spend prolonged durations on social media, conform to popular opinions as the correct opinions, rather than taking time out to develop their own.

### Distraction and time wasting

Social media can be a major source of distraction for employees. Constant notifications and the allure of checking updates can divert their attention from work tasks, leading to reduced focus and productivity. Moreover, excessive time spent on social media can result in time-wasting behaviours, where employees browse through social feeds, watch videos, or engage in discussions, all of which eat into valuable work hours. Such frequent interruptions can disrupt workflow and decrease efficiency as it takes time for employees to regain focus and get back on track. Additionally, exposure to negative or distressing content on social media can adversely affect employees' emotional well-being, resulting in decreased morale and productivity.

### The benefits of social media

Despite these challenges, social media can also have positive impacts in the workplace. It can of course facilitate communication and collaboration, especially with the use of platforms like Teams and Slack. These platforms can increase team communication and information sharing, leading to more efficient workflows and enhanced productivity. Furthermore, social media can even serve as a valuable source of knowledge sharing and professional development. Employees can access industry news, updates, and best practices, ultimately improving their skills and knowledge, which can positively impact their work performance.

Organisations may be able to mitigate the negative effects of social media on productivity by implementing certain strategies. Developing