

Introduction to Mass Media: Perspective Paper Number One: Media Effects on the Public

Directions: Choose one of the following prompts to explore for your paper. You should offer your perspective, but back that perspective up with logic, testimony, observations, and the like. In other words, you really do need to do a little research regarding your perspective. This will be due in two weeks.

Choose ONE of the following to write about. Should be 4-5 pages long:

1. A hundred years ago people seldom heard music and the radio was in its infancy. Today we have thousands of songs and hundreds of styles of music that we can choose and play almost immediately, yet many of us choose just a few different genres of music as our primary music choice. It seems that whenever I attend a public event, the type of event I am attending chooses a specific music style to fit that event. For example, if I go to the car (or horse) races, they tend to play country (and it seems like some venues play country as a form of “patriotic music), and baseball and hockey games seem to like some pop and lots of organ music. I have no idea why.

So . . . I would like you to think about your own experiences going out to community events, public places, sporting events (and others), and tell me what types of music you would expect to hear (even list songs if you can think of them), and what image that music is trying to portray to the audience of the event and why. Are they appealing to an audience or are they trying to make the audience appeal to the event? Is this intentional? Traditional,? Does the public have any input on what gets aired? Who makes these decisions and why?

2. Alternately, you could expand or modify #1 to include reality shows, T.V. dramas, video games, and/or comedies. Questions you might explore could include “ does the music chosen for these shows, events, or games set a mood for the intended audience? And “Does the type of music affect the audience outside of the event in any way? For example, there are a few hard-core video games that play death metal throughout the game-play and many of these games have been blamed for school shootings, police shootings, or aggressive social behavior. The messages in many of these songs may relate to the violence in the games, so, does that have an effect on people who play those games. . . to help desensitize them to violence, or perhaps push them to be more violent in their own lives? Offer some support for your opinion.

3. Take a critical look at the world of magazines. How do the images you see in them affect society? For example, you could explore how the use of photo shop helped or hurt ideals of what it is like to be male or female? You could focus on body image, plastic surgery, self-esteem, eating disorders, physical activity, and so on? Other examples might be how colors, images, and models are used to increase desires for products and how what we see for articles and images may be persuaded by advertiser’s desires. Do we really have a choice in what to believe, what to desire, and how to behave? Use examples to illustrate points.

4. When we watched the video about Pulitzer and Hearst, we saw that they took different approaches to reporting the news, one with an attention to detail about the facts, and the other as a form of entertainment. Given the public's desire for entertainment and short sound bites, how can newspapers make a comeback, whether online or in print form? Is the world of local news dead, except for the 6 and 11 o'clock news programs? What lessons could we learn from newspapers that might apply to other media forms such as television, or to other types of media outlets like Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram?