



The Media Flashcards

Part of the AP U.S. Government collection

Overview

This resource contains a collection of 37 flashcards that will help students master key Media concepts that may be covered on the AP U.S. Government exam.

These are not actual test questions, nor do they involve much “application” of knowledge. Instead, they focus on the basic factual and conceptual knowledge that students must first internalize if they are to successfully formulate logical responses to multiple-choice or essay questions on the eventual exam.

Brainscape has created this content in partnership with several AP U.S. Government teachers and tutors, as well as ex-executives from test prep publishers such as Kaplan and The Princeton Review. The material is as comprehensive as possible, while still being broken down into small bite-sized chunks that make it easy to study. We have included a variety of question formats to help students’ minds encode the knowledge as deeply as possible.

How to Use This Resource

Teachers and students can use these flashcards in a variety of creative ways. Below are a few common use cases:

1. Post this PDF on your class website, so students can download it on their own, and potentially print their own copy as a study aid (and even *cut out* individual flashcards)
2. Use these questions as inspiration for your own quiz questions
3. Use these flashcards as a “game”, where one student (or group of students) asks another student (or group) a random question, and keeps score of how well the questions are being answered
4. Encourage students to use the digital version of the flashcards (see below)

Online and Mobile Version

All of these flashcards are available to study on the Brainscape website (brainscape.com) and in our mobile app(s). Brainscape’s “smart flashcards” study system uses our unique “Confidence-Based Repetition” method, which repeats questions in a progressive pattern based on students’ personalized path of mastery. Teachers can track students’ progress and identify students who need more guidance.

Students can study a portion of Brainscape’s premium flashcards for FREE and can gain unlimited access for a small fee. Students can also use Brainscape to create & share their own supplementary flashcards (which is ALWAYS FREE).

If you are interested in a bulk class license for Brainscape’s web & mobile study system, please contact info@brainscape.com, and we can set up some time for a call.

#	Question	Answer
1	Define: mass media	Mass media refers to all forms of communication that are designed to reach the general public and includes the Internet, magazines, newspapers, radio, and television.
2	What nickname do the bureaucracy and mass media share?	Bureaucracy and mass media are both commonly referred to as "The Fourth Branch of Government." While the bureaucracy often makes regulations that have the force of law and drives foreign and domestic policy, the media often places issues of foreign and domestic policy before the public.
3	What were the first forms of mass media?	The first forms of mass media were pamphlets and essays, which gained traction during the Revolutionary Period. Publications such as Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania and Common Sense were published in pamphlets, which were often read aloud in taverns for general consumption and swayed public opinion toward a break with Great Britain.
4	During most of the 19th century, what relationship was shared by newspapers and political parties?	During most of the 19th century, newspapers were closely tied to political parties. For instance, the Albany Evening Journal supported the Whig Party (and later the Republican Party), while the Albany Argus was an organ of the Democratic Party.
5	Define: yellow journalism	Yellow journalism was a form of newspaper publishing prominent in the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that featured sensational headlines (often only remotely connected with facts), exaggeration, and fear-inducing news stories. Unlike previous newspapers, the yellow journals and those that followed in their wake created their own stories, which drove political action. For instance, publisher William Randolph Hearst is widely credited with instigating the U.S. declaration of war against Spain in 1898.

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6	Define: muckraker	<p>Muckrakers were professional journalists who wrote mainly for magazines during the early 20th century. Muckrakers exposed political and business corruption, working conditions in industry and agriculture, and sexual harassment.</p> <p>While magazines had previously been issue-driven (e.g. Railway Age), muckraking aided in making general issue magazines such as McClure's popular and profitable.</p>
7	What do critics mean when they deride certain media organs as "lapdogs"?	<p>When critics refer to certain media as a lapdog, they are referring to the practice of granting favorable political reporting in exchange for continued access. As an example, a reporter who writes stories praising a president may be allowed further interviews with the president. Critics complain that this type of reporting is often biased.</p>
8	Who was the first president to use the power of radio effectively?	<p>Franklin Roosevelt gave frequent radio addresses, known as "Fireside Chats." These talks allowed Roosevelt to speak directly to the American public.</p> <p>Even today, presidents deliver weekly radio addresses.</p>
9	What is the largest form of mass media today?	<p>The largest form of mass media today is television. Televised political journalism became popular in television's early years with even-handed and informative broadcasts such as 60 Minutes or Walter Cronkite's news broadcasts.</p> <p>Cronkite was so respected that when he reported that America had lost the Vietnam War, President Johnson reportedly stated "If I've lost Cronkite, I've lost middle America."</p>

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10	What are some of the criticisms of television news?	<p>Criticisms of television news:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex issues are not substantively presented due to time constraints • Politicians develop soundbites to cater to television, rather than complex solutions to difficult issues • Conservatives say television news has a liberal bias (though studies have failed to prove this)
11	Each year, more Americans use the Internet to access news stories. What are some of the concerns regarding Internet news?	Although Internet news enables anyone to access coverage of issues they care about, when and where they want, anyone can post a story on the Internet, so accuracy of Internet news reporting continues to be a concern.
12	What two events established the media as the public's watchdog over the government and gave birth to modern investigative journalism?	<p>The Vietnam War and the Watergate coverup established the media as a government watchdog.</p> <p>In the early 1970s, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein of The Washington Post uncovered a vast coverup of corruption in the Nixon White House, partly through the help of a disgruntled FBI employee. Woodward's and Bernstein's efforts gave birth to modern investigative journalism.</p>
13	When critics denounce the mass media's "junkyard dog function," to what conduct are they referring?	<p>Critics are referring to the efforts of attack media, who focus on scandals and titillating headlines to garner fame for themselves by creating outrageous attacks.</p> <p>Examples of the junkyard dog function include the Monica Lewinsky and Larry Craig scandals.</p>
14	How does mass media drive the public agenda?	<p>Mass media drives the public agenda by focusing on certain stories and issues, which then become the focus of domestic and foreign policy debates.</p> <p>As an example, after an undercover reporter revealed corruption at ACORN (a community housing organization), legislators cut off funding for the organization.</p>

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15	How do mass media and political campaigns interact?	<p>Mass media is integral in defining public perception of a candidate, and candidates are careful to stage speeches to the media, often limiting questions to friendly reporters.</p> <p>Sometimes these efforts backfire. During the 1988 presidential campaign, Michael Dukakis was photographed in an M-1 Abrams tank attempting to appear martial. The image backfired and was roundly mocked as silly -- a death knell for any presidential candidate.</p>
16	Define: news cycle	<p>The term "news cycle" refers to the amount of time it takes the news media to report on a story and then broadcast on public perceptions on the story. Politicians often try to take advantage of a news cycle by timing press releases and events.</p> <p>For instance, bad news is often delivered on a Friday (when few are paying attention), and good news is delivered early in the week.</p>
17	Define: adversarial press	<p>The term adversarial press refers to a press that is suspicious of information presented by public officials, and that attempts to investigate and report stories which contradict the information presented by those officials.</p>
18	Define: gatekeepers	<p>Gatekeepers are those in the mass media who decide whether a message will be distributed. The term may refer to media executives, editorial boards, editors, or reporters.</p> <p>Given the limited amount of messages that can reach and be disseminated by the general public, gatekeepers decide what stories should be covered and what stories should be ignored.</p>

#	Question	Answer
19	Define: narrowcasting	<p>Instead of traditional broadcasting, narrowcasting is the dissemination of information to a specialized audience.</p> <p>With the proliferation of cable television, narrowcasting has become commonplace with entire networks devoted to narrow audiences. This trend includes political reporting with some 24-hour news channels specifically catering to conservatives or liberals.</p>
20	Who owns most mass media outlets in the United States?	<p>Although there are a few media outlets that receive public support (e.g. the Public Broadcasting Service), most media outlets are privately owned.</p> <p>While private ownership ensures that media outlets are independent of the government, it also requires that media outlets must attract viewers, which can lead to more sensationalist stories rather than truly important ones.</p>
21	The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), an executive agency, is responsible for "technical regulation." What does "technical regulation" mean?	<p>Technical regulation refers to the FCC's control over certain technical aspects of broadcasting, such as assigning radio wavelengths to certain stations or establishing standards related to picture quality.</p>
22	The Telecommunications Act of 1996 permitted _____, the ownership of multiple media outlets by a single person or corporation.	<p style="text-align: center;">cross-ownership</p> <p>Prior to 1996, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) prohibited a single person or corporation from owning more than one broadcast license in a given community. The Telecommunications Act permitted single corporations to acquire large media holdings.</p>
23	How does the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) engage in censorship?	<p>The FCC enforces indecency regulations on public airwaves and can issue fines for nudity or profanity.</p>

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24	Define: on the record	An on-the-record quote means a reporter may identify the source by name. By contrast, a quote "off-the-record" means the reporter may not repeat the quote, nor identify its source.
25	Define on background	When an official indicates that the information is provided to a reporter "on background" it means that the reporter can print the information and attribute it to an official, but not identify the official by name. "On deep background" allows the reporter to print the information, but not attribute it to any official at all.
26	What are shield laws?	Shield laws guarantee reporters the right to protect the anonymity of their sources. The most common example of a protected source took place during the Watergate Era, when Washington Post reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein shielded the identity of Mark Felt, a disgruntled FBI assistant director who was providing them information on the Nixon Administration.
27	The "Fairness Doctrine" refers to what type of activity?	The Fairness Doctrine refers to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requiring holders of broadcast licenses to devote airtime to discussing controversial issues of public importance, and to air contrasting views regarding those issues. The Fairness Doctrine was established in 1949, and revoked in 1987.
28	The Federal Communications Commission enforces the Equal Time Rule. What does the Equal Time Rule state?	The Equal Time Rule says that if a licensed broadcast station gives free airtime to one political candidate, it must also give the same amount of airtime to that candidate's opponent upon request.

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29	Political talk radio programs such as the Rush Limbaugh Program are most commonly comprised of speakers from what side of the political aisle?	<p>Most talk radio programs are conservative, and shows such as the Rush Limbaugh Program have been enormously successful, but not without some controversy.</p> <p>An effort to launch a liberal alternative, known as Air America, went bankrupt in 2010.</p>
30	What is the Associated Press?	<p>The Associated Press (AP) is a non-profit organization owned by newspapers, radio, and television stations. The AP writes stories on its own behalf which are then distributed to its members for publication. It also republishes stories previously published by its member newspapers.</p> <p>The AP allows smaller regional newspapers to publish articles on national issues, without placing their own correspondents in Washington D.C.</p>
31	Although it provides live coverage of the U.S. Congress, the not-for-profit television channel _____ also covers the Canadian and British Parliaments, and broadcasts political presentations, talks on non-fiction books, and the like.	<p style="text-align: center;">C-SPAN</p> <p>C-SPAN was founded in 1979 as a public service by cable providers. Its content is usually unedited, providing viewers with unfiltered information about politics.</p>
32	Although their influence has waned with the advent of cable television, the _____ networks still hold considerable sway.	<p style="text-align: center;">Big Three</p> <p>CBS, ABC, and NBC are the "Big Three" networks, stemming from a time when television programming was limited to only three channels. The limited television output meant that the Big Three networks' news programs were heavily watched, giving reporters such as Walter Cronkite immense influence.</p>
33	Define: selective attention	<p>Selective attention means paying attention to only those news stories with which one agrees. For instance, a person who is a member of the Democratic Party may only wish to watch programming that criticizes the Republican Party's actions, and vice versa.</p>

#	Question	Answer
34	Scholars claim that the media in the United States have a "scorekeeper role." What do they mean?	<p>The scorekeeper role means that the media track the performance and positions of elected and appointed officeholders throughout their political careers.</p> <p>While the scorekeeper role allows the media and the public to hold politicians accountable for previous promises, it also acts as a check to prevent politicians from modifying their views in the wake of changing public opinion or new information for fear of being accused of "flip-flopping" or pandering.</p>
35	Criticized public officials often demand their "Right of Reply." What is the Right of Reply?	<p>The Right of Reply refers to the right to defend oneself from public criticism in the same venue where that criticism was first levied.</p> <p>The Federal Communications Commission requires that if a person is criticized on a non-news broadcast, that person has the right to respond to that criticism on the same station.</p>
36	Define: mainstream media	The term "mainstream media" refers to the traditional sources of news, such as newspapers, radio, and non-cable television news broadcasts. With the advent of cable news channels and the Internet, the power and influence of the mainstream media has waned in recent years.
37	In the context of political reporting, what is "spin"?	<p>Spin refers to the interpretation of an event that is manipulated in such a way as to appear more positive or negative.</p> <p>For instance, if employment in a given month only went up 0.1%, the government might "spin" the report and announce the creation of 10,000 new jobs. The larger number 10,000 creates a more positive perception.</p>