

## Unit 9 The significance of the media in society

### About the unit

This unit looks at the role and significance of the media in different local, national and international contexts. Pupils investigate how the media presents different issues and views; how it can be used to promote causes and campaigns; and its role in publicising other events, *eg sporting events*. Pupils consider questions such as whether individuals should be protected from the media with a ‘right to privacy’. The unit also provides opportunities for active involvement in, and contribution to, local media. Pupils investigate the importance of new technology, especially the internet. They have opportunities for group work, discussion, creativity and decision-making.

The activities in this unit could be used in conjunction with activities in many of the other units that involve the use of media, investigation and discussion. The unit also links closely with work in English.

The *Teacher’s guide* provides information about approaches to teaching and learning (appendix 6) and handling sensitive and controversial issues (appendix 9).

### Where the unit fits in

This unit addresses the following aspects of the key stage 3 citizenship programme of study:

#### Knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens

Pupils should be taught about:

- 1h the significance of the media in society
- 1i the world as a global community, and the political, economic, environmental and social implications of this, and the role of the European Union, the Commonwealth and the United Nations

#### Developing skills of enquiry and communication

Pupils should be taught to:

- 2a think about topical political, spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues, problems and events by analysing information and its sources, including ICT-based sources
- 2b justify orally and in writing a personal opinion about such issues, problems or events

#### Developing skills of participation and responsible action

Pupils should be taught to:

- 3c reflect on the process of participating

### Expectations

#### At the end of this unit

**most pupils:** demonstrate knowledge of how significant the media’s role is in putting across different views. They understand how topical issues are portrayed in the media, and how other events, *eg sporting events*, can be publicised. They know that the media can be used to promote causes. They are aware of the effect the media has on individuals’ rights and responsibilities.

**some pupils have not made so much progress and:** research the coverage of stories in different media, discussing it and describing how it differs.

**some pupils have progressed further and:** demonstrate advanced research and analysis skills. They are able to explain why the same story may be presented in very different ways by different media. They use their knowledge to investigate bias or the misleading use of statistics. They discuss and debate the role of the media in society.

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## Resources

Resources include:

- local and national newspapers; articles about celebrities from magazines; clips from films or television programmes
- information and resources from local/regional independent newspapers or radio stations

Many groups and organisations produce online resources that are relevant to citizenship. QCA has not printed these website addresses as it recognises that they can and do change, often at short notice. So that we can monitor and maintain a reliable and useful resource, the website addresses of the following organisations can be accessed through the key stage 3 citizenship scheme of work site at [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/) schemes

- Newswise (*educational resources based on topical news stories*)
- Children's Express (*online newspaper*)
- BBC
- Contemporary History Weekly
- Institute for Citizenship
- 'Kick Racism out of Football' campaign
- 'Show Racism the Red Card' campaign
- Press Complaints Commission
- You Gov

NB: care should be taken when encouraging pupils to access websites

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## Literacy and language

References to the Key Stage 3 National Strategy *Framework for teaching English, Years 7, 8 and 9* (NSE) are given in brackets and are indicated in appropriate sections of this unit.

Through the activities in this unit pupils will be able to understand, use and spell correctly words relating to:

- the media in society, *eg promotion, bias, campaign, privacy, celebrity*

Speaking and listening – through the activities pupils learn to:

- develop drama techniques to explore issues in role-play (year 7 S&L15, year 8 S&L15, year 9 S&L12)

Reading – through the activities pupils learn to:

- recognise bias and objectivity in text (year 7 R9, year 8 R6, year 9 R7)
- understand how media texts are tailored to an audience (year 7 R10, year 8 R8, year 9 R8)

Writing – through the activities pupils learn to:

- present a case persuasively, using selective arguments (year 7 Wr15, year 8 Wr13, year 9 Wr13)

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## Links with other subjects

PSHE: 3d, 3k in the non-statutory guidelines

English: En2, 5a–d in the programme of study

Geography: 3a, 3c in the programme of study

Pupils should learn:

Pupils:

### What makes a news story?

- about different approaches taken to a 'news' story by journalists
- to consider the effectiveness of different types of media for different audiences
- to recognise both bias and objectivity in stories (NSE)
- to understand how media stories are tailored to an audience (NSE)
- Using a range of newspapers from a single day, the pupils select a current event or issue to focus on. In small groups, they look at headlines and articles concerning the event/issue from two tabloids and two broadsheets. They discuss how the headlines from the different papers differ, and where the story appeared in that paper (ie was it the first/second/third/fourth, etc most important story that day?).
- Pupils could follow this activity by looking at coverage of the story in different media – television, radio, the internet. How and why does coverage differ?
- Pupils consider how different newspapers present an event or issue in different ways, and identify reasons why this might be so, eg *the political views of the paper, the seriousness of the story*. Pupils review their four articles from the first activity, considering questions such as: *What is the focus of the story? How do the different newspaper stories compare in terms of length, language, style, use of terminology, presentation, use of images? How easy is it to distinguish fact from opinion? What is the proportion of fact to opinion? Whose opinions are quoted? Is it a one-sided view of the event/issue (ie one showing bias) or does it offer a balance of views? Which story do I find most persuasive, and why? What else do I want to know about the event/issue?*
- understand that a range of opinions exist, and that this affects media news coverage
- realise that not all coverage of an issue/event will offer a balance of views, and that coverage may contain bias
- Links could be made with introductory unit 1 'Citizenship – what's it all about?', unit 4 'Britain – a diverse society?' and unit 13 'How do we deal with conflict?', which highlight the use of the media to investigate and analyse current events.
- Headlines/news stories can be found in online versions of newspapers or at the BBC news website (see [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes)).
- Local newspapers could also be looked at for this activity. Pupils could compare national and local coverage of a particular news story.
- Link with NSE: year 7 R9, year 8 R6, year 9 R7.
- Link with NSE: year 7 R10, year 8 R8, year 9 R8.

### How is the media used to promote causes and campaigns?

- how the media can promote causes and campaigns
- Pupils consider how the media can affect opinion. They discuss the use of famous people as the 'public face' of a campaign, or to promote the causes championed by a particular organisation, eg *Aids awareness, causes promoted by Greenpeace or Amnesty International*. Is this an effective way of gaining more media attention? Pupils could review a variety of local, national and international coverage of a particular cause, organisation or perhaps a charity supported by the class. Does local coverage differ from national and international coverage? Why do different organisations, charities and campaigns receive different amounts of attention from different media?
- Pupils investigate whether the school has had any media attention. Are there copies of this coverage? What sort of articles were written about the school? Why? How are other schools written about, and why? How is this coverage different from coverage of national or international events, issues, campaigns, etc? How would they like to see their own school portrayed in the media?
- recognise the reasons why different issues receive different amounts of media coverage
- The 'Learning through elections' pack produced by the Institute for Citizenship (see [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes)) is available free, and contains useful extension activities and lesson plans on topics such as spotting media bias and analysing media election coverage.
- This section links with unit 6 'Government, elections and voting', unit 8 'Leisure and sport in the local community'.

**Learning objectives**

Pupils should learn:

**Possible teaching activities****Learning outcomes**

Pupils:

**Points to note****How does the media portray sport and its supporters?**

- how media coverage can affect people's views on diversity and equality in sport
- that sporting events and sports fans receive a range of media coverage
- to present a case persuasively, using selective arguments (NSE)
- Pupils consider how the media covers sport. They discuss how media coverage can raise awareness of issues such as the ethnic diversity of players. Do male and female sports teams and individuals receive the same amount of media attention? If not, why not?
- Pupils discuss how sport can promote equality. Are the class aware of any campaigns on this issue fronted by sports personalities? Pupils could research relevant initiatives and analyse the different approaches taken. Which campaign do they think is the most effective? Why?
- Pupils examine a piece of writing about football violence and decide whether it is balanced. What sort of language is used? Can media coverage of football violence actually make the problem worse? Why are issues of identity and diversity important in relation to this type of coverage?
- In groups, pupils choose a sporting event and discuss the types of media coverage it attracts, *eg an important football match might be covered in a newspaper's sports pages, its news pages if there is any hooliganism, and its features pages if any famous players are interviewed*. The pupils could then write or film short pieces on a school sporting event that reflect these different styles.
- understand the role of the media in raising awareness of issues such as diversity and equality in sport
- understand where different types of media coverage are found, and why different styles and language are used in different contexts
- This section links with unit 4 'Britain – a diverse society?'
- Current initiatives include 'Let's kick racism out of football', backed by the Professional Footballers' Association and the Commission for Racial Equality, and 'Show racism the red card'. Pupils could investigate whether a local sports team or club has equal opportunities policies. How effective are they?
- Pupils could cover a school sports event, assuming the roles of sports reporters, news editors, celebrity interviewers, etc. Ask them to consider how their work would differ if it were for television/radio/the internet.
- Link with NSE: year 7 Wr15, year 8 Wr13, year 9 Wr13.

**Should celebrities have a right to privacy?**

- how the interests of different people can conflict
- to develop drama techniques to explore issues in role-play (NSE)
- Discuss with the pupils the interests of media companies in maximising sales and profits. Why do stories about celebrities increase sales?
- Pupils role-play or discuss different groups with an interest in the issue of privacy: journalists, photographers, media companies, celebrities, viewers/readers.
- Pupils consider how people can complain about intrusion by the press. They could research the role of the Press Complaints Commission (PCC). Why do we need a code of practice on privacy? Why did Prince William attend the PCC's 10th anniversary celebrations?
- Pupils investigate the role of the 'Right to respect for private and family life' in the Human Rights Act 1998. Do celebrities have the same rights as other people?
- Ask pupils to think up a set of rules for journalists and photographers, to ensure responsible behaviour by the media.
- Pupils produce a code of practice for their own school/community publications and suggest ways of monitoring its application, *eg through a sub-group of the school council or a student press complaints committee*.
- learn that different members of society have competing rights and responsibilities
- Refer to the past reports of the Press Complaints Commission on their website (see [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes)) for examples of complaints about press intrusion. Pupils could discuss what effect an upheld complaint might have on the media organisation in question. Also see the BBC *Producers' guidelines*, which includes areas for pupils to consider as they develop their code of practice, such as impartiality, accuracy, fairness, diversity (see [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes)).
- Link with NSE: year 7 S&L15, year 8 S&L15, year 9 S&L12.