

The Role Journalism Plays In Society (The Odyssey)

The importance of ethical and civic duty

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The word "journalism" is often complicated and misinterpreted by many. Most people do not consider journalism a profession because there isn't a set of guidelines that everybody must pass and there is no required curriculum for journalists. We live in a time where news is accessed in many different ways through many different platforms. Bloggers and activists are considered journalists by many. And this is where the complication of the word lies.

Journalists cannot solely be looked at as writers, editors and news anchors. Being a journalist means being an invisible fourth branch to the government. The Founding Fathers created the First Amendment in order to protect the press against tyranny. Journalists are expected to be the watch-dogs of society and to inform the public. It requires a great civic duty and a devotion to truth. Journalists provide citizens with the information to form their own opinions.

Often times, journalists can lose their credibility due to the vast amount of news sources available to use today. Many people receive news via Twitter, Facebook or blogs. Would we consider these people journalists because they are informing the public? Should there be a distinction between people who study journalism and people who tell the news? Journalists differ from bloggers because they hold themselves to a higher standard. Journalists must choose their sources, diligently seek out the truth and always identify sources and their motives.

Journalists hold themselves to a certain code of ethics and make very important decisions when reporting news to the world. Many journalists are criticized for their research such as the case of Sean Penn choosing to interview and write a feature story on Mexican drug lord, El Chapo. Although this was deemed controversial to many, it demonstrates the freedom of the American press and the moral decisions that journalists have to make. We must be the ones to decide what is important for society to know.

Citizens depend on journalists to report the fair truth and to maintain an unbiased opinion. The role of a journalist is to facilitate democracy and it is important to establish who a journalist is for credibility and professional purposes. We live in a world where clickbait is considered a form of "journalism," when the press used to be of huge importance a century ago. Society is making it harder for journalists to remain credible. The world needs journalists because they are committed to finding truth and protecting citizens.

1. In 6-8 Sentences, explain the following:
 - a. What is the job of the media/journalist?
 - b. How do they impact the public?
 - c. How do they impact the government?
 - d. Why are they important to American Society?