

Freedom of the Press and News/Media Literacy

This topic explores the news and the role of the Press and press freedom in 21st century United States democracy.

The **News** is everything of importance that happens when we are not physically present to see it for ourselves. The **Press** is a broad term, referring to the people (reporters, photographers, commentators, editorial writers and behind-the-scenes workers in media organizations) that bring us the news. It is known as the [Fourth Estate](#), or the Fourth Branch of government in our democracy, because it reports openly and fairly on what is happening in the community, the nation, and the world.

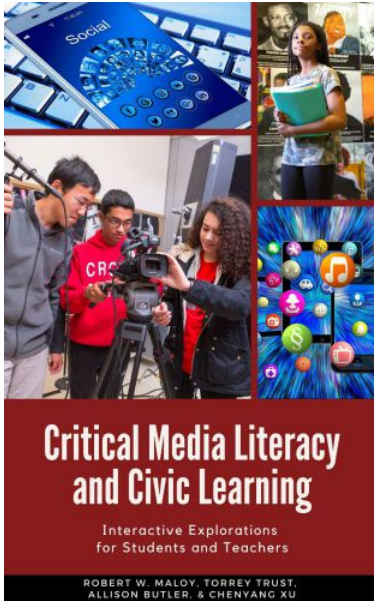
Some researchers are now referring to social media as the **Fifth Estate** ([Educators Meet the Fifth Estate: Social Media in Education](#), *Elementary School Journal* Special Issue, 2021).

Freedom of the Press is essential to the existence of democratic government. Journalists must be able to report the news openly and honestly and people must be able to access truthful information from online sources, social media, and print materials.

The media literacy activities in this section explore press freedom in the United States, objectivity in news reporting, the roles of reporters and investigative journalists, and how news-related photographs convey messages and meaning to viewers. These activities feature

low-tech and high-tech analysis of the media, including exploring how recommendation algorithms function, detecting fake news, conducting critical visual analyses, and evaluating memes and tiktoks as political cartoons.

Media Literacy Activities



Maloy, R. W.,Trust, T., &Xu, C.(2021).*Critical Media Literacy and Civic Learning*. EdTech Books.<https://edtechbooks.org/mediaandciviclearning>