



LESSON PLAN

Media freedom

Learning outcome 3.11

Debate the pros and cons of media freedom

Students will learn

- ▶ To define the media
- ▶ About the role of the press in the Oireachtas
- ▶ About the pros and cons of media freedom

Materials

- ▶ Slide show
- ▶ Worksheet 1: The role of the media – one for each student
- ▶ Discussion carousel cards – one card for each student
- ▶ Worksheet 2: Crossword – one for each student

Assessment for learning/Key skills

- ▶ Managing information and thinking
- ▶ Communicating
- ▶ Being creative



1 Introduction to the media

SLIDES 3-4

Open a discussion on media by asking students to name all forms of media they can think of. Write their suggestions on slide 3 and show slide 4.

2 The role of the media

SLIDE 5

Give each student a copy of **Worksheet 1: The role of the media** (see page 4)

Show the video and ask students to complete the worksheet. Take feedback on the final question asked in the video and record their ideas on the slide:

“Think about the ways the media can report stories about Parliament. Which do you think are the most successful?”

Answers to the worksheet:

1. YouTube, Twitter, Facebook
 2. Television, radio, newspapers
 3. Report freely
 4. Social, political, economic
 5. Reach the public, canvass for votes, debate why they are the best candidates
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3 The Oireachtas and the media

SLIDES 6-11

Outline the ways the Oireachtas engages with the media.

4 Freedom of the media

SLIDES 12-14

Explain that although the media can be criticised for not reporting the facts correctly or accused of putting out “fake news”, a free press is an important component of any democracy. This means that journalists should be allowed report the news without interference from government.

5 Discussion carousel – media freedom

SLIDE 15

Give each student a **discussion carousel card** (see pages 5-6). Ensure half the class receive an advantage statement and half the class receive a disadvantage statement.

Arrange the room with the chairs in two concentric circles and ask those with disadvantage statements to sit on the inside and those with advantage cards on the outside.

Ask students to compare and discuss their statements with the students facing them. After two to three minutes, ask the outer circle to move one seat in a clockwise direction and repeat the discussion with their new partner.

Allow for as many conversations as time allows but ensure an equal amount of time is given to each conversation.

SLIDE 16

Bring the class together again and hold a discussion on the pros and cons of media freedom. From the discussions, aim to conclude with agreed advantages and disadvantages of media freedom and record these on the slide.

If time allows, conclude by distributing **Worksheet 2: Crossword** (see page 7) and asking students to solve it.

Crossword solution

ACROSS: 3. twitter / 4. campaign / 6. gallery / 7. canvass / 8. newspaper

DOWN: 1. headline / 2. democracy / 5. fake

→ Extension activities

Choose a current news story and, over the course a few days, monitor how it is reported. Try to identify different angles on the story and look at social, print and broadcast media.



Worksheet 1:

The role of the media

Answer the following questions based on the video.

1. Name two forms of social media used to keep you in touch with the day-to-day goings on in Leinster House?

1

2

2. Name two forms of traditional media mentioned in the video.

1

2

Complete the following sentences

3. In a democracy, the press has the ability to _____.
4. The media reports on s_____, p_____ and e_____ activities here and around the world.
5. At election time, the media is a way for politicians to _____.
6. Have a think about all the ways the media can report stories about Parliament. Which do you think are the most successful?

Discussion carousel cards: Advantages of media freedom

	1	The media keep us updated about what's going on.
	2	Freedom of expression is a human right.
	3	We have access to information instantly.
	4	The media can highlight where there is injustice in society.
	5	Media can act as a watchdog and hold elected representatives to account.
	6	We can gain knowledge in an entertaining way.
	7	Media can give a voice to people who might otherwise suffer injustice.
	8	Freedom of the press is an essential part of democracy.
	9	In Ireland, there are checks in place to make sure the media are fair e.g. the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI).
	10	In the 21st century, media is a necessary part of everyday life.
	11	The media can investigate injustices by going undercover.
	12	The media is useful to politicians to get their message across.
	13	The media can be very useful to politicians in measuring public opinion on an issue.
	14	Many sources of media are free.
	15	Media makes information accessible in many different ways, so everyone is catered for.

Discussion carousel cards: Disadvantages of media freedom

	1	Media reports are not always trustworthy.
	2	The media can choose which issues to highlight and which to ignore.
	3	Media reporting of an issue can often end before an issue is resolved.
	4	Some politicians can use “spin” to make themselves look better. These media experts are known as “spin doctors”.
	5	‘Fake news’ is false news spread for political gain.
	6	Trolling In social media, many people are anonymous and use this to start online arguments.
	7	Citizen journalists can be unreliable and/or biased.
	8	Some media can give a platform for people with extreme views.
	9	When the source is unknown, some media reports can be unreliable.
	10	Some media use clickbait sensationalist headlines to attract attention which may not be true.
	11	Media reports can sometimes give only one side of an argument.
	12	Sometimes a media report can deliberately leave out a key piece of information.
	13	Unreliable media reporting can lead to violence and people coming to harm.
	14	Fake news is usually spread by people with money and power to influence others.
	15	Some media reporting can lead to people’s loss of privacy.



Worksheet 2

Crossword

Across

3. Popular social media platform (7)
4. Candidate's plan to get elected (8)
6. Where members of the press sit in Dáil Éireann (7)
7. Candidates asking for votes (7)
8. Type of print media (9)

Down

1. Words at the top of a news story (8)
2. Free press is important in this form of government (9)
5. Type of news which may not be true (4)

