

MEDIA

The US has the most highly-developed mass media in the world. American-made dramas, comedies, soap operas, animations, music videos and films have a global audience and are part of the staple fare of broadcasters worldwide.

Television is America's most popular medium. Three networks - ABC, CBS and NBC - dominated the scene for decades until the mass take-up of cable and satellite and the arrival of the Fox network. Mainstream American TV is slick, fast-moving and awash with advertising. Audience ratings and advertising revenues spell life or death for shows; networks may axe lame ducks after just one season.

There are around 10,000 commercial radio stations in the US. In urban areas there are stations to satisfy almost every musical taste, language preference and world-view. News, sports and talk stations predominate on the medium wave (AM) dial, with music on the FM band. Satellite-delivered subscription radio services offer hundreds of channels and have attracted millions of customers.

Freedom of expression in the US is guaranteed by the constitution, and some stations give airtime to extreme hues of political - often right-wing - and religious thinking. Elsewhere, outspoken radio "shock jocks" push at the boundaries of taste.

American public broadcasting is partly government-funded, but also supported by private grants. Many universities and colleges operate broadcasting outlets. National Public Radio - with more than 600 member stations - offers a more highbrow mix of news, debate and music without advertising. Public TV services operated by PBS have a mission to provide "quality" and educational programming.

The government sponsors TV and radio stations aimed at audiences outside the US. Lately, radio services for audiences in the former Soviet bloc have been cut back, while stations targeting audiences in the Middle East and Asia have been launched.

There are more than 1,500 daily newspapers in the US, most of them with a local or regional readership.

The US is the home of the internet. By early 2005 nearly 68% of Americans were estimated to be online.

The press

USA Today - national daily

Wall Street Journal - business daily

Christian Science Monitor - church-owned daily

Los Angeles Times - daily

Washington Post - daily

Boston Globe - daily

New York Post - daily

New York Times - daily

Philadelphia Inquirer - daily

Baltimore Sun - daily

Chicago Tribune - daily

Newsweek - news weekly

Time - news weekly

U.S. News & World Report - news weekly

Television

ABC - major commercial network

CBS - major commercial network

NBC - major commercial network

Fox - major commercial network

CNN - pioneer of 24-hour rolling TV news, operates domestic and international streams

MTV - pioneer of music television

HBO (Home Box Office) - pay-TV network; originator of some of American TV's most critically-acclaimed programmes

PBS (Public Broadcasting Service) - public TV, serves some 350 non-commercial member stations

Radio

NPR (National Public Radio) - non-commercial network of member stations; news, information and cultural programmes

Clear Channel - America's largest commercial radio operator, owns more than 1,200 stations

CBS Radio - major commercial operator with nearly 180 stations in major markets

ABC Radio Networks - operates flagship stations coast-to-coast

External broadcasting

Voice of America - government-funded, programmes for global audiences in many languages

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty - government-funded, targets eastern Europe, former Soviet Union and the Caucasus in local languages

Radio Free Asia - government funded, targets China, North Korea and southeast Asia

Al-Hurra - government-funded, satellite TV for Middle East

Radio Sawa - government-funded, Arabic-language radio for Middle East Radio Farda - government-funded, Persian-language radio

Radio and TV Marti - government-funded services for Cuba

(from **BBC NEWS, Americas-country profiles**)

- **Complete the following sentences.**
 1. The most popular of America's media is...
 2. The 4 major commercial TV networks are...
 3. American TV is full of...
 4. Audience's opinions are important...
 5. Most radio stations are ...
 6. Public broadcasting is ...
 7. PBS is known for...
 8. Radio Free Europe broadcasts to ...
 9. Radio Sawa is for...

▪ ***What are these abbreviations for?***

ABC
CBS
NBC
CNN
MTV
PBS

DID YOU KNOW?

HBO: a US cable television company which is the largest in the world. It operates two networks, HBO and Cinemax. Cinemax shows films, and HBO presents films, sports, special programmes and series.

PBS: (in the US) a television system that broadcasts programmes to an association of local stations which use no television advertisements and do not make a profit. It was established by the Public Broadcasting Act (1967) and is supported by money from the US government, large companies and the public.

NEWSPAPERS

The US has only one national newspaper, USA Today. The rest are local. A few newspapers from large cities, such as the New York Times and The Washington Post, are read all over the country. The International Herald-Tribune is published outside the US and is read by Americans abroad. Many Americans subscribe to a newspaper which is delivered to their house. This costs less than buying it in a shop. Papers can also be bought in bookshops and supermarkets. Large cities have news stands, small covered areas on the street, and smaller towns have vending machines from which people take a paper after putting in money.

Many newspapers are now available on the Internet. This is useful for checking the headlines, but most people prefer to read the printed version.

A daily newspaper from a medium-sized US city has between 50 and 75 pages, divided into different sections. The most important stories, whether international, national or local, are printed on the front page, which usually has the beginnings of four or five articles, and colour photographs. The articles continue inside. The rest of the first section contains news stories, an opinion page with editorials, and letters to the editor, written by people who read the paper. Another section contains local news. The sport section is near the end of the paper, with the features section. This contains comics and also advice columns, such as Dear Abby. There are advertisements throughout the paper.

Tabloids contain articles about famous people but do not report the news. They are displayed in supermarkets, and many people read them while they are waiting to pay but do not buy them.

On Sundays newspapers are thicker. There are usually fewer news stories but more articles analysing the news of the past week and many more features, including a colour section of comics.

America has many papers in languages other than English for people from various ethnic backgrounds.

(from *Oxford Guide to British and American Culture*)

- **Write T for true and F for false. Correct the false statements.**
 1. The New York Times and the Washington Post are national newspapers..
 2. People prefer to read newspapers on the Internet.
 3. A daily newspaper has 75 pages.
 4. Tabloids are given at supermarkets.
 5. Sunday newspapers have many more pages.
- **Define the following terms, using a dictionary if necessary.**
 - to subscribe
 - news - stand
 - vending machine
 - editorial
 - the comics
 - feature
 - advice column

CLOZE

Choose one appropriate word from the box below to complete each blank space.

affairs	networks	drive	listenership
programmes	language	discuss	government
English	format	telephone	licences
commercial	music	cultural	name

RADIO

In the US there are more than 10.000 radio stations. Many people listen to the radio during1..... time, the time when they are travelling to or from work. There are no national radio stations, but there are2....., groups of stations that are associated with each other. The network affiliates (= stations in the group) use some of the same3... .

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), a part of the US government, issues ...4..... to radio stations and says what frequency they can use. The FCC also gives a station its call letters, the letters that it uses to identify itself. Many stations make their5.... from their call letters or frequency, e.g. Sunny 95.

Each station has a specific6.... (= style of programmes), which it hopes will be popular with its7.... . Some stations play a particular kind of music, such as 'top 40' (= popular songs), country8.... or golden oldies. Other stations have talk radio and phone-in programmes, in which radio presenters9.... an issue and invite people listening to10.... the station and take part in the discussion. Ethnic radio stations operated by people from particular11.... groups offer programmes in languages other than12..... . Some stations broadcast religious programming.

Many towns also have a public radio station, which is part of the National Public Radio network. Public radio stations often have public13.... programming and classical music, which is not common on14.... radio. The United States Information

Agency, part of the US15....., operates the Voice of America, which brings information about the US, its culture and16..... to people around the world.

Sources

Oxford Guide to British and American Culture, OUP 1999

Story from BBC NEWS:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/americas/country_profiles/1217752.stm

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