

# Sensationalism, Modern Media, & Presidential Elections

## Grade 6

The following question is based on the accompanying documents (1-5). It is designed to test your ability to examine and interpret the meaning of the documents. You will write a final essay which uses important information from the documents you have analyzed.

### Directions:

- Write an introductory paragraph.
- Use specific details from at least three documents in Part A.
- You may include any other outside information that you have learned.
- Finish with a concluding paragraph.

**Historic Background:** For as long as it had been in existence, the media has had a heavy influence on public opinion in the United States. From the Penny Press to Facebook, the profits for media companies have risen to nearly 3 billion dollars every year. What is the role that money plays in what is presented in the media?

### Task:

For Part A, read **each** document carefully and answer the question or questions after each document. Then read the directions for Part B and write your essay.

For Part B, use your answers from Part A, information from the documents, and your knowledge of social studies to write a well-organized essay. In your essay, you should:

Discuss the media's influence on public opinion and how money influences what is portrayed in the media.

**Part A:**

The documents that relate information about the media’s role in public opinion and the influence of money on the media. Examine each document carefully and then answer the question(s) that follows it. These answers will help you in Part B.

**Document 1:**

In the late 1800s, when media began to be produced on a greater scale, dishonest reporting became a way for different news sources to make more profit. This is called sensationalism.

**MAINE EXPLOSION CAUSED BY BOMB OR TORPEDO?**

Capt. Sigsbee and Consul-General Lee Are in Doubt---The World Has Sent a Special Tug, With Submarine Divers, to Havana to Find Out---Lee Asks for an Immediate Court of Inquiry---Capt. Sigsbee’s Suspicions.

CAPT. SIGSBEE, IN A SUPPRESSED DESPATCH TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT, SAYS THE ACCIDENT WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY AN ENEMY.

Dr. E. C. Pendleton, Just Arrived from Havana, Says He Overheard Talk There of a Plot to Blow Up the Ship---Capt Zalinski, the Dynamite Expert, and Other Experts Report to The World that the Wreck Was Not Accidental---Washington Officials Ready for Vigorous Action if Spanish Responsibility Can Be Shown---Divers to Be Sent Down to Make Careful Examinations.

<http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/spanwar/world-2-17-1898.jpg>

1. According to this headline, who could be responsible for the explosion of the U.S.S. Maine?

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2. What evidence does the headline provide for the accusation?

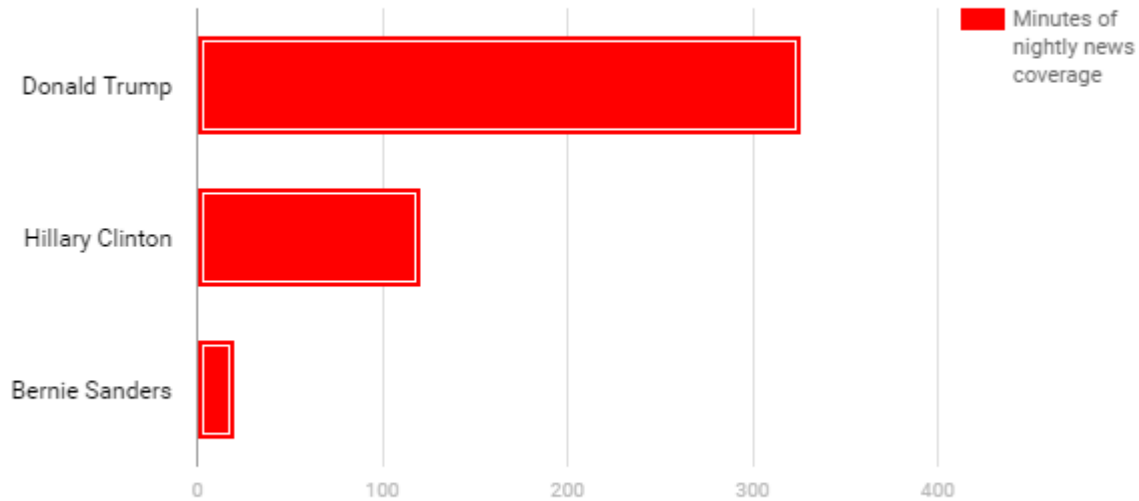
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## Document 2

Minutes of Nightly News Coverage for Each Presidential Candidate in 2015



numbers from : <https://origins.osu.edu/article/media-and-politics-age-trump>

1. According to this chart, who had the greatest amount of nightly news coverage in 2015?

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2. A recent poll said that 47 % of likely voters support Hillary Clinton and 42% of likely voters support Donald Trump. Does this information support the nightly coverage that each candidate receives?

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# Document 3

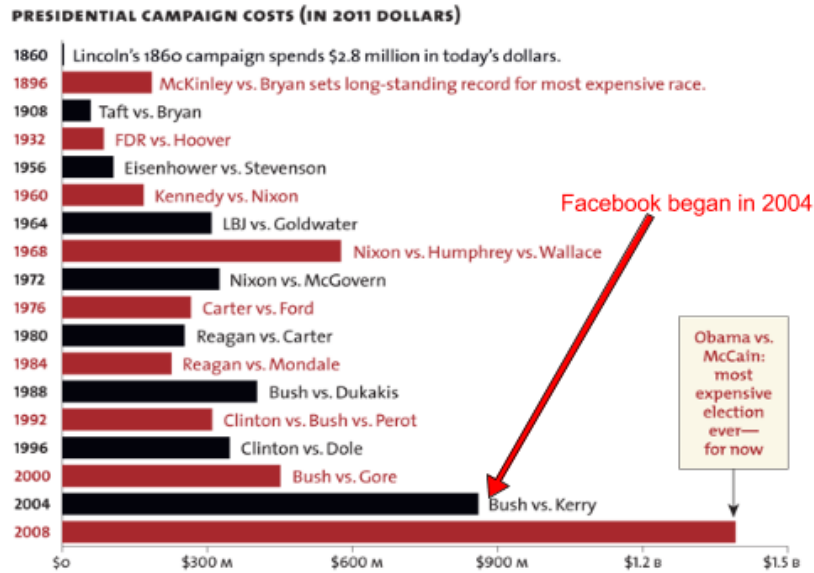


image from: <http://www.motherjones.com/mojo/2012/02/historic-price-cost-presidential-elections>

1. What trend does this graph reveal about the cost of presidential campaigns between 1860-2008?

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2. Between 2004 and 2008, campaign costs changed 30%. This change is greater than any other change in cost to date. What caused this change?

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Document 4

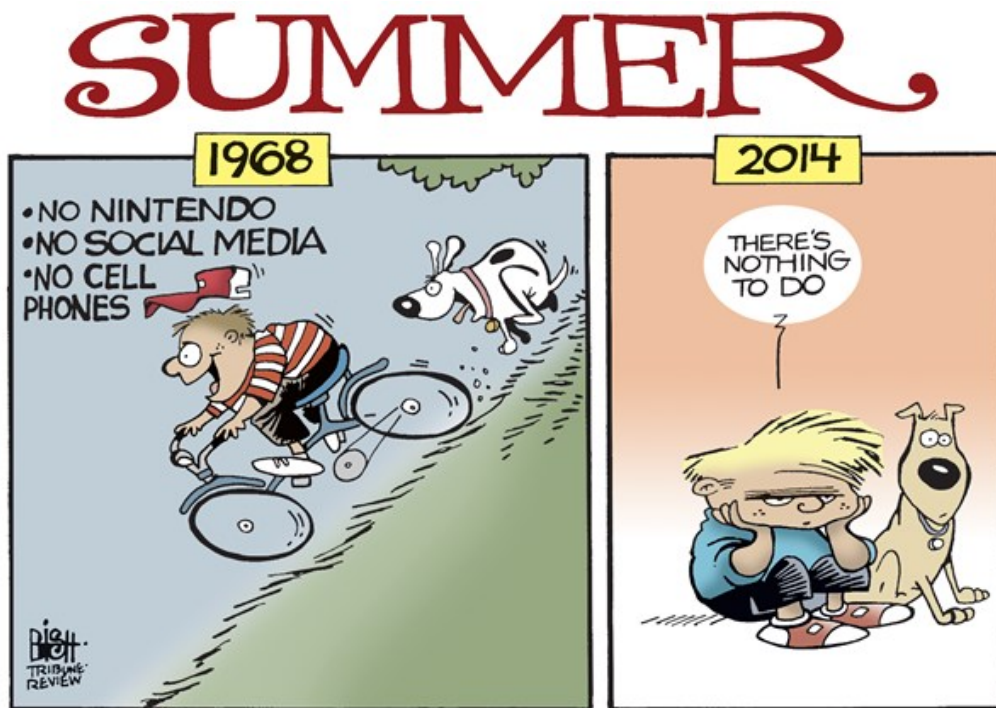


image from: <http://www.cagle.com/randy-bish/2014/07/kids-and-summer>

1. According to this cartoon, how did an adolescent spend his time in the summer of 1968?

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2. According to this cartoon, how does an adolescent in today's time spend his summer?

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3. What does the cartoon claim to have caused this difference?

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Document 5



1. What group do all of these sports teams logos represent?

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2. Do these logos accurately represent that group?

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1. How might this group feel about the way they are represented in sports media?

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**Part B:**

**Directions:** Using the documents, the answers to questions in Part A, and your knowledge of social studies, write a well-organized essay about the media’s influence on public opinion and how money influences what is portrayed in the media.

In your essay, remember to:

- Tell how media influences public opinion
- Explain how money supports media
- Include an introduction, a body, and a conclusion
- Include details, examples, or reasons to develop your ideas
- Use the information from the documents in your answer

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