



Chapter

11

# Influencing Government

JIM BOURG/Reuters/Landov



## Why It Matters

In America, different groups of people hold many different viewpoints. Some groups form to try to persuade government officials to support their views. These groups are exercising the important rights of freedom of speech and assembly.

# BIG Ideas

## Section 1: Forming Public Opinion

**A democratic society requires the active participation of its citizens.** Individuals, interest groups, the mass media, and government officials all play a role in shaping public opinion.

## Section 2: The Mass Media

**In a democratic society, various forces shape people's ideas.** The media have a profound influence on the ideas and behavior of the American people and their government.

## Section 3: Interest Groups

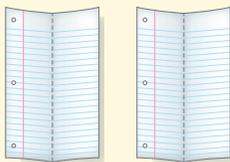
**Political and economic institutions evolve to help individuals and groups accomplish their goals.** Interest groups, a powerful force in our democracy, use various techniques to influence public opinion and policy.

◀ Antiwar protesters march past the White House in 2005

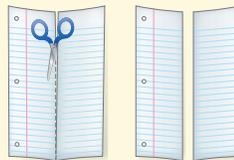
### FOLDABLES™ Study Organizer

**Comparing Information Study Foldable** Make the following Foldable to help you compare the ideas and attitudes that influence government representatives in their decision making.

**Step 1** Fold two sheets of paper in half from top to bottom.



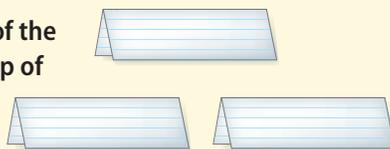
**Step 2** Cut each sheet of paper in half the long way. Fold in half again.



### Reading and Writing

As you read the chapter, take notes and compare how each of the three groups discussed in the chapter influence decision makers in government.

**Step 3** Place three of the folded papers one on top of each other and label the top side of each: Public Opinion, The Mass Media, and Interest Groups.



**Step 4** Cut the sheets together at the left end. Staple here.





Section  
**1**

# Forming Public Opinion

## Guide to Reading

### Big Idea

A democratic society requires the active participation of its citizens.

### Content Vocabulary

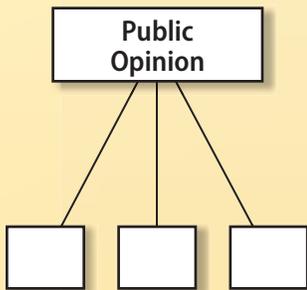
- public opinion (p. 319)
- mass media (p. 320)
- interest group (p. 321)
- public opinion poll (p. 323)
- pollster (p. 323)

### Academic Vocabulary

- uniform (p. 319)
- gender (p. 319)
- survey (p. 323)

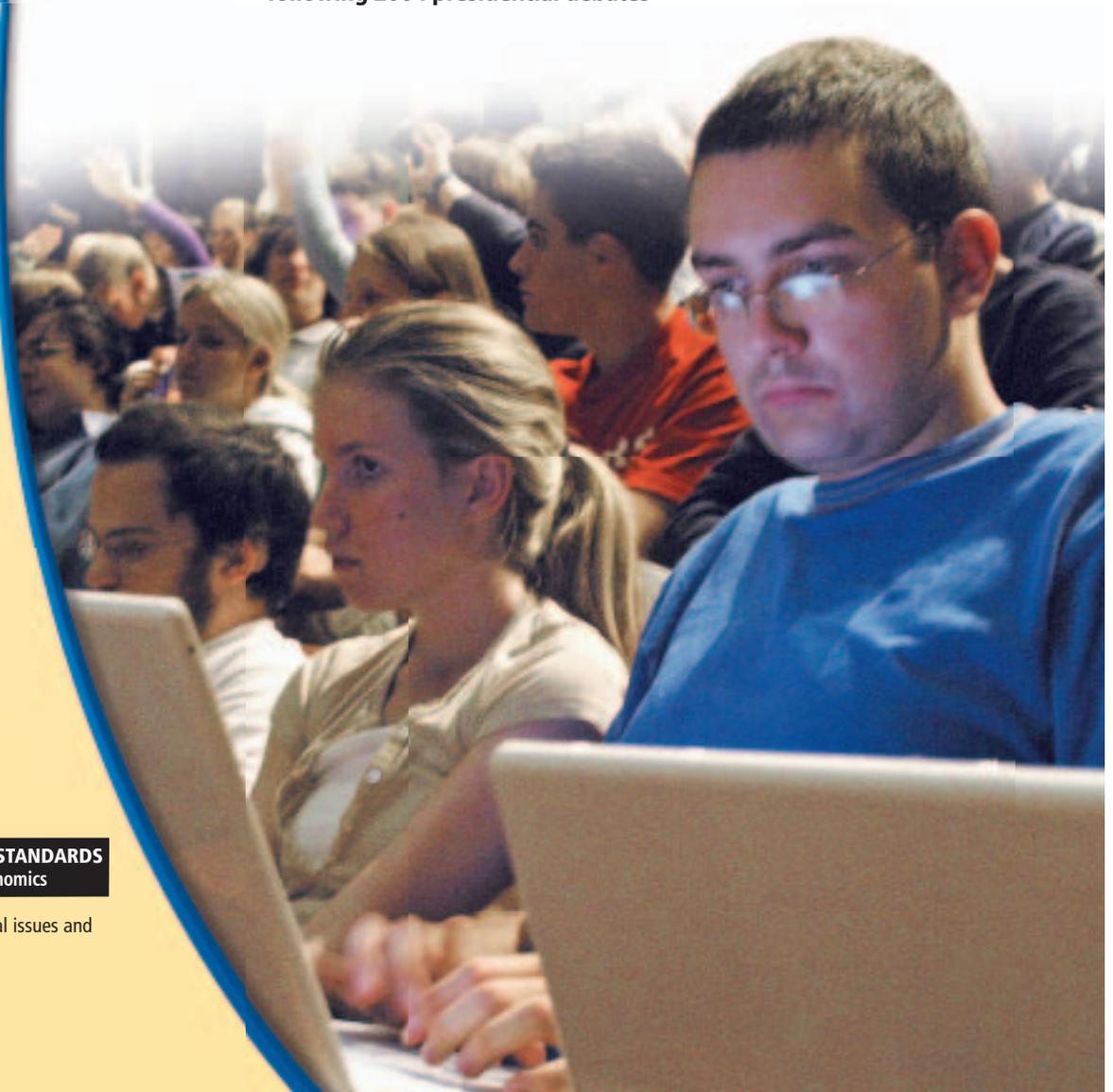
### Reading Strategy

**Identifying** As you read, complete a graphic organizer like the one below by identifying the three features of public opinion.



***Real World Civics*** Have you heard about all the opinion polls that roll out during election time? Internet blogs are everywhere. In politics, voter opinion is constantly monitored. Students are often part of these polls, as during the Kerry-Bush debates in their 2004 race for president. Pollsters gathered information in pre-debate polls and then in post-debate polls to evaluate shifts in opinion as a result of the debate. Overnight approval ratings of the candidates can rise or drop dramatically because of these polls.

- ▼ **Students in Pennsylvania post online opinions following 2004 presidential debates**





# Public Opinion

**Main Idea** Public opinion, the ideas and attitudes most people hold, plays a vital role in our democracy.

**Civics & You** How often have you heard that a president’s popularity is up or down? Whose opinion does this represent? Read to find out how public opinion is created and how it, in turn, shapes the way our country is governed.

**Public opinion** is a term that refers to the ideas and attitudes that most people hold about a particular issue or person. Public opinion plays a key role in a democracy.

**Role of Public Opinion** For example, public opinion helps shape the decisions of every president. Presidents know they need the support of the public to carry out presidential programs. They also need the support of Congress. Presidents are more likely to have this support if their popularity with the public is high.

Understanding public opinion can also help presidents make effective, timely decisions. Successful presidents have a good sense of when the public is ready for a new idea and when it is not. Franklin D. Roosevelt expressed this idea when he said, “I cannot go any faster than the people will let me.”

**Diversity** Public opinion is not **uniform**, or alike, however. In fact, most Americans agree on very few issues. On any given issue, different groups of the “public” often hold different viewpoints. For example, some Americans support increasing the nation’s military forces, while others strongly disagree and wish to minimize military spending. Between these two positions are many shades of opinions. Enough people must hold a particular opinion, however, to make government officials listen to them.



**Protecting Animals** Activist Tony Madsen protests the treatment of animals by the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. **Analyzing** How might a person’s age or residence have an effect on his or her opinions?

## Sources of Public Opinion

Where does public opinion come from? Why do people often hold widely differing opinions about a particular issue or government action? Among the factors that influence public opinion are a person’s background, the mass media, public officials, and interest groups.

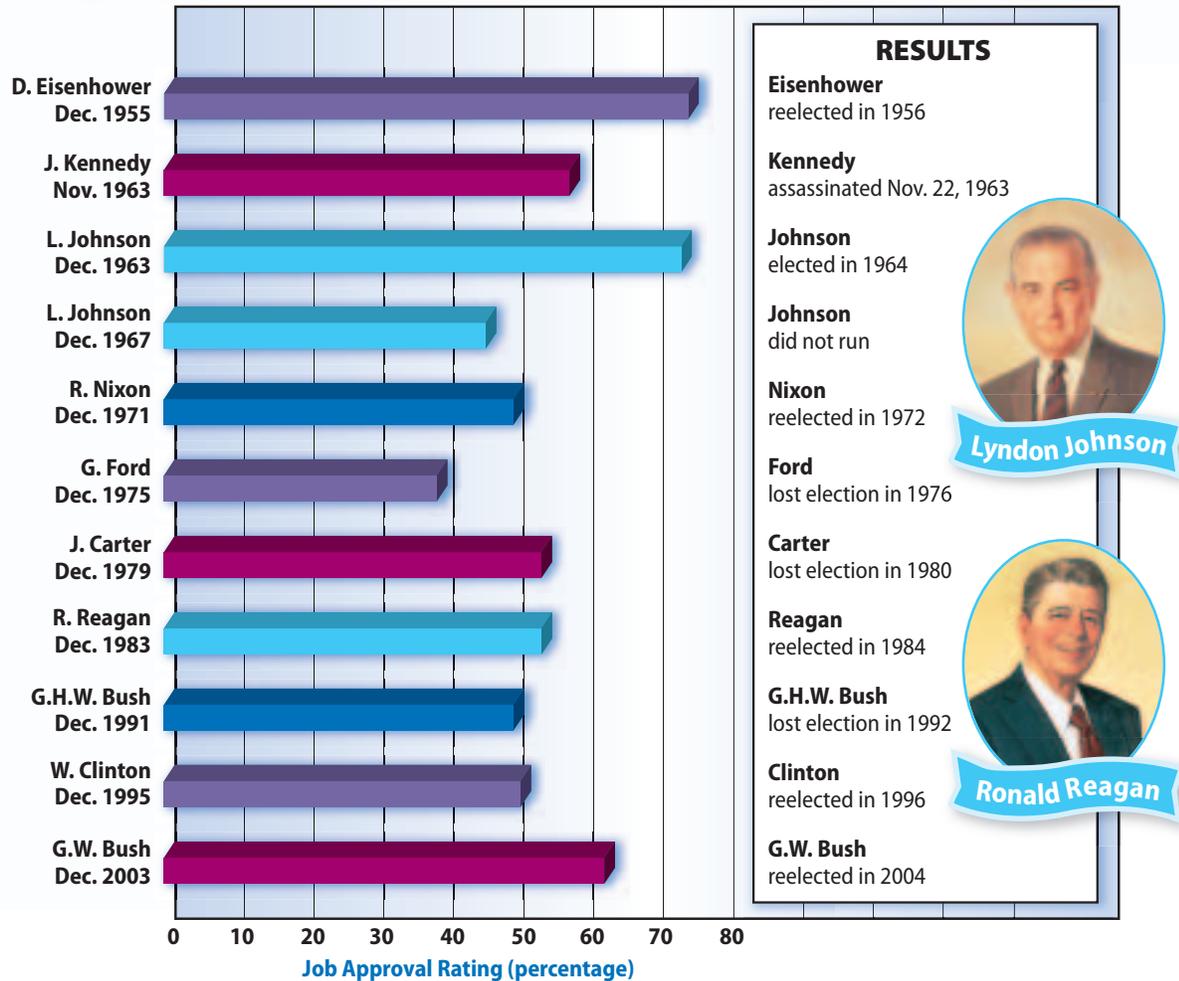
**Personal Background** People’s lives and experiences have a major influence on their opinions. Age, **gender**, income, race, religion, occupation, and place of residence play important roles. For example, a wealthy young person who lives in a big city may have very different opinions about the government’s role in providing social services than might a poor elderly person who lives in a small town or rural area.



# Pre-Election Approval Ratings, 1955–2003

Graphs In Motion

See StudentWorks™ Plus or [glencoe.com](http://glencoe.com).



Sources: Gallup; USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup Polls.

## Analyzing Graphs

**Analyzing** The poll asked the question “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [the president] is handling his job as president?” Most presidents who ended their third year in office with a job approval rating above 50 percent and ran for another term were reelected. Who was not? What presidents had approval ratings of more than 70 percent? Were they reelected?

**The Mass Media** A medium is a means of communication. (The plural form of the word is *media*.) A letter you send to a friend, for example, is a private medium of communication between the two of you. Television,

radio, newspapers, magazines, recordings, movies, Internet Web sites, and books are called the **mass media** because they communicate broadly to masses of people.

**Public Officials** Political leaders and government officials can influence public opinion. When voters elect people to office, they are indicating that they trust those officials and rely on their opinions. When public officials state their views, they hope to persuade as many people as possible to support their positions.



**Interest Groups** Individuals who share a point of view about an issue sometimes unite to promote their beliefs. They form what is called an **interest group**. Interest groups work at influencing public opinion by trying to persuade people—including public officials—toward their point of view. Interest groups are sometimes called pressure groups. This refers to their attempts at putting pressure on government to act in their interests.

## Features of Public Opinion

Public opinion is often described in terms of three features: *direction*, *intensity*, and *stability*. These terms are discussed in the following paragraphs.

**Direction** One important question is whether public opinion on any given topic is positive or negative. For example, are people for or against spending more money on national defense? Do people support or oppose a cut in taxes? On most topics, public opinion is mixed, with some people expressing positive opinions and other people holding negative opinions.

**Intensity** Intensity refers to the strength of an opinion on a given issue. When Americans do have strong feelings, many are often willing to act upon them by voting for or against a candidate, working in an election campaign, or even participating in demonstrations.

**Powerful Photos** Images shown in the media are often meant to catch attention or change people's opinions about an issue. The baseball player needs funding for a better ballpark. This duck is covered in oil. **Explaining** What interest group would want to publicize this image of the duck?



# American Biography

## Ethel Percy Andrus (1884–1967)

**E**thel Percy Andrus spent her life as an educator, becoming the first female principal of a California high school at age 32. When she retired at age 60 in 1944, Andrus volunteered to direct California's Retired Teachers Association. What she discovered troubled her. Many retired teachers struggled to survive on small pensions, often with no health insurance.



Andrus decided to form retired teachers into an alliance that would force lawmakers to listen to them. In 1947 she founded the National Retired Teachers Association.

In 1956 the organization won the first health insurance program for educators over age 65. Two years later, Andrus founded the American Association for Retired Persons, now known as the AARP.

Under the direction of Andrus, the AARP became a powerful lobby, focused on meeting the needs of all Americans over age 50. Today the AARP has more than 34 million members. The AARP advises the government on age-related issues and protects programs like Social Security. Staffed mostly by volunteers, the AARP tries to fulfill the motto given to it by Andrus: "To Serve; Not to be Served!"

### Making a Difference

### CITIZENSHIP

Ethel Andrus was active in education her whole life. **Identifying** What contributions did Andrus make that benefited older Americans?

**Stability** The stability of public opinion—meaning how firmly people hold to their views—may differ greatly from issue to issue. People's opinions are less likely to change when they have a firm belief. For example, most people's opinions about civil rights are more stable than their opinions about political candidates. Evidence suggests that most Americans hold the strongest convictions about issues that directly affect their lives. It is one thing to support more aid to the poor if you are poor. It is quite another if you are extremely well off. In some campaigns, voters change their minds many times before Election Day. Thus, public opinion on candidates is relatively unstable.

**Reading Check** **Describing** Why is public opinion of interest to government officials?

## Measuring Public Opinion

**Main Idea** The most common way of measuring public opinion is with public opinion polls.

**Civics & You** Have you ever taken part in an opinion poll? Did you think about why the poll was being taken? Read to find out the role of opinion polls in measuring public attitudes.

If public opinion is to affect public policy, then political leaders must be made aware of it. One way to measure public opinion is by looking at election results. If voters elect a candidate, presumably many of them agree with most of the candidate's ideas.



## Public Opinion Polls

Measuring public opinion by looking at election results is not always reliable, though. People vote for particular candidates for a variety of reasons. Perhaps they liked how a candidate looked; they supported some, but not all, of the candidate's views; or they voted a straight ticket, that is, for only Republicans or only Democrats. Election results show only a broad measure of public opinion.

A more accurate measure is to request individuals answer questions in a **survey**, or a **public opinion poll**. Today hundreds of organizations conduct public opinion polls. Every major elected official uses polls to closely monitor public opinion.

## What Do Pollsters Do?

Most presidents, for example, have a specialist—a pollster—whose job is to conduct polls regularly. The **pollster** measures the president's popularity or public attitudes toward possible White House proposals, such as a tax increase or change in immigration policy.

**Random Samples** Pollsters usually question a group of people selected at random from all over the United States. Such a sample, often of about 1,500 people, will usually include both men and women of nearly all races, incomes, ages, and viewpoints. A well-constructed sample will reflect the characteristics of the entire population so that it can present a reasonably accurate picture of public opinion as a whole.

To find out people's true opinions, pollsters must be careful how they word their questions. By changing the wording of the questions, pollsters can manipulate the process to get nearly any answers they want. For example, the question "Do you favor cutting taxes?" might produce one kind of answer from a person. "Do you favor cutting taxes if it means letting poor people go hungry?" might make the same person respond differently.

## Alix Olian



**A**lix Olian, 17, of Highland Park, Illinois, knows that public awareness of an issue is often the key to change. She was one of three students in charge of the annual Highland Park High School (HPHS) Charity Drive. The month-

long drive raised \$162,000 for the Children's Neuroblastoma Cancer Foundation (CNCF).

**QUESTION:** What is neuroblastoma?

**ANSWER:** It is one of the most common childhood cancers. As of now, there is no cure. Yet it gets almost no government funding.

**Q:** Why is awareness of this form of cancer so important?

**A:** When leukemia research first began, it was at the point where neuroblastoma is today in terms



Alix Olian with other fundraisers

of its mortality rate and lack of research. Then government funding for leukemia research increased, and doctors made strides toward finding a cure. We

hope that by raising awareness, we will inspire the government to take similar action with neuroblastoma research.

**Q:** What happened at the school assembly at the end of the charity drive?

**A:** We announced the amount of money we had raised. The mothers of children who had died from neuroblastoma were in tears, and so were a number of students and teachers. It was a moment I will never forget.

Making a Difference

CITIZENSHIP

**Analyzing** What do you think led Alix to provide her time and efforts to support the CNCF cause?



**Push Polls** Polls in which the questions are worded so as to influence a person’s responses one way or another are called push polls. Push polls are condemned by responsible scientific pollsters. When they are considering poll results, thoughtful citizens should ask themselves whether the questions were, in fact, fair and unbiased.

**Support for Polls** Some people believe that public-opinion polling serves a useful purpose. Polling, they argue, allows officeholders to keep in touch with citizens’ changing ideas about issues. With polls, officials do not have to wait until the next election to see if the people approve or disapprove of government policies.

**Problems With Polls** Some claim polling makes our elected officials more concerned with pleasing the public rather than exercising political leadership and making wise

decisions. Many people also worry that polls affect elections. The media conduct polls constantly during campaigns so they can report who is ahead. Critics argue that these polls treat an election like a horse race, ignoring the candidates’ views on issues to concentrate on who is winning or losing at the moment. Furthermore, polls may discourage voting. If they show one candidate far ahead of another, some people may decide not to bother voting because they think the election has already been won or lost.

Our government is responsive to public opinion—to the wishes of the people. However, public opinion is not the only influence on public policy. Interest groups, political parties, the mass media, other institutions of government, and individuals also shape public policy.

**Reading Check Explaining** Why do some people criticize public opinion polls?

## Section Review 1

### Vocabulary

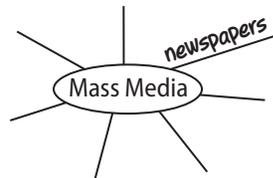
- Define** the following terms and use them correctly in a paragraph about a recent election: *public opinion, mass media, interest group, public opinion poll, and pollster.*

### Main Ideas

- Explaining** What are three components of public opinion and what do they describe?
- Describing** In polling, what are random samples?

### Critical Thinking

- BIG Ideas** Do you think political polling provides accurate results? Useful results? Explain your opinion.
- Identifying** In a graphic organizer like the one below, list different forms of mass media.



- Analyzing Visuals** Examine the graph—Pre-Election Approval Ratings—on page 320. Write a paragraph summarizing the general trends you feel the results indicate.

### CITIZENSHIP Activity

- Persuasive Writing** Supporters of polling argue that it is a tool for democracy. Critics of polling think that it makes politicians into reactors rather than leaders. In a short essay, explain which opinion you agree with and why.



**Study Central™** To review this section, go to [glencoe.com](http://glencoe.com).



# LANDMARK SUPREME COURT CASE STUDIES

## Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier

The Supreme Court's 1969 ruling in *Tinker v. Des Moines* affirmed students' First Amendment rights to freedom of expression in public schools (see the *Tinker* decision in Chapter 4, page 132). How far did those rights extend?

### Background of the Case

Hazelwood East High School near St. Louis, Missouri, sponsored a student newspaper as part of its journalism classes. Before each issue, principal Robert Reynolds reviewed the pages.

Reynolds objected to two articles he read in the pages for an issue. One article discussed three pregnant students. The other described a certain student's experience with divorcing parents. Although actual names were not used, Reynolds felt readers could easily identify the featured individuals. Reynolds cancelled the two pages on which the articles appeared.

Kathy Kuhlmeier and two other students who worked on the newspaper sued the school claiming their First Amendment rights had been denied. Many others wore armbands in support.

### The Decision

Relying on the Supreme Court's earlier *Tinker* decision, a lower court upheld Kuhlmeier's claim. On January 8, 1988, however, the Supreme Court reversed this ruling. The Court did not overturn the *Tinker* decision. Instead it drew a sharp line between individual expression—as in the wearing of armbands in *Tinker*—and the content of a school-sponsored newspaper. Justice Byron R. White wrote:

“A school must be able to set high standards for the student speech that is disseminated [distributed] under its [sponsorship] . . . and may refuse to disseminate student speech that does not meet those standards.”

—Justice Byron R. White



High school students all over the country learn about freedom of the press rights as they publish their school newspapers.

### Why It Matters

Although students still have some First Amendment protections, the Hazelwood decision brought on cries of censorship among advocates of free speech and student interest groups. The Student Press Law Center reports that a number of schools, fearing lawsuits, have done away with student newspapers. Schools have also applied the Hazelwood decision to prevent the publication of student yearbooks, to stop stage performances, and to censor the content of student-based Internet Web pages.

### Analyzing the Court Decision

1. **Analyzing** Why did the students on the school newspaper sue their school?
2. **Concluding** How do you think Hazelwood could affect a school's responsibility to educate?



Section  
**2**

## Guide to Reading

### Big Idea

In a democratic society, various forces shape people's ideas.

### Content Vocabulary

- print media (p. 327)
- electronic media (p. 327)
- public agenda (p. 327)
- leak (p. 328)
- prior restraint (p. 329)
- libel (p. 330)
- malice (p. 330)

### Academic Vocabulary

- acknowledge (p. 328)
- benefit (p. 328)
- regulatory (p. 330)

### Reading Strategy

**Organizing** As you read, note the impact of each of the types of media and list them on a chart like the one below.

| Most Powerful Media |
|---------------------|
| 1.                  |
| 2.                  |
| 3.                  |
| 4.                  |
| 5.                  |

# The Mass Media

***Real World Civics*** If you see it on the news, or read it in the newspaper, it must be true—right? News media cameras track politicians' every move. But competition for the best photos and newest news is tremendous. While it is the job of the media to report the facts, there are many ways to see the facts. The media can act as a "watchdog," but they also can "spin" the news to present a specific point of view. Remembering that those in the media have their own viewpoints of government and politics can help citizens better understand the messages the media are sending.

▼ Photographers and reporters swarm presidential candidates



**NORTH CAROLINA STANDARDS**  
Civics and Economics

**4.03** Analyze information on political issues and candidates seeking political office.

**5.06** Analyze roles of individual citizens, political parties, the media, and other interest groups in public policy decisions, dispute resolution, and government action.



**You Are There** Television reporting of news events, such as the damage done by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, takes people right to the event. **Predicting** How might television affect people's thoughts about how serious an event is?

## The Media's Impact

**Main Idea** The nation's media are an important influence on politics and government and also help set the public agenda.

**Civics & You** Where do you get your news? How reliable is this source? Read to find out how Americans depend on the media for information.

In the United States the mass media play an important role in influencing politics and government. They also form a link between the people and elected officials.

### Types of Media

Newspapers, magazines, newsletters, and books are examples of **Print media**. The **electronic media** are radio, television, and

the Internet. In the United States, most media outlets are private businesses, run to make a profit. For that reason, media managers often decide what news to run based on what will attract the most viewers, listeners, or readers. The larger the audience, the more money the media can charge for advertising.

### Public Agenda

The government must deal with many problems and issues. The ones that receive the most time, money, and effort from government leaders make up what is often called the **public agenda**.

The media have great influence on which problems governments consider important. When the media publicize a problem, such as immigration, white-collar crime, or pollution, people begin to worry about it and to expect that government officials will deal with the problem.



**Watchdogs** The media track and report bad behavior and corruption by politicians. **Explaining What positive things about politicians do the media report?**

## Coverage of Candidates

Today's modern media, especially television, make it possible for some people to run for office who might never have done so in an earlier time. Previously, candidates were usually experienced politicians who had spent many years working their way up through their political parties. Today sports, media, and Hollywood celebrities with little or no political experience can quickly move into major political positions, based on the fame they earned in other fields.

## Media and Elected Officials

The relationship between journalists and politicians is complicated. They need one another, yet they often clash. One presidential assistant explained it this way: "Politicians live—and sometimes die—by the press. The press lives by politicians."

Politicians may also secretly pass on, or **leak**, information to friendly reporters about proposed actions. Leaks allow them to test public reaction to a proposal without having

to **acknowledge**, or admit, that the government is considering it. If the public reacts favorably, the government might officially move ahead with the idea. If the public reaction is negative, they can quietly drop it. Politicians also use leaks to change public opinion on an issue, or to gain favor with a reporter.

Leaking information is part of politics. Many journalists go along with the practice because they **benefit**, or profit, from being able to report "inside" information. When they can get hot news from politicians and "scoop" their rivals—break a story first—they become more successful as journalists.

## Watchdog Role

The mass media also play an important "watchdog" role over government activities. Journalists are eager to expose government waste or corruption. They know that stories about government misconduct will attract a large audience. Throughout American history the media have served both their own interests and the public interest by exposing misconduct in government.

## Media and National Security

A tension exists between the American citizens' need for information and the need for the government to keep secrets to protect national security. The government can control information the media reports by classifying information as secret and limiting press coverage of military actions. In the war in Iraq, "embedded," or implanted, journalists went with American troops into battle. They reported live on clashes with the enemy as well as on the daily life of the troops. Most journalists welcomed this opportunity. Some critics, however, felt the arrangement made it too easy for the government to control news reporting on the war.

**Civics ONLINE**

**Student Web Activity** Visit [glencoe.com](http://glencoe.com) and complete the Chapter 11 Web Activity.

**Reading Check Explaining** Why would a government official leak information to the media?



# Media Safeguards

**Main Idea** Freedom of the press is protected by the U.S. Constitution, although some regulation is permitted.

**Civics & You** Have you ever seen something on TV or heard something on the radio that you thought “went too far”? What do you think should be done about it? Read to find out what the Constitution says and how courts have interpreted it.

**D**emocracy requires a free flow of information and ideas in order to thrive. In the United States the government plays an important role in protecting the ability of the mass media to operate freely. The Constitution extends freedom of speech to the media.

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states, in part,

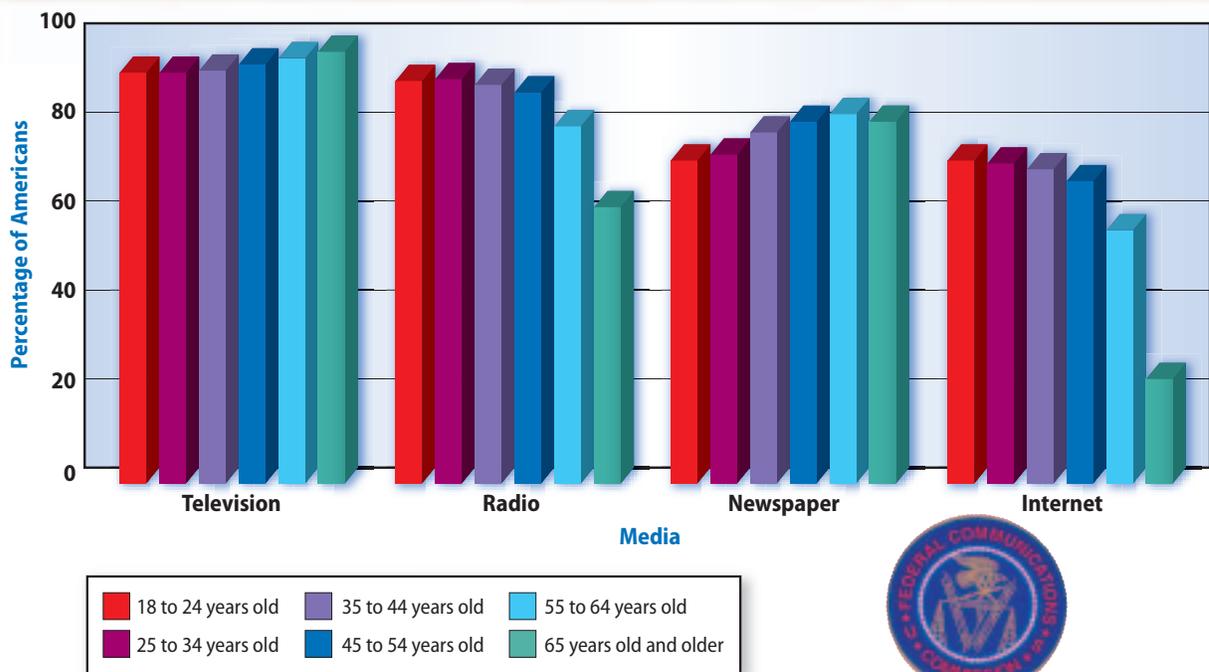
“Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom . . . of the press.”

Today, “press” in this usage refers not only to print media but to radio, television, and the Internet as well. In the United States, the First Amendment means that the media are free from **prior restraint**, or government censorship of material *before* it is published. Generally the government cannot tell the media what or what not to publish. This means that reporters and editors are free to decide what they will say, even if it is unpopular or embarrassing to the government or to individual politicians.

## America’s Use of Mass Media

Graphs in Motion

See StudentWorks™ Plus or [glencoe.com](http://glencoe.com).



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 2006.

### Analyzing Graphs

- Identifying** Which form of media is the most used by all age groups?
- Explaining** What age group uses the Internet the least? Explain why.



**Freedom Within Limits** Freedom of the press is not, however, unlimited. For example, no one is free to publish false information that will harm someone’s reputation. This action is called **libel**. Anyone who believes a written story has damaged him or her may sue for libel. Unlike ordinary people, however, government officials rarely win libel lawsuits. In *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan* (1964), the Supreme Court ruled that public officials must prove actual **malice**, or evil intent—meaning that the publisher either knew that the material was false or showed a reckless disregard for the truth.

**Protecting Sources** Success in gathering news may depend on getting information from those who do not want their names made public. The press and the United States government have fought many battles over the media’s right to keep sources secret. Thirty-one states and the District of Columbia have media shield laws to protect reporters from having to reveal their sources.

For the most part, however, reporters have no more right to avoid presenting evidence than do other citizens.

## Regulating the Media

The federal government possesses some power to regulate the broadcast media. This is because the government decides who gets access to the limited number of airwaves available for radio and television broadcasting. One way the government regulates broadcasting is through the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The FCC is a **regulatory**, or managing, commission of the federal bureaucracy. The FCC cannot censor broadcasts, but it can penalize stations that violate its rules. A well-known example is the fine for the broadcast of the 2004 Super Bowl halftime show featuring singer Janet Jackson.

**Reading Check Describing** How does prior restraint protect the media?

## Section 2 Review

### Vocabulary

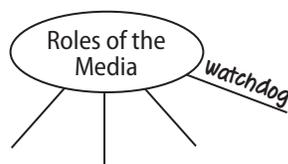
- Write** a short paragraph about mass media using each of these terms: *print media, electronic media, public agenda, leak, prior restraint, libel, malice*.

### Main Ideas

- Explaining** How do the media set the public agenda?
- Describing** What are two ways freedom of the press is limited?

### Critical Thinking

- Analyzing** Explain how the media and public officials are dependent on one another.
- BIG Ideas** Describe the roles the media plays in influencing government and politics by completing a graphic organizer like the one below.



- Analyzing Visuals** Examine the chart on page 329. What general statements can you make about those 18 to 24 years old?

### CITIZENSHIP Activity

- Interviewing** Contact a local TV or radio station. Ask them to identify a recent broadcast that drew criticism. Have the station describe its procedure for handling such complaints.



**Study Central™** To review this section, go to [glencoe.com](http://glencoe.com).



# Issues to Debate



## Do the media have a political bias?

In the past, most Americans watched the major television networks—CBS, NBC, and ABC—for their news. Today fewer Americans rely on the three major networks and their local newspapers. Many receive their news from a wide variety of sources, including cable television and the Internet. The issue of bias—or prejudice—in the news has become a topic for debate. Interest groups have organized to report on media bias. Some groups report that the media are generally liberal; others say they are more often conservative. Obviously, the bias of the interest group helps determine how it sees the media. Is news reporting in America generally biased?



A cartoon shows that it seems the media produced slanted or biased reports

### YES

The nonpartisan Center for Media and Public Affairs published a study in 1981 showing that the majority of network journalists identified themselves as liberal. Rupert Murdoch founded the Fox News cable channel to counterbalance what he saw as liberal bias at the big three networks. More recently, a CBS broadcast journalist, Bernard Goldberg, wrote a book called *Bias* in which he claimed that a one-sided opinion dominates the mainstream news media. He identified three network anchors: "I said out loud what millions of TV news viewers all over America know and have been complaining about for years: that too often, Dan (Rather) and Peter (Jennings) and Tom (Brokaw) and a lot of their foot soldiers don't deliver the news straight, that they have a liberal bias."

—Bernard Goldberg, Center for American Progress

### NO

Network anchors, like former CBS anchorman Dan Rather, claim to be unbiased and above politics. In 1995, Rather said that most reporters did not know whether they were Republican or Democrat. He thought that most were probably moderates. In his recent book *What Liberal Media?* Eric Alterman accused conservatives of using the myth of liberal bias to gain a political advantage. "The myth of the 'liberal media' empowers conservatives to control debate in the United States to the point where liberals cannot even hope for a fair shake anymore. However immodest my goal, I aim to change that." He added that the 47 percent of people polled who believed that the media are "too liberal" were influenced by the myth of liberal bias.

—Eric Alterman, *What Liberal Media?*

## Debating the Issue

- 1. Identifying** What three networks captured most of the news viewers in the past?
- 2. Recalling** How has the way Americans receive their news changed in recent years?
- 3. Contrasting** Explain the difference between Goldberg's and Rather's views of network anchors.
- 4. Evaluating** Why do many people believe news reporting is biased?



Section  
**3**

# Interest Groups

## Guide to Reading

### Big Idea

Political and economic institutions evolve to help individuals and groups accomplish their goals.

### Content Vocabulary

- public interest group (p. 334)
- nonpartisan (p. 334)
- political action committee (PAC) (p. 334)
- lobbyist (p. 335)

### Academic Vocabulary

- primary (p. 334)
- guarantee (p. 337)

### Reading Strategy

**Summarizing** As you read, complete a web diagram like the one below to show how interest groups influence governmental decision making.



**Real World Civics** Since our country began, the right to assemble has been a basic freedom. When labor union members such as those in the AFL-CIO get together to support issues, they hope people listen. Labor unions formed early in America to give workers a more powerful voice. Although not all Americans agree with unions, all people have a right to be heard. The AFL-CIO was formed in the 1950s to give labor unions its most powerful voice.

▼ Steelworkers and postal workers at an AFL-CIO Solidarity rally



**NORTH CAROLINA STANDARDS**  
Civics and Economics

- 2.07** Identify modern controversies related to powers of the federal government that are similar to the debates between Federalists and Anti-Federalists over ratification of the United States Constitution.
- 4.04** Demonstrate active methods of promoting and inhibiting change through political action.
- 4.09** Utilize various methods of resolving conflicts.
- 6.06** Analyze the role of lobby groups and special interest groups in the enactment of legislation.



# Types of Interest Groups

**Main Idea** Interest groups are an important part of our democratic process because they influence public policy.

**Civics & You** If you wanted to change a policy at your school, do you think you would have more influence as an individual or as a part of a large group? Read to see how many Americans have answered this question on the national level.

As you learned earlier, interest groups are organizations of people who unite to promote their ideas. People form, join, or support interest groups, also called special-interest groups, because they believe that by pooling their resources, they can increase their influence on decision makers. The First Amendment protects your right to belong to interest groups by guaranteeing “the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government.”

## Economic Interest Groups

Some of the most powerful interest groups are based on economic interests. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which promotes free enterprise, is one of the largest. Others represent specific types of businesses, such as the Tobacco Institute, which represents cigarette manufacturers. Such groups try to influence government decisions on issues that affect their industries.

Interest groups representing workers have been some of the most influential. They are concerned with wages, working conditions, and benefits. The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), an alliance of labor unions, is the largest of these groups. Professionals such as lawyers, doctors, and accountants have their own interest groups. The American Medical Association, for instance, represents doctors.



**Energy Protest** Demonstrators protest President Bush’s energy policy in 2003. **Comparing** How are public interest groups different than economic interest groups who protest?

## Other Interest Groups

People have also organized to promote an ethnic group, age group, religious group, or gender. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) works to improve the lives of African Americans. The National Organization for Women (NOW) represents women’s interests. AARP promotes the interests of older Americans.

Another category of interest groups work for special causes. For example, the Sierra Club is concerned with protecting nature. The National Rifle Association (NRA) looks after the interests of gun owners.



**Public Interest Groups** All the interest groups described earlier are private groups because they promote only the special interests of their own members. Some groups, however, work to benefit all, or at least most, of society. These are **public interest groups**. These groups support causes that affect the lives of Americans in general. For example, the League of Women Voters is a **nonpartisan**, or impartial, group that educates voters about candidates and issues. Other public interest groups have worked for consumer rights and the rights of the disabled.

## Interest Groups and Government

Interest groups are an important part of our democratic process because their **primary**, or first, goal is to influence public policy. To do this, interest groups focus their efforts on elections, the courts, and lawmakers.

**Elections** Some interest groups use political resources to support certain candidates at election time. For example, the Sierra Club might back candidates who support laws to protect nature and oppose those who disagree with its beliefs. Many interest groups, including most labor unions and many corporations and trade associations, have formed **political action committees (PACs)**. PACs collect money from the members of their groups and use it to support some candidates and oppose others.

**Going to Court** Trying to influence public policy by bringing cases to court is another option. For example, when a law—in the opinion of an interest group—is not being properly enforced, the group may sue the party who is breaking the law. A group may also use the courts to argue that a law or government policy is unconstitutional.

---

**Peaceful Demonstrations** Many special-interest groups protest peacefully, just asking citizens to read materials or sign petitions. **Describing** What kinds of actions by the government are special-interest groups hoping for?



## Political Cartoons



—Steve Breen/Copley News Service

Every year, more than half of all Americans do volunteer work. role in it. One of the responsibilities of citizens is to help make their of volunteer groups small. Perhaps that's why

In this cartoon, Steve Breen comments on the relationship between special interests and Congress by making reference to the movie *King Kong*.

1. Define special interests.
2. Why do you think the cartoonist represents special interests as a giant?
3. How does Breen portray Congress?
4. Do you think Breen views this relationship as positive or negative? Explain.

## Lobbying Government

Interest groups use lobbyists to help them influence government officials, especially at the national and state levels. **Lobbyists** are representatives of interest groups who contact lawmakers or other government officials directly. Lobbyists operate at all levels of government—local, state, and national.

The term *lobbyist* was first used in the 1830s to describe people who waited in the lobbies of statehouses to ask politicians for favors. Today lobbyists use a variety of strategies to influence lawmakers. Lobbyists have a good understanding of how the government functions. Good lobbyists know which government department to contact about a particular concern. They are also talented public relations agents who know how to make friends and talk persuasively.

One of the lobbyist's most important resources is information. The most effective lobbyists are able to supply to lawmakers

useful information that helps their own cases. They suggest solutions to problems and issues. Lobbyists sometimes prepare their own drafts of bills for lawmakers to consider and even testify in legislative hearings on bills. All of these activities provide lawmakers with a tremendous amount of information. This is important because lawmakers deal with thousands of bills each year.

The work of lobbyists does not end once a law is passed. Their interest groups also try to make sure the laws are enforced and upheld in court. For example, if an oil exploration bill is approved, environmental groups are likely to watch the whole operation carefully. If oil companies do not observe provisions aimed at protecting the environment, lobbyists for the environmental groups will lobby various government departments or agencies to see that the law is enforced.

**Reading Check Explaining** Why do some people form interest groups?



## Propaganda Techniques

### THE BANDWAGON



"Polls show our candidate is pulling ahead, and we expect to win in a landslide."

### NAME-CALLING



"Candidate A is a dangerous extremist."

### ENDORSEMENT



Popular beauty queen says, "I'm voting for Candidate B and so should you."

### STACKED CARDS



"Candidate C has the best record on the environment."

### GLITTERING GENERALITY



"Candidate B is the one who will bring us peace and prosperity."

### JUST PLAIN FOLKS



"My parents were ordinary, hardworking people, and they taught me those values."

### TRANSFER



Associating a patriotic symbol with a candidate.

### Analyzing Charts

- Explaining** How does name-calling differ from the other techniques?
- Evaluating** In your opinion, which propaganda techniques, if any, are more acceptable than others in political campaigns?

## Techniques Interest Groups Use

**Main Idea** Interest groups use various techniques to influence public opinion and policy.

**Civics & You** Are you more likely to support a cause because a famous singer supports it? Read to find out how groups and office seekers try to gain your support.

All interest groups want to influence public opinion, both to gain members and to convince people of the importance of their causes. Many use direct-mail campaigns to

recruit. Interest groups also advertise. Maybe you have seen ads urging you to drink milk, use ethanol in your car, or buy American-made products. Trade associations sponsor these types of ads. Interest groups also stage protests and organize public events to get coverage in the media.

### Beware Propaganda!

Interest groups use propaganda techniques to promote a particular viewpoint or idea. Citizens need to recognize the different types of propaganda described in the chart on this page. Many political and special-interest groups apply the same techniques used to market products to consumers.



## Regulating Interest Groups

Although the Constitution **guarantees**, or promises, Americans the right to participate in interest groups, state and federal governments regulate their activities. Laws have limited the amount of money PACs may contribute to candidates and have required lobbyists to register with congressional officials who have authority to monitor them. Lobbyists must also disclose who hired them, how much they are paid, and how they spend money related to their work.

Federal and state laws also require a waiting period before former government officials can become lobbyists. For example, a person who just ended a term as a representative cannot immediately become a lobbyist for some special-interest group or organization that wants to hire that person. These laws are meant to prevent ex-public officials from taking unfair advantage of inside knowledge and friendships with former associates

on behalf of interest groups. Laws regulating lobbyists have had only limited success.

**Pros and Cons** Interest groups have both their critics and their defenders. Some people argue that interest groups and lobbyists have too much say in government. Critics claim that campaign contributions give interest groups improper influence over officeholders. Many critics point to the example of Jack Abramoff, one of Washington’s most powerful lobbyists. In January 2006, Abramoff admitted corrupting government officials and stealing millions of dollars from his lobbying clients.

Those who defend interest groups say that they make government more responsive. They provide necessary and important services by communicating the people’s wishes to their representatives. They also enable Americans to organize and participate in the political system, and pressure the government to follow policies they want.

## Section Review 3

**Reading Check Explaining** What are the main tasks of lobbyists?

### Vocabulary

1. **Define** the following terms and use them in sentences related to interest groups: *public interest group*, *nonpartisan*, *political action committee (PAC)*, *lobbyist*.

### Main Ideas

2. **Describing** What are three ways interest groups can be organized?
3. **Explaining** How have laws regulated the activities of interest groups, PACs, and lobbyists?

### Critical Thinking

4. **Making Judgments** Which of the marketing techniques discussed in this section do you think is the most effective among consumers and citizens? Why?
5. **BIG Ideas** On a graphic organizer like the one below, compare and contrast the benefits and dangers of interest groups and lobbyists in our political system.

| Benefits | Dangers |
|----------|---------|
|          |         |

6. **Analyzing Visuals** Examine the chart of propaganda techniques on page 336. Work with a partner to list an example you have seen, heard, or read in the media of each.

### CITIZENSHIP Activity

7. **Expository Writing** You have studied about political parties and about interest groups. Write a one-page paper in which you compare interest groups and political parties. How are they similar? How are they different?



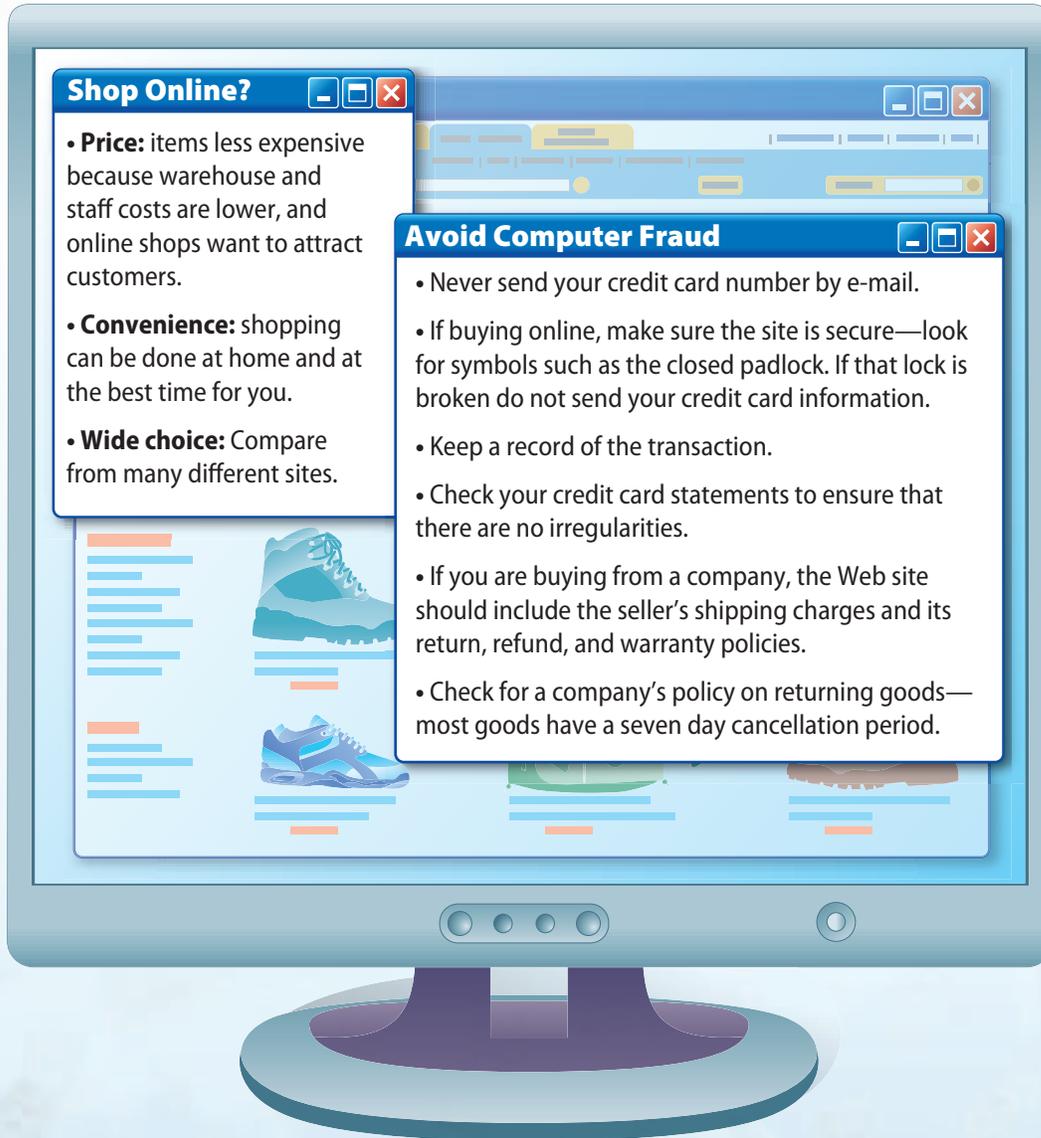
**Study Central™** To review this section, go to [glencoe.com](http://glencoe.com).



# Financial Literacy

## Shopping on the Internet

Shopping on the Internet has become increasingly popular because of the ease with which it can be done. Anybody with access to the Internet and a valid credit card can order on the Web.

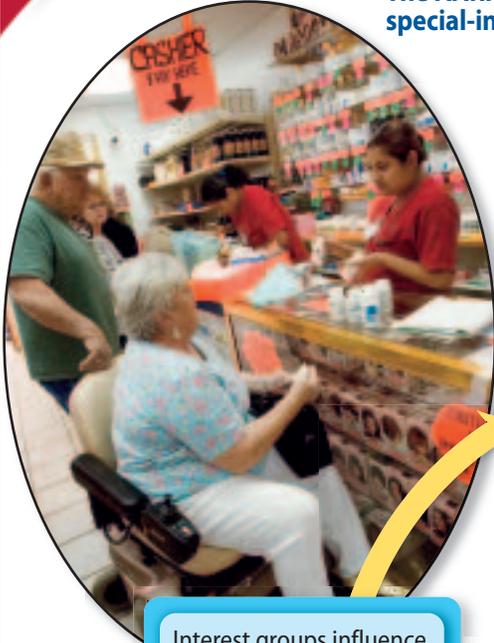


## Analyzing Economics

1. **Comparing and Contrasting** Make a chart comparing the advantages and disadvantages of shopping on the Internet. In your opinion, do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages or vice versa? Why?
2. **Applying** What are three ways that you and your family can make shopping on the Internet safer for yourselves?

# Visual Summary

The AARP is a strong special-interest group.



American daily newspapers

**INFLUENCING GOVERNMENT**

Interest groups influence government decision making.

Public opinion helps shape the decisions of government officials.

The mass media help set the public agenda, publicize candidates, and present information to the public. The mass media also monitor government activities.

A person's background, the mass media, public officials, and interest groups all play a role in shaping public opinion.



Citizens often join together in a common cause.

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# North Carolina End-of-Course Test Civics and Economics Practice

## TEST-TAKING TIP

When answering an essay question, give specific details to support your main ideas.

### Reviewing Vocabulary

Directions: Choose the word(s) that best completes the sentence.

- A(n) \_\_\_\_\_ measures public attitudes toward possible White House proposals.
 

|                         |                                     |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>A</b> pollster       | <b>C</b> regulatory commission      |
| <b>B</b> interest group | <b>D</b> political action committee |
- Issues that receive the most time and money from government leaders make up the \_\_\_\_\_.
 

|                         |                                |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>A</b> mass media     | <b>C</b> public agenda         |
| <b>B</b> public opinion | <b>D</b> public interest group |
- Government censorship of material before it is published is called \_\_\_\_\_.
 

|                 |                          |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| <b>A</b> libel  | <b>C</b> partisanship    |
| <b>B</b> malice | <b>D</b> prior restraint |
- Representatives of interest groups who contact public officials directly are called \_\_\_\_\_.
 

|                      |                                 |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>A</b> celebrities | <b>C</b> lobbyists              |
| <b>B</b> journalists | <b>D</b> white-collar criminals |

### Reviewing Main Ideas

Directions: Choose the best answer for each question.

#### Section 1 (pp. 318–324)

- How do public officials try to persuade as many people as possible to support their positions?
 

|  |
|--|
| <b>A</b> by conducting public opinion polls                    |
| <b>B</b> by promoting their views in the mass media            |
| <b>C</b> by changing their positions based on public opinion   |
| <b>D</b> by forming groups with others who share their beliefs |

- Why do responsible pollsters condemn push polls?
 

|   |
|---|
| <b>A</b> Push polls discourage voting.        |
| <b>B</b> Push poll questions are biased.      |
| <b>C</b> Push polls use too few respondents.  |
| <b>D</b> Push poll samples are seldom random. |

#### Section 2 (pp. 326–331)

- How do mass media act as a “watchdog” over government?
 

|   |
|---|
| <b>A</b> by covering leaks from public officials        |
| <b>B</b> by airing news that attracts more viewers      |
| <b>C</b> by exposing public officials’ misconduct       |
| <b>D</b> by publicizing entertainers running for office |
- How does the Federal Communications Commission regulate radio and television?
 

|  |
|--|
| <b>A</b> by penalizing stations for breaking rules         |
| <b>B</b> by suing scriptwriters for committing libel       |
| <b>C</b> by monitoring programmers suspected of malice     |
| <b>D</b> by censoring objectionable material in broadcasts |

#### Section 3 (pp. 332–337)

- What interest group would most likely back a candidate who supports laws to protect nature?
 

|                                 |
|---------------------------------|
| <b>A</b> Sierra Club            |
| <b>B</b> Tobacco Institute      |
| <b>C</b> Chamber of Commerce    |
| <b>D</b> League of Women Voters |
- What do critics of interest groups claim?
 

|   |
|---|
| <b>A</b> Interest groups have too much influence.         |
| <b>B</b> Interest groups provide necessary services.      |
| <b>C</b> Interest groups enable Americans to organize.    |
| <b>D</b> Interest groups communicate the people’s wishes. |

## Critical Thinking

Directions: Base your answers to questions 11 and 12 on the diagram below and your knowledge of Chapter 11.

| Techniques                 | How to Recognize It   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Name-calling               | Referring to an opponent with an unpleasant label or description, such as “un-American” |
| Glittering generality      | Vague or broad statement containing little substance                                    |
| Card stacking              | Giving only one side of the facts to support a position                                 |
| Transfer of symbol         | Associating a patriotic symbol with a point of view or person                           |
| Just plain facts           | Identifying a person as “just one of the common people”                                 |
| Testimonial or endorsement | A celebrity endorses a person or point of view  |
| The bandwagon              | Urging people to support a position or person because everyone else is                  |

11. Analyze the following passages from special-interest Web sites. Which uses glittering generalities?
- A The Sierra Club’s members are more than 750,000 of your friends and neighbors.
  - B Hispanic-American Soldiers have embodied the army’s core values for generations.
  - C The arrogance of anti-gun politicians and their hate of freedom will churn your stomach.
  - D Robert Redford urges Americans to call on their representative to vote against any bill that would plunder the Arctic Refuge.
12. Which passage uses name-calling?
- A The Sierra Club’s members are more than 750,000 of your friends and neighbors.
  - B Hispanic-American Soldiers have embodied the Army’s core values for generations.
  - C The arrogance of anti-gun politicians and their hate of freedom will churn your stomach.
  - D Robert Redford urges Americans to call on their representative to vote against any bill that would plunder the Arctic Refuge.

## Document-Based Questions

Directions: Analyze the following document and answer the short-answer questions that follow.

The following passage discusses reporting on the occupation of Iraq.

*There were photos of the platoon, guns over shoulders, praying for the fallen buddy. The Times is careful not to ruin the heroic mood, so there is no photograph of pieces of corporal Smith’s shattered head. Instead, there’s an old, smiling photo of the wounded soldier.*

*The reporter, undoubtedly wearing the Kevlar armor of the troop in which he’s “embedded,” quotes at length the thoughts of the military medic: “I would like to say that I am a good man. But seeing this now, what happened to Smith, I want to hurt people. You know what I mean?”*

*The reporter does not bother — or dare — to record a single word from any Iraqi in the town of Karma where Smith’s platoon was, “performing a hard hit on a house.”*

*And if we asked, I’m sure the sniper would tell us, “I am a good man, but seeing what happened, I want to hurt people.”*

—Greg Palast, “I Want to Hurt Somebody”

13. Why do you think the author mentions that the reporter is “embedded”?
14. In the third paragraph, the author implies that the reporter used a propaganda technique. Which one?

## Informational Writing

15. Write a brief essay about requirements for a well-constructed public opinion poll.

**STOP**

**Civics ONLINE**

For additional test practice, use Self-Check Quizzes—Chapter 11 on [glencoe.com](http://glencoe.com).

### Need Extra Help?

|                           |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| If you missed question... | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  | 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  |
| Go to page...             | 323 | 327 | 329 | 335 | 320 | 324 | 328 | 330 | 333 | 336 | 336 | 336 | 328 | 336 | 323 |

# Analyzing Primary Sources

## Extending the Right to Vote

### Reading Focus

On Election Day, every citizen over the age of 18 is able to cast a vote. It is a right that defines our nation as a democracy. But universal suffrage—letting everyone vote—did not appear overnight with the ratification of our Constitution. Many Americans struggled to gain the right to vote.

### Read to Discover

As you read, think about the following:

- Why did it take so long for many people to win voting rights?
- How were voting rights extended?

### Reader's Dictionary

**peer:** a person who has equal standing with another or others

**comply:** meet the terms

### The Fight for Woman Suffrage

Susan B. Anthony was a leader in the fight for legal rights for women.

It may be delayed longer than we think; it may be here sooner than we expect; but the day will come when man will recognize woman as his **peer**, not only at the fireside but in the councils of the nation. Then, and not until then, will there be . . . the ideal union between the sexes that shall result in the highest development of the race. What this shall be we may not attempt to define, but this we know, that only good can come to the individual or to the nation through the rendering of exact justice.

—Susan B. Anthony, article on woman suffrage



### Promoting Voting Rights

Martin Luther King, Jr., explains why the right to vote is vital.

“We know that Americans of good will have learned that no nation can long continue to flourish or to find its way to a better society while it allows any one of its citizens . . . to be denied the right to participate in the most fundamental of all privileges of democracy—the right to vote.”

—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., “Civil Rights No. 1: The Right to Vote”

### Native American Suffrage

Native Americans also were denied equal rights.

The Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 granted Native Americans citizenship. However, it still took more than 40 years for all 50 states to allow Native Americans to vote.

In order to exercise the right of suffrage, Indians must of course **comply** with the conditions equally required of other voters, and may be denied the privilege of voting if they fail to comply with the requirements of the law as to registration, payment of poll tax, or do not meet the educational or other qualifications for electors, etc., as provided by the State laws.

—Indian Citizenship Act of 1924

## The Voting Rights Act

The purpose of this Act is to ensure that the right of all citizens to vote, including the right to register to vote and cast meaningful votes, is preserved and protected as guaranteed by the Constitution. . . .

The record compiled by Congress demonstrates that, without the continuation of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 protections, racial and language minority citizens will be deprived of the opportunity to exercise their right to vote, or will have their votes diluted, undermining the significant gains made by minorities in the last 40 years.

—H. R. 9, the bill to extend the 1965 Voting Rights Act

Civil rights leader John Lewis, who helped organize voter registration drives in the 1960s, spoke out in favor of extending the Voting Rights Act.

“The Voting Rights Act is the heart and soul of our Democracy. The Voting Rights Act literally ushered in the possibility of transforming electoral politics. In the American South, you had millions who could not vote because of the color of their skin.”

—John Lewis on the renewal of the Voting Rights Act



**Photographs as Primary Sources** What can you learn from the photo about the people who demonstrated in Selma, Alabama, in the 1950s? What kind of demonstration did they hold?

## Why I Vote

A college student explains why voting is important.

As a child growing up with parents who were immigrants and had no voice in their country, I was able to see the importance of voting. When my parents became American citizens they took me and my siblings into the voting booth with them every time.

—Sonia Zobdeh, student at Brooklyn College

## DBQ Document-Based Questions

- 1. Interpreting** What did Anthony mean when she argued that women should be recognized as peers to men “not only at the fireside but in the councils of the nation”?
- 2. Explaining** What did King mean when he called the right to vote “the most fundamental of all privileges of a democracy”?
- 3. Explaining** Why was the right to vote not extended to all Native Americans, despite passage of the Indian Citizenship Act?
- 4. Evaluating and Connecting** If Susan B. Anthony and Martin Luther King, Jr., were alive today, what issues do you think they might be addressing? Why?