

Media Literacy Mini-Lesson #12

AUDIENCE

Journalists always consider who their **audience** is — that is, who is reading, watching, or hearing their stories. For example, a journalist sharing news on TikTok would know that the audience is likely younger and also that they may only have a minute to tell their story. Anchors on cable TV networks are reaching an older audience and might spend more time on a story and choose content of interest to this group.



Audiences affect journalistic decisions...

though journalists are committed to uncovering the truth, most publications are business, and they thus need to maintain audience interest to stay in business. Journalists or their editors will always decide which stories to cover and how to cover them with their audience in mind.

Describing an audience

There are many different aspects of the audience that can determine the way that news is reported. Some of the biggest factors that differentiate news audiences are demographics like age, gender, race, income, education level, religion, and geographic location.



Read the source on the next page and answer the following questions about the role of audience. Share your responses with a peer in-person or online.

The following interview with Marcia Ann Gillespie, editor-in-chief of Essence magazine, focused on issues affecting women and aired on the PBS WNED news program "Woman" from the 1970s. In it, the host interviews Marcia Ann Gillespie, the editor of Essence, a magazine about Black women's issues. It was broadcast on public television in Buffalo, New York.

Go to bit.ly/jia-gillespie to watch.



Woman, "New Image for Black Women" Edited version of interview with Marcia Ann Gillespie of Essence magazine. Jan 16, 1976. Permission has been granted for educational purposes only, courtesy of WNED via American Archive of Public Broadcasting (WGBH and Library of Congress).

Describe what is happening in the excerpt. What did you notice or wonder about?

Who is the target audience for the show Woman?

What is Marcia Ann Gillespie's message to the show's audience? How does she direct her message to that audience?