

“Biased,” “Boring” and “Bad”: Unpacking perceptions of news media and journalism among U.S. teens (2025)

Final Topline Results

This study was conducted for the News Literacy Project by SSRS, an independent research company. More information about SSRS can be obtained by visiting www.ssrs.com.

Interviews were conducted online from April 28, 2025 to May 12, 2025, among a recontacted nationally representative sample of 756 adolescent respondents ages 13 to 18. Respondents ages 13 to 17, as well as non-panelist 18-year-olds, were recontacted via their parents using the [SSRS Opinion Panel](#); meanwhile, respondent panelists age 18 were recontacted directly via the SSRS Opinion Panel. The margin of error for total respondents is ± 5.3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The survey's margin of error is the largest 95% confidence interval for any estimated proportion based on the total sample – the one around 50%. This means that in 95 out of every 100 samples drawn using the same methodology, estimated proportions based on the entire sample will be no more than 5.3 percentage points away from their true values in the population. For estimates smaller or larger than 50%, the margin of sampling error will be smaller. Margins of error for subgroups will be larger.

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100%, or to subtotals indicated, due to rounding.

(ASK ALL)

[PN: ONLY ALLOW ONE WORD.]

1. What **one word** do you think best describes news media these days?
Open-ended responses. Data not shown.

(ASK ALL)

2. What's **one thing** you think journalists are doing well these days?
Open-ended responses. Data not shown.

(ASK ALL)

3. What's **one thing** you think journalists could improve on these days?
Open-ended responses. Data not shown.

(ASK ALL)

[PN: PROGRAM AS A GRID]

[PN: ROTATE CODES 1-5/5-1]

[PN: RANDOMIZE ALL ITEMS]

4. How often, if ever, do you think professional journalists and the news organizations they work for...
 - a. Confirm facts before reporting them.

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/12/2025
NET Always/Often	30
Always or almost always	6
Often	24
Sometimes	47
NET Rarely/Never	23
Rarely	19
Never or almost never	4
No answer	0

- b. Pay or do favors for sources in exchange for information or special access.

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/12/2025
NET Always/Often	51
Always or almost always	12
Often	39
Sometimes	36
NET Rarely/Never	13
Rarely	10
Never or almost never	2
No answer	0

- c. Take photos and videos out of context and say they are something they are not.

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/12/2025
NET Always/Often	60
Always or almost always	20
Often	40
Sometimes	31
NET Rarely/Never	9
Rarely	7
Never or almost never	2
No answer	<1

- d. Cover stories that help protect the public's interests (for example: reporting on corruption).

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/12/2025
NET Always/Often	31
Always or almost always	6
Often	24
Sometimes	45
NET Rarely/Never	25
Rarely	20
Never or almost never	5
No answer	0

- e. Give advertisers special treatment, such as ignoring negative stories about them.

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/12/2025
NET Always/Often	49
Always or almost always	15
Often	34
Sometimes	40
NET Rarely/Never	11
Rarely	8
Never or almost never	3
No answer	0

- f. Correct errors when they happen.

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/12/2025
NET Always/Often	23
Always or almost always	6
Often	17
Sometimes	39
NET Rarely/Never	39
Rarely	31
Never or almost never	8
No answer	0

- g. Make up details, such as quotes, to make stories more interesting or engaging.

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/12/2025
NET Always/Often	50
Always or almost always	18
Often	32
Sometimes	36
NET Rarely/Never	14
Rarely	11
Never or almost never	3
No answer	0

- h. Gather information from multiple sources to get the whole story.

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/12/2025
NET Always/Often	29
Always or almost always	8
Often	22
Sometimes	44
NET Rarely/Never	26
Rarely	21
Never or almost never	6
No answer	0

(ASK ALL)

5. Are there any movies or TV shows that come to mind when you think of journalism?

U.S. Teens 13-18	
	05/12/25
Yes	32
No	68
No answer	0

(ASKED OF THOSE WHO THOUGHT OF MOVIES OR TV SHOWS WHEN THEY THINK OF JOURNALISM, n = 244)

6. What are some movies or TV shows that come to mind when you think of journalism?
Open-ended responses. Data not shown