



Weekly Discussion Questions 4/21/2025

The Spokesman-Review is in the process of transitioning to a nonprofit model under the ownership of the Comma Community Journalism Lab. This change comes as a response to the sharp decline in newspaper advertising revenue, readership, and staffing seen across the industry. By becoming a nonprofit, The Spokesman-Review aims to preserve local journalism through community support, grants, and donations—like how public radio and television are funded. The goal is to ensure the newspaper remains an independent and sustainable source of local news for Spokane and the surrounding region. Using the linked articles and other information provided, discuss how this transition might affect the role of journalism in the community and what challenges or opportunities it could create.

[Article 1](#)

[Article 2](#)

Classroom Discussion Questions College Level

Reimagining Journalism: The Nonprofit Transition: The Spokesman-Review's shift to nonprofit ownership reflects a broader movement in response to the collapse of traditional advertising revenue models. What are the potential strengths and weaknesses of nonprofit journalism as a sustainable business model? In what ways might this reshape journalistic independence, community trust, or editorial priorities?

Local Journalism and Democratic Resilience: Research consistently links the decline of local journalism to lower civic engagement and decreased government accountability. How does the weakening of local news ecosystems threaten democratic participation at the community level? What responsibilities do citizens, educators, and institutions have in addressing this gap?

Navigating News in a Post-Print Era: As newspapers transition from print to digital formats—and increasingly rely on alternative funding like grants or community support—how should they adapt their practices to maintain credibility and reach diverse audiences? What strategies might help nonprofit newsrooms combat misinformation and rebuild public trust in journalism?

Classroom Discussion Questions Grades 9-12

Why Go Nonprofit? The Spokesman-Review is planning to become a nonprofit news organization. Why do you think this model might help protect local journalism? What are the potential benefits and challenges of funding a newspaper through community donations, grants, or public support instead of advertising?

The Role of Local News in a Democracy: As newsrooms shrink and more local papers shut down, fewer people have access to reporting about their own communities. Why is this a problem? How could the loss of local journalism affect the way citizens participate in elections, government, and public debates?

Journalism in the Digital Age: The articles describe a shift from print to digital platforms and a massive drop in advertising revenue. If fewer people pay for news and more rely on social media, what impact could that have on the reliability and depth of the information we consume? How can nonprofit journalism models help solve this?

Classroom Discussion Questions Grades 6-8

What Does Nonprofit Mean for a Newspaper? The Spokesman-Review wants to become a nonprofit, which means it would be supported by donations instead of mostly selling ads. Why might that help a newspaper? What are some ways the community could help support it?

Why Local News Matters: Some areas in the U.S. don't have any local newspapers anymore. Why do you think it's important to have a newspaper that shares news about your own city or town? What kinds of stories would be missing without it?

Reading News Online vs. in Print: Fewer people are reading printed newspapers, and more people are getting news online or from social media. What are some good things about that? What could be the problems? Do you think a nonprofit newspaper could help people get better information?

Classroom Discussion Questions Grades 1-5

Helping the Newspaper: The Spokesman-Review wants to become a nonprofit, which means people can help support it with money or donations. Why do you think it's important to help your local newspaper?

Why News About Our Town Matters: Some towns don't have a newspaper anymore. Why is it important to read news about your school, your town, or your neighbors? What kinds of stories do you like to read?

Reading on Paper or Online: Some people read the news on paper, and some read it on a phone or computer. What do you like better? Why do you think it's important for people to get good, true information?