



Weekly Discussion Questions 5/5/2025

Please review the special coverage on World Press Freedom featured in the Sunday edition of *The Spokesman-Review*. This section explores the challenges journalists face around the world, the importance of free press in democratic societies, and how these global issues connect to our local news environment. After reading, use the provided discussion questions to reflect on what you’ve learned and consider how press freedom—or the lack of it—can shape communities both near and far.

Classroom Discussion Questions College Level

Understanding News Deserts: The decline of local news outlets has contributed to the rise of “news deserts” across the U.S. What structural, economic, or social factors most contribute to the disappearance of local journalism, and how do these losses impact civic engagement and democratic participation?

Ownership and Trust in Journalism: Ownership models—from corporate chains to local nonprofits—affect how journalism is produced and received. How might these ownership structures influence editorial choices, public trust, and the overall health of a local news ecosystem?

Delivering Journalism in the Digital Age: Sisi Wei argues that good journalism must be actively delivered—not just created—to reach and empower communities. In an era of misinformation and media fragmentation, how should journalists rethink access, distribution, and engagement to better serve underserved or underinformed audiences? *We welcome your insights—send your reflections to nie@spokesman.com.*

Classroom Discussion Questions Grades 9-12

Exploring News Deserts: Some communities are losing access to local news, creating what experts call “news deserts.” What are some reasons this might be happening, and how could it affect people who live in those areas?

Who Owns the News?: News organizations can be owned by large companies, nonprofits, or even families in the local community. How might the owner of a news outlet affect the kind of news it shares and how much people trust it?

Reaching Today’s Audiences: One journalist said, “It’s not: If you build it, they will come. It is: If you build it, deliver it to people.” What does this mean in today’s world of social media and digital news? How can

journalists make sure people—especially young people—see and understand important news? *We'd love to hear your ideas! Send your responses to nie@spokesman.com.*

Classroom Discussion Questions Grades 6-8

What Happens Without Local News?: Some towns and neighborhoods don't have newspapers or local news anymore. Why do you think this happens, and what could it mean for the people who live there?

Who Makes the News?: News can be made by big national companies or small local groups. How do you think the kind of owner might change what stories get told and how people feel about the news?

Sharing News in a Digital World: One journalist said, "It's not: If you build it, they will come. It is: If you build it, deliver it to people." What do you think that means? How can reporters make sure people your age can find and understand the news? *We'd love to hear your ideas! You can send your responses to nie@spokesman.com.*

Classroom Discussion Questions Grades 1-5

Why Is Local News Important?: Some towns don't have a newspaper or local news anymore. Why do you think it's important for people to have news about what's happening in their town?

Who Tells the News?: Sometimes news is made by big companies, and sometimes by people who live nearby. Who do you think tells better stories about your community, and why?

How Do People Get the News?: One person said it's not enough to just write the news—you have to bring it to people. What are some fun or helpful ways to share the news with kids and families? *We'd love to hear what you think! Ask a teacher or adult to help you send your answers to nie@spokesman.com.*