

Analyzing Television News

Media Investigations

Every night, millions of Americans turn on their televisions to watch the nightly news. Many of these people have already read about most of the day's events in newspapers, yet they choose to watch television news to not only *hear* about those stories, but also to *see* them. Newspapers and television news are both valuable parts of the American media, but they work in different ways. As a visual medium, television news can present viewers with another perspective on the day's headlines by pairing words and images (and sound). Read the excerpt from a newspaper article below, then answer the questions that follow.

“Ask Not” Bill Awaits President’s Signature

As the current session of Congress comes to a close, lawmakers are awaiting news of whether the president will veto H.RES.542, which only passed in both houses two days ago. The Responsibility Act is the result of a two-year-long effort to educate the American public about citizens' responsibilities to their country. It has been nicknamed the "Ask Not" bill in reference to President John F. Kennedy's famous quote, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." The bill also provides money to school districts across

the country to get students involved in service projects that help improve their communities.

"We are very hopeful that the president will agree with us on the importance of this legislation and quickly sign it into law," said one of the bill's sponsors on Tuesday. "The act may help get more citizens involved in helping out their communities. We have to realize that we are all in this together." Analysts predict that the president will sign the bill, pointing to his strong belief in greater reliance on volunteerism to solve community problems.

1. Create a storyboard of how this story might appear and be reported on television news. Be sure to suggest images and sound that might be used. Your storyboard should include at least three panels.

2. Compare and contrast people's reactions to seeing this story on television news and reading the story in the newspaper.

3. Watch part of a television news story about a major event with the sound on, then watch the rest of the story with the sound off. Write a paragraph explaining what sound contributes to television news, as well as how sound can distract or limit the viewer.