



SEARCHLIGHTS AND SUNGLASSES

LEARNING LAYER

Dissecting traditional media's decline

People have always complained about the state of their news. But now they see many options if they don't like the offerings in traditional media. The Pew Research Center's 2013 State of the Media report says 31 percent of those surveyed reported abandoning a news outlet because the level of its news had fallen.

Assignments at three levels:

Flashlight: Research the origin of the term "the Fourth Estate." What does it mean to you? Watch the [Support Reporting](#) video. Do you agree that daily newspapers still provide most of America's local news? In places where people are abandoning traditional media, are others taking on the role of the Fourth Estate?

Spotlight: Share [this chart](#) showing the collapse in afternoon newspaper circulation. Why don't people want to read papers in the afternoon or evening? Is it the content, or could there be other reasons? If the rise of television was a reason, how do you explain the fall of local television in recent years? What's replacing it?

Searchlight: Women and people of color have long said mass media does not reflect their lives. The book [News in a New America](#) found that the diversity of daily newspaper newsrooms peaked in the early 1990s. As the American population has become more diverse, the gap between newsrooms and the population they serve has grown. Is this a factor in the decline of traditional media? Explain your view.