
Decoding
the Media:
Power, Profit,
and Information
A critical toolkit for understanding
how the news is shaped in a democracy
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THE ILLUSION OF INFINITE CHOICE
Print and digital media offer a **massive variety** of information designed to suit every taste, interest, and demographic.
We are surrounded by an **endless, carefully curated feed** of content.
THE ILLUSION OF PARK INDIFFINIES
The New York Times
Ukrananints feet in all attending
Wartan Ager
TAKE FRANCE
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MODALITIES OF MEDIA: HOW INFORMATION MOVES



PUBLISH

- **Medium:** Newspapers, magazines, books.
- **Audience:** Readership.
- **Nature:** Physical, permanent, designed for a wide audience.

BROADCAST

- **Medium:** TV, radio, digital streams.
- **Audience:** Viewers and Listeners.
- **Nature:** Widely transmitted, immediate, continuous.



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CONTROLLING THE SPOTLIGHT: AGENDA SETTING

By deciding which stories deserve attention and which do not, the media dictates what the public thinks important. The media decides what to focus on, and in this way, it sets the agenda.



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The Cycle of Influence: Money and Attention



Big Business Houses
Own radio, TV, newspapers.
Advertise their products.



The Media
Promotes products through advertisements.



Readers, Viewers, Listeners
People buy products seen in the media.

Money flows back

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The Myth of the Balanced Report

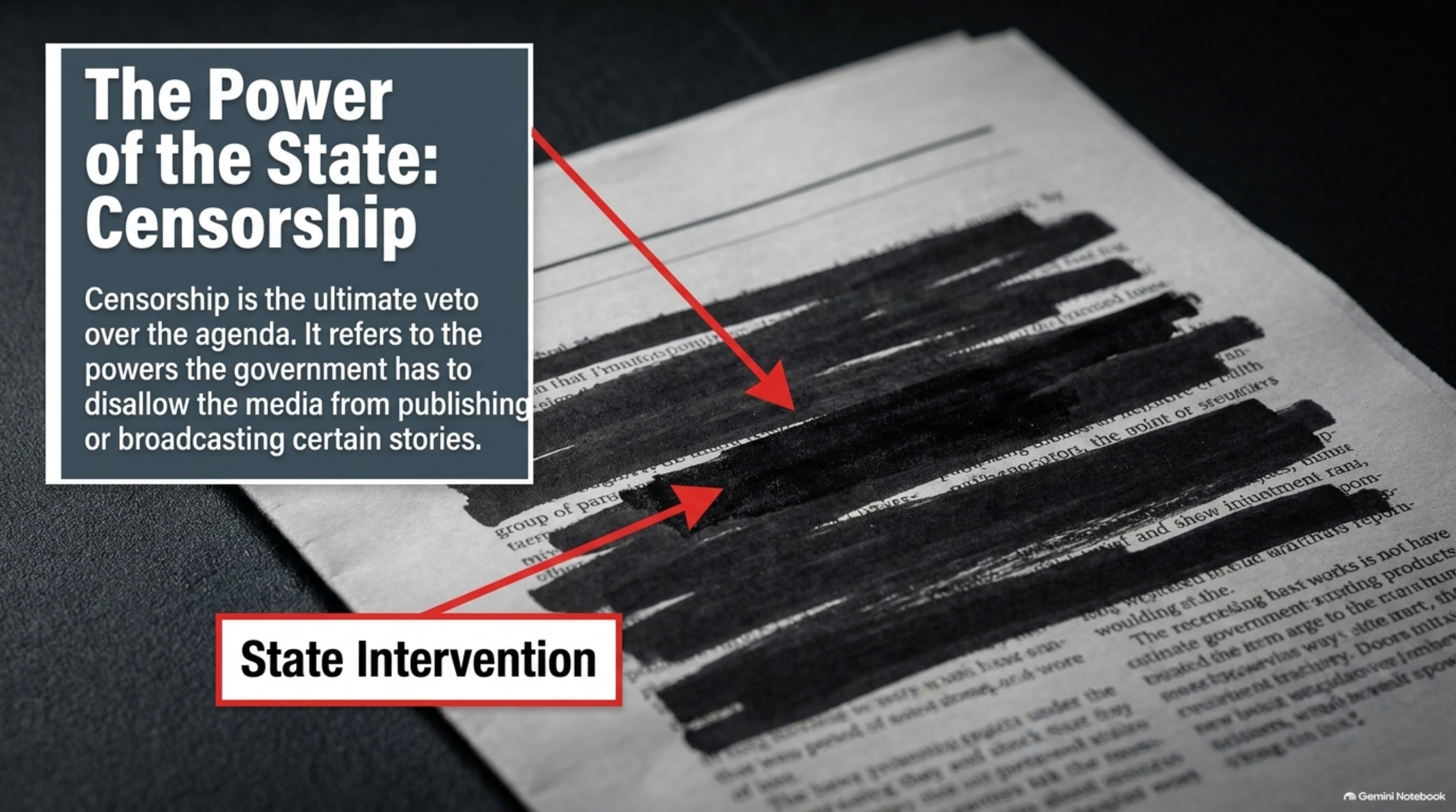
Because of the media's close financial relationship with big business, a truly objective, balanced report is difficult to come by.

The factual information a news report provides is often incomplete and can be heavily one-sided.

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The Power of the State: Censorship

Censorship is the ultimate veto over the agenda. It refers to the powers the government has to disallow the media from publishing or broadcasting certain stories.



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The Power of the People: Public Protest

When citizens reject the narrative, they can force the media to change its agenda.

A public protest occurs when a large number of people come together to openly state their opposition to an issue through rallies, signature campaigns, or blocking roads.

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The Flow of Power in a Democracy



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From Passive Consumer to Active Analyst

How do we navigate a world of incomplete information? We stop just reading the news, and we start investigating it.

PASSIVE CONSUMPTION

ACTIVE INVESTIGATION

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The Media Decoding Lens



The Fact Check

What information am I actually learning from this report?



The Blind Spot

What information is intentionally not being provided?



The Lens

From whose point of view is this article being written?



The Silenced

Whose point of view is being left out, and why?

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The Investigation Project

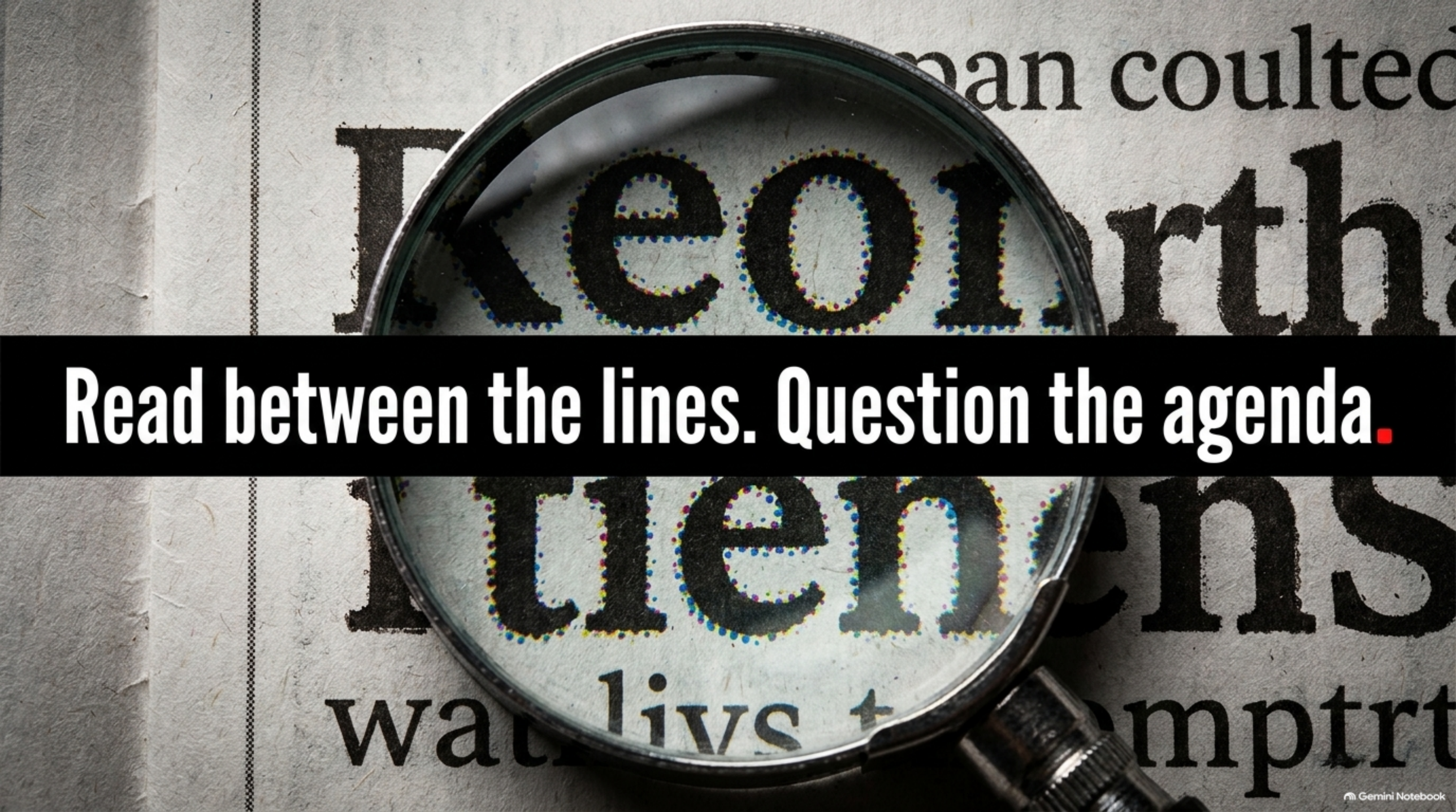
Mission Brief

1. Select a single, current news topic.
2. Track it across different modalities.
3. Compare the coverage in two different newspapers, and analyze how the same topic is handled on a TV news broadcast.
4. Map the similarities and the differences.



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The Engine of a Democracy
An informed democracy requires an **independent** media to report the facts. But more importantly, **it requires an independent, critical audience** to analyze them.
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Read between the lines. Question the agenda.