In the headlines

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
ADVANCED | C1

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Match each advanced term with its definition.

1 agenda-setting theory ____	**a** the theory that media coverage shapes which issues the public perceives as most important, rather than necessarily what to think about them
2 framing effect ____	**b** the phenomenon whereby the way information is presented shapes audience interpretation independent of the underlying facts
3 media bias ____	**c** a systematic tendency in reporting to favour a particular perspective, whether through selection, emphasis or framing
4 false balance ____	**d** presenting two sides of an issue as equally credible even when evidence strongly favours one, misrepresenting genuine scientific or factual consensus
5 churnalism ____	**e** journalism produced largely by recycling press releases or wire copy with minimal independent verification or original reporting
6 gatekeeping (journalism) ____	**f** the editorial process by which journalists and editors decide which stories reach publication and which are excluded
7 narrative arc ____	**g** the overarching structure and progression a news story or ongoing coverage follows over time
8 source triangulation ____	**h** the practice of verifying a claim by consulting multiple independent sources before reporting it as fact
9 press release journalism ____	**i** journalism substantially derived from corporate or institutional press releases rather than independent investigation
10 discourse of urgency ____	**j** a rhetorical pattern emphasising immediate crisis or emergency to increase audience engagement or urgency

2 Choose the most precise term for each context.

In the headlines

1 Media shaping which issues the public sees as important is agenda-setting theory / total audience indifference.

2 The way information is presented shaping interpretation is a framing effect / a fixed, objective meaning.

3 A systematic tendency to favour a particular perspective is media bias / strictly neutral reporting.

4 Presenting two sides as equally credible despite unequal evidence is false balance / accurate proportional coverage.

5 Journalism recycling press releases with minimal verification is churnalism / rigorous investigative reporting.

6 The editorial process deciding which stories reach publication is gatekeeping / unrestricted publication.

7 Verifying a claim through multiple independent sources is source triangulation / relying on a single unverified source.

8 A rhetorical pattern emphasising immediate crisis is a discourse of urgency / calm, measured framing.

3 Match the verbs with the noun phrases to form academic collocations.

1 exploit ____	**a** a claim through source triangulation
2 mitigate ____	**b** a discourse of urgency
3 institutionalise ____	**c** systemic media bias
4 detect ____	**d** false balance in reporting
5 corroborate ____	**e** churnalism practices editorially
6 amplify ____	**f** a framing effect statistically
7 challenge ____	**g** gatekeeping norms
8 quantify ____	**h** media bias in coverage

In the headlines

4 Complete the analysis with terms from the box.

agenda-setting theory | churnalism | discourse of urgency | false balance | framing effect | gatekeeping | media bias | narrative arc | press release journalism | source triangulation

Media scholars applying 1 _____ argue that coverage shapes not what audiences think but which issues they consider salient in the first place, a distinct but related phenomenon to the 2 _____, whereby the specific presentation of an issue shapes interpretation independently of underlying facts. Critics increasingly document 3 _____ in contested scientific debates, where outlets present a fringe minority view as equally credible to overwhelming expert consensus, misleading audiences about the genuine state of evidence. Economic pressure on newsrooms has accelerated 4 _____, with journalists increasingly repackaging 5 _____ with minimal independent verification, undermining the traditional editorial 6 _____ process that once filtered institutional claims more rigorously before publication. Rigorous outlets still commit to 7 _____, verifying claims through multiple independent sources before publication, though this practice takes considerably more time than simply reproducing a single source's framing. Meanwhile, some coverage increasingly adopts a 8 _____, emphasising immediate crisis to sustain audience engagement, a pattern that risks compromising the sober, sustained 9 _____ needed to track how a complex story actually develops over time, ultimately reflecting broader concerns about 10 _____ in how contested issues are systematically framed across an entire media landscape.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

In the headlines

The economics behind declining verification

Media economists studying declining standards of journalistic verification link the phenomenon directly to structural economic pressures facing contemporary newsrooms, rather than attributing it primarily to declining professional standards or individual journalistic laziness. Shrinking advertising revenue has forced widespread staff reductions precisely as competitive pressure to publish quickly, ahead of rival outlets, has simultaneously intensified, creating powerful incentives to prioritise speed and volume of output over the time-consuming practice of source triangulation. Churnalism, in this economic framing, represents less a deliberate abandonment of journalistic ideals than a rational, if troubling, adaptation to genuinely diminished resources within an industry under sustained financial strain, suggesting that meaningfully improving verification standards may require addressing the underlying economic model of journalism itself, rather than journalists' individual professional choices or intentions.

1 What do media economists link declining verification standards to? _____

2 What has shrinking advertising revenue forced, according to the text? _____

3 What has simultaneously intensified alongside this? _____

4 What powerful incentives does this combination create? _____

5 How does the text characterise churnalism, in this economic framing? _____

6 What might meaningfully improving verification standards require, according to the text? _____

6 Replace the words in bold with a precise term or collocation.

1 The outlet presented the fringe view as equally credible to expert consensus. _____

2 The reporter simply recycled a press release with minimal independent checking. _____

3 The journalist confirmed the claim through several independent sources. _____

4 The story emphasised immediate crisis to hold the audience's attention. _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a 160-190 word critical commentary on how economic pressures have affected journalistic verification standards, distinguishing observation from causal argument.

[ ] Use at least twelve target expressions. [ ] Include four academic collocations. [ ] Maintain a precise, balanced register.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Advanced terms

1 a 2 b 3 c 4 d 5 e 6 f 7 g 8 h 9 i 10 j

2 Precise terms

1 agenda-setting theory 2 a framing effect 3 media bias 4 false balance 5 churnalism 6 gatekeeping 7 source triangulation 8 a discourse of urgency

3 Academic collocations

1 f exploit a framing effect statistically... note adjust 2 d mitigate false balance in reporting 3 e institutionalise churnalism practices editorially 4 h detect media bias in coverage
5 a corroborate a claim through source triangulation 6 b amplify a discourse of urgency 7 g challenge gatekeeping norms 8 c quantify systemic media bias

4 Analysis

1 agenda-setting theory 2 framing effect 3 false balance 4 churnalism 5 press release journalism
6 gatekeeping 7 source triangulation 8 discourse of urgency 9 narrative arc 10 media bias

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 Structural economic pressures facing contemporary newsrooms.
2 Widespread staff reductions.
3 Competitive pressure to publish quickly, ahead of rival outlets.
4 Incentives to prioritise speed and volume of output over source triangulation.
5 A rational, if troubling, adaptation to genuinely diminished resources within an industry under financial strain.
6 Addressing the underlying economic model of journalism itself.

6 Precise terms and collocations

1 false balance 2 churnalism 3 source triangulation 4 a discourse of urgency

Over to you

Answers will vary. Look for conceptual precision, evidence-aware reasoning and balanced evaluation.