Unit 5 — Media and Democracy — Teacher copy

Track E · Klasse 10 · Niveau E

Niveau E

1. Vocabulary

Match each item to its meaning or use it in a sentence.

Term	Your note
free press	
press freedom	
accountability	
scrutiny	
oversight	
opinion vs. reporting	
editorial independence	
conflict of interest	
sponsored content	
public-interest journalism	
civic information	
local press desert	

2. Reading

Read the text and use it for the activities below.

Reading — *Local Papers, Local Voters*

More than 200 local newspapers in the UK have closed in the past two decades. Research has linked their disappearance to lower voter turnout, less scrutiny of local councils and slower response to local environmental issues. The link is not necessarily causal — districts that lose papers are also often districts under broader economic stress — but it is consistent across studies. In some contexts, hyper-local newsletters and citizen journalism have replaced the papers; in others, they have not.

Vocabulary — media and democracy

free press, press freedom, accountability, scrutiny, oversight, opinion vs. reporting, editorial independence, conflict of interest, sponsored content, public-interest journalism, civic information, local press desert.

Academic-register hedges

It has been argued that … / The available evidence suggests that … / In some contexts … / This is not necessarily causal … / The link is consistent across studies … / Critics maintain that … / Caution is warranted.

3. Practise

Niveau E — controlled

1. Choose hedge: *It has been argued / The evidence suggests / Critics maintain* — ___ that local papers support voter turnout. ___ that the link is causal.
2. Match: free press → press freedom; oversight → scrutiny; sponsored content → paid promotion.

Niveau E — productive

3. Build 4 academic-register sentences on the local-press topic.

4. Your turn

Op-ed, 220 words. Take a position on a media-democracy topic of your choice. Use 4 academic-register hedges + 1 cautious-claim phrase + 1 complex-sentence subordinator.

Sample

The available evidence suggests that the closure of more than 200 local newspapers in the UK over the past two decades has had measurable democratic consequences. Research has linked their disappearance to lower voter turnout, less scrutiny of councils, and slower response to local environmental issues. It has been argued, with reason, that the link is not necessarily causal — districts that lose papers are often districts under broader economic stress. However, the consistency of the link across studies warrants attention. In some contexts, hyper-local newsletters and citizen journalism have replaced the papers; in others, they have not. Critics maintain that volunteer-run replacements lack the staff time for sustained scrutiny, which is the part of journalism most at risk in a press desert. Although the picture is uneven, the policy implication is fairly clear: support for local public-interest journalism — through grant schemes, regulatory tweaks, or simply paid subscriptions — is one of the cheaper democratic investments available. Caution is warranted; complacency is not.

5. Further reading / listening

- The Guardian — *Comment is free*.
- Reuters Institute — accessible digital news report.

6. Teacher answer key

Controlled. 1. The evidence suggests / Critics maintain.

2. all true.

Productive. 3. Open.