1. MASS MEDIA

**a)** kinds of mass media (their use, advantages, disadvantages)

**b)** the press (newspapers, magazines, articles), how to choose them, where to buy them – favourite columns

**c)** radio, TV (favourite kinds of programmes, ratings)

**d)** the influence of mass media on life of an individual, family and society

**e)** the Internet and its influence on a person and society

**Mass media** (masovokomunikačné prostriedky) – are means (prostriedky) of communication which reach a very large number of people. They include TV (television), radio, press (tlač) (press includes newspapers, magazines and journals) and the Internet.

In modern society we are in a daily contact with different types of mass media. **We watch television, read newspapers or magazines, listen to the radio or surf the Internet. These are the media that reach a large number of people and that is why they are called mass media.**

**Why are mass media so important?**

The mass media serve, first of all, as a **source (zdroj) of information**. Apart from that, the role of mass media is **to educate (they are source of knowledge – vedomostí, znalostí)** and **entertain (they are source of entertainment - zábavy)**. Watching TV is the most favourite way of relaxation and spending free time for a lot of people. They watch football or hockey matches, films, sitcoms, soap operas or series; some prefer discussions, documentaries, or reality and quiz shows.

**Television and radio**

Television is the most popular source of information. People of all ages spend their free time watching TV programmes. Children are often obsessed with watching TV but it is not healthy for their mental and physical development (watching TV for a long time causes poor eyesight, children are getting fatter and fatter, they do not play with their friends outdoors, they often spend hours in front of the television and do not talk to anybody, there is too much violence (priveľa násila) on TV, children are becoming more violent and treat their friends and classmates according to what they have seen on TV. Some are not able to see the difference between fact and fiction. People who are TV stars are often idols for a lot of young people. All radio and television stations, **public** (verejné) or **private** (súkromné), educational (vzdelávacie) or commercial (komerčné), big or small **have to have a licence to broadcast** (musia mať licenciu na vysielanie).

**Public TV stations** – are owned by a state, they are **non-commercial**, and they are financed from the state budget (sú financované zo štátneho rozpočtu). In Slovakia we have **3** public television stations: STV1, STV2 and STV3. The first channel STV1 is more and more like other commercial TV stations, the second channel specialises in documentaries, quiz shows, educational programmes, music and sports and the third channel specialises in sports and mainly broadcasts live football or hockey matches. Some cities and areas also have **local TV stations** presenting mostly local news. There are not too many commercials and for example when you watch a film on STV, it is not interrupted (nie je prerušený) by **commercial breaks**. They **broadcast** a lot of films of Slovak and Czech productions and a lot of documentaries and programmes targeted on nationalities and ethnic minorities living in Slovakia, people who have special hobbies (there are programmes for hunters, farmers, fishermen, mothers, etc.)

**Commercial breaks (reklamné prestávky)** – five to fifteen-minute breaks broadcasted on TV. Companies pay a lot of money to TV stations to advertise their products or services. These commercials often influence people who watch TV. The aim of the commercial **is to persuade the potential customer to buy a product or a service that is advertised**. Commercials influence viewers very much. Some people like them and some phrases such as “Díky Broňa” have become widely used and popular among people. Others hate them and they switch to a different station or they have a cigarette or go to loo when there is commercial break on.

**Private TV stations** – **commercial stations**, they get money from companies that advertise their products or services on the station. They broadcast programmes that enjoy wide popularity, such as soap operas (telenovely), series (seriály) or mini-series and a lot of American movies. Commercial stations, such as ***TV Markíza*** and ***TV Joj*** enjoy wide popularity. They don’t often specialise in anything in particular but try to satisfy (uspokojiť) viewers (divákov) with different tastes and preferences. There are **several music channels** such as MTV, VH1, Music box, **hobby and lifestyle channels**, **sports channels**, **history channels**, **cartoon channels**, **wildlife** (Spektrum, Discovery channel) and **cookery channels**. **HBO** is a cable TV station which broadcasts a lot of movies/films before they are broadcasted on other channels.

***TA3*,** the first **Slovak news channel** started broadcasting in 2001. Thanks to this channel, Slovaks can watch current **international and home/domestic news** throughout the whole day. Its programmes cover a wide range of topics, mostly from economy, politics, technology and sport. There are several news channels e.g. **BBC news** in Britain, **CNN in the USA** and **Euro news** which broadcast news. In Britain there are several TV stations but BBC1, 2, 3 and Channel 4 are the most popular ones.

**Programmes which are broadcasted on TV:**

1. **Entertainment programmes** (movies, talk shows, quiz shows, comedies, cartoons, sitcoms, series, mini-series, soap operas, phone-ins, reality shows and talent shows).
2. **Educational** (vzdelávacie) and **news programmes**: the news, sports news, weather forecast, documentaries, wildlife programmes, political discussions etc.

**The news** usually starts at 7 o’clock or 7.30 every evening, it covers topics such as politics, **world affairs**/events (svetové dianie), **home affairs**/events, **crime**, **catastrophes** (tsunami, hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, droughts, terrorist attacks), current events (najnovšie udalosti) – they are usually **live broadcasted**.

**RADIO** programmes: weather, news, chat shows (famous people talk about themselves, answer listeners’ questions), phone-ins (people phone in and ask questions), educational programmes, radio plays, morning shows, music programmes, etc. Some radio stations have their specializations: some present pop music or sport, education and children’s programmes, some light entertainment or the main news. In Slovakia, probably the most popular radio stations are FUN rádio, Jemné Melódie, Rock FM and Rádio Express.

**Newspapers**

Most newspapers are **daily newspapers**. It means that they are published every day except weekends. But there are also some newspapers that are published once a week and they are called **weeklies**, for example Slovak Spectator – a newspaper about politics and cultural life in Slovakia published in English. There are two kinds (druhy) of newspapers: **serious newspapers**, also called “**broadsheets**” (they have large sheets) and “**tabloids**” (small sheets). The broadsheets are known as “quality” newspapers and the tabloids are called “popular” papers. **Broadsheets** publish serious articles about politics, world and domestic events, religion, economy, social life, etc. Broadsheets are quality papers and you can find serious news and articles written in a serious manner in them. *SME* is a daily paper that is widely read and influential. *Pravda* is another widely read paper in our country. They both, as well as the other quality papers, contain a great variety of national and international news, reports from parliamentary debates, reviews of the arts, features about fashion and sport and business news. The best selling daily paper, however, is the **tabloid** *Nový Čas*, which doesn’t really publish any serious material. In this type of a paper you mostly read about sex scandals and money, idols and celebrities. There are advertisements, various competitions and some home news. Popular papers contain a high number of features (interesting reports about subject, place, or a person) about stars, sports and celebrities. The information they publish is not often based on true facts and they publish a lot of made-up stories and gossip (klebety). They contain a lot of pictures and the headline (titulok) sometimes takes more space than the article itself. Both types of the papers, quality ones and tabloids, pay special attention to the reporting of sports.

Typical sections in newspapers are **editorials** (úvodníky), **news reports**, **international/domestic news**, **political commentaries**, **business news**, **cartoons**, **crosswords**, **sports reports**, **reviews** (recenzie). Newspapers contain articles on politics, sports, economy, social life, editorials (person’s opinion), features etc. People who write articles for newspapers are journalists.

Slovakia: Broadsheets: SME, Pravda, Hospodárske noviny, Národná obroda, The Slovak Spektator; tabloids: Nový čas, Nový čas víkend, Nový čas pre ženy. Most of our newspapers have their on-line editions so you don’t have to buy them at the newsagent’s. The newsagent is not the only place where you can buy newspapers; nowadays they are sold in supermarkets, groceries and at kiosks.

Britain: broadsheets: The Times, The Guardian, The Financial Times; tabloids: The Sun, The Daily Mirror.

The USA: broadsheets: The New York Times, The Washington Post, tabloids: the Star, the Globe.

**Magazines** are published weekly (once a week) or monthly (once a month) and they contain different kinds of articles, news, stories, agony aunt pages, fashion sections, lifestyle sections, cookery sections and many others. Some magazines such as Plus 7 dní, Televízia, Trend, Profit, Týždeň are popular among all the people and some magazines target special groups - it means that there are magazines for women (Život, Slovenka, Eva), men (Playboy, Esquire) or teenagers, for people interested in various kinds of sports and hobbies (Muscle and Fitness, Záhradkár), such as gardening, cars, tennis, knitting (štrikovanie) and many more.

**Journals** – are serious magazines written by experts (economic journals, medicine journals).

**The Internet**

Although the definition of the mass media does not cover it, it is important to mention the Internet. Nowadays many people do not hear the latest news from the TV or read about it in the papers but on the Internet. You can find there even older articles of your interest and many people would say that it is even easier than reading the papers.

However, the Internet is not only access to any type of information from the latest news to opening hours or details about products or services. These days, more and more people use e-mail to communicate and send information or documents. Many Slovaks use the Internet as a form of entertainment (zábava). Chatting, joining different discussion groups and reading blogs is becoming very popular, especially among the young. The internet has changed our lifestyles, and it has simplified (zjednodušil) communication between people. **Google** is a web search engine (prehliadač) that is able to find the information we are looking for in a couple of seconds (departures/arrivals, opening hours, addresses of institutions, essays, articles). **People use internet** to pay their bills, they listen to the on-line editions of music albums, they play on-line games, they watch films, read books on the internet and young people chat on social networks such as Facebook and ICQ. People write their blogs and others read them. You can buy things, food, holidays via (prostredníctvom) the Internet. Nowadays, people do not write letters any more, they write e-mails instead.

But you have to be very careful and do not enter your personal data because there is a danger that someone (hackers) might misuse them.

**The negative impact of television and the Internet**

For many people the TV or the Internet are the only ways of entertaining themselves. The sick, the unemployed, the disabled or lonely people normally watch it much more than people who have families or who are busy.

However, there are people, especially children and the youth, who are obsessed with watching the TV or surfing the Internet several hours a day. It damages their eyesight and keeps them from doing sports or being outside. People do not spend their time outdoors nowadays and they do not meet their friends so often. It is also one of the reasons why people do not read as many books as they did before and why the relationships are so bad.

Otázky:

1. What are mass media? Why do we call them mass media?
2. What are their main functions?
3. What types of mass media do you know? Which of them do you use most often?
4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of reading a newspaper/reading on-line edition of a newspaper?
5. What is the difference between daily and weekly newspapers?
6. What is a broadsheet?
7. What sorts of news can you find in quality papers?
8. Which Slovak, British, American broadsheets do you know?
9. What is the tabloid? What sorts of articles can you find in it?
10. Do you know any magazines for teenagers/men/women/sportsmen/photographers…?
11. What do you like reading about? What do you read more often: newspapers or magazines?
12. What are the typical sections in newspapers?
13. Which is the best-selling Slovak tabloid?
14. Do you know any journalist who writes for newspapers?
15. Where do public TV stations get their money from?
16. Where do commercial TV stations get their money from?
17. Why do companies pay a lot of money to commercial TV stations?
18. Which educational programmes do TV stations broadcast?
19. Which entertainment programmes do TV stations broadcast?
20. What is a commercial break?
21. Is there any commercial you like?
22. What do you do during commercials?
23. Which British TV stations do you know?
24. Which public TV stations are there in Slovakia?
25. What sorts of programmes does STV2 broadcast?
26. What does the News report on?
27. Which news channels do you know?
28. What radio programmes do you listen to? Which is your favourite radio station?
29. What are the disadvantages of spending too much time in front of the TV?
30. What do you use the Internet for?
31. What can you do via the Internet?
32. Why is it not healthy to spend too much time on the Internet?
33. What is Google?