

## 2 2025-09-10

### 2.1 Choose one prompt to answer

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**Prompt A:** Think of a media-related issue or question you find interesting (e.g., misinformation on social media, representation in film, streaming habits). Now imagine researching that issue without using any theory—just collecting facts. What would be missing from your findings? Reflect on how theory might deepen or improve your ability to explain or understand the issue. What questions might theory help you ask?

### 2.2 Response

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"Let's use my interest in athletics as an example. A media-related issue is that not a lot of people watch women's sports. This issue has been publicized on social media by different pages and campaigns trying to bring awareness to women's sports. Women's sports lack representation on tv as well as streaming opportunities. Using just facts from platforms like Instagram, you may not necessarily know how misrepresented women are in sports. There are a handful of star female players in multiple leagues who have gained a deserved spotlight. However, that does not fully bring awareness to how women's sports are not as prominent as men's. By just collecting facts, you may learn of some star names like Paige Bruekers and Caitlon Clark, but you will not learn about how they are not paid correctly or how they are some of the first female athletes to help break the stereotype of women's sports not having viewers. You will miss the statistics and research of growth that women's sports have had in the past year. Things missing from your findings could be things like what the selective representation is towards women's sports. Are people encouraging women's sports media in their algorithms? Furthermore, the agenda-setting theory could help imply that because these women are not getting equivalent or more air-time of their sport, streaming services

and media organizations are not telling their viewers to think about these events and to prioritize them. This not only impacts television viewership but also influences how digital media platforms prioritize content, shaping what appears in people's social media feeds and search results. You would not know this from simply viewing an ESPN highlight of a woman on Instagram, or from an Instagram post promoting female athletes. This lack of coverage is a form of media gatekeeping, where a select few control the information the public sees and what they don't. A framing theory lens would also show how even positive coverage can subtly focus on their personal lives or appearances rather than their athletic skill, reinforcing a male-centered view of sports. These decisions are often rooted in historical biases and commercial interests, which prioritize the male sports audience as the primary consumer. This further explains why even star female players receive disproportionately less coverage. Theory helps us ask questions like why things are happening. Why are people starting a campaign on social media about women's sports, but not for men? Why are women in the WNBA petitioning for better pay? Why is there a perception that women's sports are inferior compared to men? These questions cannot be answered by only observing facts, because without theory facts cannot connect numbers, statistics, and growth, and cannot provide a full storyline.

## 2.3 Word Count & Range Check

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**\*\*Word count:\*\* 0**

**\*\*Required range (MC501):\*\* 450–500 words**

**\*\*Status:\*\*  Out of range**