

Sound Bites

by

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Sound Bite - a short brief statement that supposedly summarizes what a person has spoken.

[Wikipedia](#)

Sound bites were originally used by advertisers and public relations people to capture the public's attention. From the beginning of American history, oratory, the skillful art of public speaking, was generally the purview of ministers and politicians. While oratory sermons still last about as long as the parishioners' back-ends can take (about 30 minutes), the length of political oratories since the 1960s has shortened considerably.

No longer do we hear long oratories unless they take place in political arenas such as the halls of Congress, or when political candidates are out stomping for votes. Only in such arenas do we hear the whole speech. However, often what we hear are sound bites announced by mainstream media. In the [1960s](#) these sound bites were 43 seconds long. Today, they are often less than 9 seconds.

Legacy media scrutinizes political oratories, and then dissects them, pulls apart the words and phrases, and then rewrites them, often leaving out important details that are relevant to an accurate sound bite. This selective editing often leads to misunderstanding and unintended consequences.

Political sound bites have become important for all political parties and politicians. People consume information differently than even a decade ago. Instead of reading books and newspapers, consumers have turned to technology for their information resources. This leaves them vulnerable to disreputable people, groups, and organizations with specific agendas that are counter to common sense and proper governing.

Combined with an environment of immediate gratification, social and work distractions, and consumption, we have become a "sound bite" society.

We are flooded with images and slogans, bits of information and abbreviated or symbolic messages--a culture of instant but shallow communication.

It is a society anesthetized to violence, one that is cynical but uncritical, and indifferent to, if not contemptuous of, the more complex human tasks of cooperation, conceptualization, and serious discourse. ... "The sound bite

culture ... focuses on the immediate and the obvious; the near-term, and the particular; on identity between appearance and reality; and on the self rather than larger communities. Above all, it is a society that thrives on simplicity and disdains complexity."

[Jeffrey Scheuert](#)

The danger of sound bites is their ability to degrade political and do not enable more informed decision making. They distract voters from accessing real and actual data in an attempt to move their opinion toward positions contrary to engaging in scholarly inquiry, and supporting democratic deliberation. ([Sound-Bite Saboteurs: Public Discourse, Education, and the State of Democratic Deliberation](#))

According to [Danielle Allen](#), the best protection against propaganda, against the abuse of the pleasures and discomforts of sound bites, is an education in the verbal arts and in close reading and listening. "Education fosters capacities with words," says Allen. "It is the capacity of words to help a community define itself through its practices, habits, and institutions that I take to be their most important political function." ([Kelly Devine Thomas](#))

Sound bites in politics are designed to create anger, hate, and rage against the opposition. They are neither ethical nor moral. They are counter to the concept of democracy and should not have a place in our republic.

PSALM 2:1-3 (KJV)

¹ Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? ² The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, ³ Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

The Bible