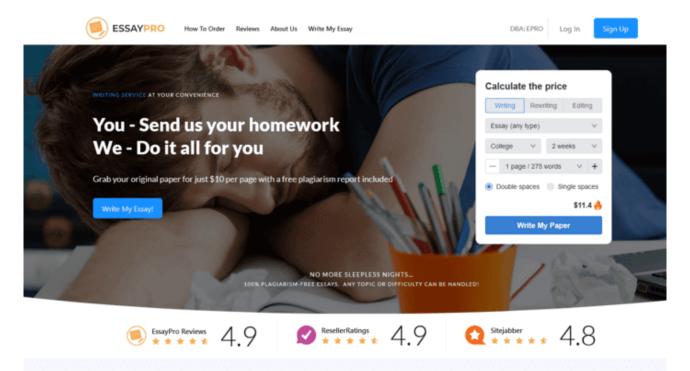
## **Media Control**



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## Media Control

In the United States, most of us probably feel that we live in a relatively free environment. We are proud to live in a country in which we are supposedly given the freedom of choice. We are proud of our freedom to voice our opinions. We feel no pressure to conform, but we do every day in ways that we are completely unaware of. We are oblivious to the messages we are constantly receiving from the media, messages that tell us how we should think, feel, and act, and this oblivion makes us all the more vulnerable.

In the U.S., the average person sees 25,000 commercials a year. These commercials are not just advertising a product. They are also advertising the values and lifestyles that surround it. Take, for example, our countries burst of patriotism after the <u>September 11th</u> attacks. Soon after the attacks, the cover model of Vogue appeared on the November issue wearing an American flag T-shirt, and a page of the magazine was dedicated to advertising the new style of "chic, patriotic" clothing. Television commercials as well have taken a turn towards patriotism, some in very subtle ways. It seems that many ads now emphasize families, comfort, sentimentality, and security, things that are desired by many U.S. citizens after the attacks. Through indirect messages, ads not only promise these

things to those who purchase their products, they also promote these desires and feelings, wrapping us all up in warm, patriotic comfort instead of encouraging any kind of critical thinking or examination of the issue at hand. Few of us are safe exempt from receiving these messages, as 98% of all homes in America own a TV set, and the average person spends four hours a day watching it. Unfortunately, it isn't just the c...

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...dcasters, which is paramount". By law television broadcasters are obligated to "serve the public interest, convenience, and necessity" and broadcast programs that inform communities on local, national, and global issues from diverse perspectives. The ideal media would reflect the interest of the entire population, not just an elite few. There are already many independent news sources though they reach a significantly smaller audience than the mainstream media. If we could turn the media so that it works for the people it could be an amazingly useful tool for informing and educating the public on vitally important issues that do not currently receive enough attention. As Lester Brown, author of the State of the World book series says, "The communications industry is the only instrument that has the capacity to educate on a scale that is needed in the time available."

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