

Shouting Matches Between Nincompoops

Go back fifty years or so, and you can find news that was, to some extent, actually news: you know, more or less factual answers to the classic journalistic questions: what, who, when, where, and how. I'm not sure exactly when the change happened, but at some point the news became entertainment. Not funny entertainment, mind you, but something aimed less at informing and more at arousing people, especially by stimulating their fears, keeping them in a state of constant apprehension, and confirming people's ideological beliefs and cementing their allegiance with one political team or another.

Discussions of current events became shouting matches between sets of nincompoops who could speak of political trivia, but had no understanding of anything truly important in social, political, and economic affairs. Along the way, truth — even a clear understanding of how truth differs from falsehood or from one's sentiments or wishful thinking — fell completely out of favor. It is now no longer “a thing,” as the lingo goes.