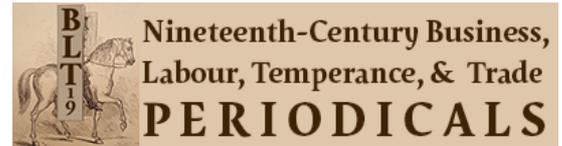


THEME: What is a Trade Journal?



Overview

Students will read several short 19th-century nonfiction texts, including excerpts from the *Stationery Trade Review*, in order to identify intended audience. They will also consider:

- (1) What is a trade journal?
- (2) How do trade journals appeal to their intended audiences?
- (3) What is the difference between a trade and a profession?

The nineteenth-century stationery trade dealt in the raw materials essential to both business and literary production—paper, writing implements, envelopes, and items of stationery, which were used by authors, artists, editors, agents, and businesspeople. Some stationers and newsagents also sold periodicals, newspapers, and books. Therefore, a publication devoted to the stationery trade sheds light on a sector of nineteenth-century business that was important to the creation and dissemination of literature and information throughout Britain. Business and professional journalism continues to be an important sector of publishing in the twenty-first century.

Academic Level(s)

- Undergraduate
- Advanced Secondary (Key Stage 5)

Subject(s):

- English Language and Literature/Language Arts
 - o Interpreting texts (19th-century nonfiction)
 - o Identifying intended audience
- History
 - o Interpreting primary sources
 - o Business/Trade history
 - o 19th-century history
 - o Provinces/Metropolis

Lesson Options

- Option 1: All students work together on 3 readings
- Option 2: 3 break-out groups + plenary discussion

Time

- OPTION 1: ALL STUDENTS WORKING TOGETHER (52-55 minutes)
 - o Introduction = 2-5 minutes
 - o Reading 1 = 20 minutes
 - o Reading 2 = 10 minutes
 - o Reading 3 = 20 minutes
- OPTION 2: BREAK-OUT GROUPS + PLENARY DISCUSSION (50 minutes)
 - o Introduction = 5 minutes
 - o 3 Break-out Groups = 20 minutes
 - o Plenary discussion = 25 minutes

Student Materials

- Handout 1: BLT19-STUDENT-What is a Trade Journal?

Background Information

In this module, students examine 3 primary texts related to nineteenth-century trade journals, including the *Stationery Trade Review*. While reading texts and answering questions, students will gather evidence about trade periodicals, the intended audience of the *Stationery Trade Review*, and the ways that trade journals appealed to readers.

- The ***Stationery Trade Review*** was a trade journal launched in Edinburgh in January 1881 to serve the needs of the stationery, leather, and fancy goods trades in the north of England, Scotland, and Ireland. The publisher/proprietor, James Glass, felt that existing publications aimed at the stationery trade focussed too much on London and not enough on the needs of businesses outside of the metropolis. The trade journal sought to provide provincial businesspeople with the latest news about the trade and new product developments because, “*Fancy Stationery must be had piping hot, or it is not worth having at all*” (STR 1 [3 Jan 1881]: 1). Regular departments included:
 - the State of the Trade;
 - Notices of New Goods;
 - Notices of New Books; and
 - Letters to the Editor.

- **Editorial Statements and Target Audience**--Readings 1 and 2 come from the ***Stationery Trade Review***. Nineteenth-century periodicals were generally launched with rousing **editorial statements** explaining the publication’s purpose, market, target audience, and aims. Such statements were essentially marketing material, so they are often very optimistic. Subsequent announcements, such as when changes were made to the publication, were similarly optimistic regardless of the business realities or motivations behind such changes. There are no surviving business records or subscription lists for the *Stationery Trade Review*, so we need to rely on the publication’s self-fashioned contents to determine intended audience (and possible gaps between intended and actual audience).

- **Advertising** was an important feature of the *Stationery Trade Review*, not only because it generated income, but also as a means of keeping members of the trade informed about the latest products and innovations. Several issues list the rates charged to advertise in the *Stationery Trade Review*; however, it is important to note that the rates advertised were not necessarily paid by repeat customers who may have been given a discounted rate by the publisher.
 - You can easily draw attention to the advertising in the publication by using the Metabotnik interface (<https://metabotnik.com/projects/260/>), which allows you to browse and zoom through all of our current collection. You can search for the advertising and items that list advertising rates using a projector, iPads, or student computers.
 - EXERCISE: Try looking in the *Stationery Trade Review* for advertisements for other trade journals [*British and Colonial Printer and Stationer and Bookseller’s Circular*; *The Paper Trade Review: A Weekly Journal for Papermakers and the Paper Stock Trade*]

- **Press Directories and Advertising**--Reading 3 is taken from *Sell’s Dictionary of the World Press*, an important **press directory** that was produced annually by a London-based advertising agency. It was a tool to help the advertising agency’s customers select where to place advertisements. In addition to listing major British newspapers and periodicals, the directory included advertising rates, updates on the publishing industry, sample ads, legal reports, and essays on important trends and innovations. While its market was primarily based in Britain, the press directory’s title suggests the global nature of Victorian business. In 1888, *Sell’s* considered trade journals and trade journalism an important innovation.

- The fact that an advertising agency is highlighting the importance of trade publishing to its customers—advertisers—is an important point for discussion. The *Sell's* article shows its biases in a number of ways. Students can use the reading to consider how news/information is shaped for a particular audience.
- **Trade vs. Profession**—The *Sell's* article highlights the hierarchical differences between professions, which generally required specialised training and knowledge, and trades, which were seen as inferior because of their association with commercial matters.
 - There are opportunities to discuss not only nineteenth-century business and social/class hierarchies, but also contemporary ideas about social/class hierarchies and work.
- **Class**—The question of trades versus professions is inherently linked to issues of class. The glossary provided with the student materials points out the definitions of the terms. Victorian tradespeople like stationers were on a higher social and economic footing than those working in manual labour. However, because they were involved in commerce, they were looked down upon by members of the upper and professional classes. The difference between classes (and trade vs. profession) can be considered in terms of education, wealth, and control over work/production.
- **Gender**—Students may assume that the stationery trade was carried out by men only, but that would be wrong. Women were business owners and ran stationery stores, newsagents, and bookstores, either alongside a spouse, children, or on their own. Evidence of women stationers can be found in publications like the 1872 *Kelly & Co. Post Office Directory of Stationers, Printers, Booksellers, Publishers, and Paper Makers of England, Scotland and Wales and the Principal Towns in Ireland* and census records.
- **Strategies for Analysing Periodicals**—Encourage students to pay attention to certain elements each time they encounter a new publication. The following are helpful for identifying the intended audience: masthead/logo, publication date, frequency/periodicity, cost, publication location (publisher), content on front/first page, whether editor is named, whether publisher is named, whether contributors are named, advertisements (who and what), regular columns/features, headings and headlines, number of pages. Have them think about, for example, how anonymous content is different from content where you know the name (and gender) of the person who wrote an article. Or, consider the ways in which advertisements suggest both intended audience and, in some cases, a relationship between the publisher/editor and a particular business (e.g., Ormiston & Glass, the publisher of the *Stationery Trade Review*, frequently advertises its stationery business in the magazine).

Discussion Questions

- See Student Handout

Follow-up and Plenary Discussion Questions (Different from Those on Student Handout)

- Is the intended audience the same as the actual audience? What differences might there be between the intended audience of the *Stationery Trade Review* and actual readers of the publication?
- The *Stationery Trade Review* sent out complimentary copies of the magazines. How do you think they identified their list of potential recipients?
- Which of the following individuals might be interested in reading or subscribing to the *Stationery Trade Review*? Why?

- NOTE: The following four names and addresses are from the 1872 Kelly & Co. *Post Office Directory of Stationers, Printers, Booksellers, Publishers, and Paper Makers of England, Scotland and Wales and the Principal Towns in Ireland*
 1. Miss S. Ashworth & Sisters, a fancy stationers located at 2 South Parade, Rochdale, Lancashire, England.
 2. John Noble, a stationer with a store at 98 Castle Street, Inverness, Scotland.
 3. James Hodgson, the owner of a company (wholesaler) that makes and sells envelopes and stationery with offices located at 16, Queenhithe, London, E.C.
 4. Macniven & Cameron, a steel pen manufacturer located at 23 to 33 Blair Street, Edinburgh, Scotland.
- Other possible identities:
 - The manager of a W.H. Smith bookstall in Euston Station in London
 - The manager of an Eason & Son railway bookstall in Dublin
 - An employee of W.H. Smith’s lending library in London
 - John R. Menzies, the Managing Director of John Menzies & Co., which owns and operates railway bookstalls in Scotland and throughout the UK.
 - A counter clerk working at a John Menzies & Co. bookstall in Stirling.

Other Possible Activities, Assignments, or Assessments

- Optional Activity 1: Make your own trade journal
 - Give students sheets of paper and ask them to work either individually or as a group to layout and design their own trade magazine
 - Describe the trade journal’s intended audience
 - Create a masthead – How does it appeal to your intended audience?
 - What goes on the front and back pages?
 - What columns will appear in every issue?
 - How frequently will the journal be published?
 - How much will it cost?
 - Can you find any existing trade journals aimed at your target audience? What are they?
- Optional Activity 2: Compare two 19th-Century Trade Journals
 - Ask students to compare issues of the *Stationery Trade Review* available at <https://metabotnik.com/projects/260/> with the 1861 issue of *The Bookseller* available at the Internet Archive: https://archive.org/stream/bub_gb_F0nQAAAAMAAJ
 - Compare the front pages: What elements appear on both? What elements are different?
 - Compare advertising: Who advertises in each? Where do the advertisements appear? Do the advertisements look similar or different? How many have images?
 - Compare correspondence/letters to the editor columns: Do they publish letters from readers or letters to the editor? What kinds of letters do they print? Why do they print letters?
 - Think about the interface for each publication. Metabotnik lets you browse and zoom, but it is nothing like reading a book; whereas the Internet Archive simulates turning the pages of a book. How has digitisation changed the way you experience a publication? Does this change matter?

- Optional Activity 3: Compare the *Stationery Trade Review* with a 21st-century online trade publication
 - o Ask students to compare issues of the *Stationery Trade Review* available at <https://metabotnik.com/projects/260/> with the website for *The Bookseller* <http://www.thebookseller.com>
 - What is the intended audience of *The Bookseller* website? Does it have anything in common with the target audience for the *Stationery Trade Review*?
 - Does the *Bookseller* website have content that is similar to the content found in the *Stationery Trade Review*? What do they have in common? What content is different?
 - Think about the experience of reading a digital publication compared to reading a print publication—are they different? How?
 - If you were going to start a trade journal today, would you create an electronic journal or a print/paper one?

About BLT19

BLT19 (Nineteenth-Century Business, Labour, Temperance, & Trade Periodicals) is a University of Greenwich pilot project aimed at encouraging students and educators to access and engage with digitised nineteenth-century periodicals. BLT19 materials for educators are available at www.blt19.org. Questions about the project or teaching materials can be directed to blt19@blt19.org.