

Political Portals

The Eagle Edition evaluated top political podcasts, Political Gabfest comes out on top

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Graphic by
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The Daily

Run by the New York Times, “The Daily” is released every weekday, with episodes ranging from 20 to 45 minutes. The show is hosted by Michael Barbaro and features journalists from the New York Times as well as experts, such as accomplished physicians and government officials. It’s perfect for early risers and morning commuters, as it is always posted by 5 a.m. CST. While “The Daily” does tend to have a liberal bias, it is still an excellent source for factual news, as they back-up their statements and feature credible guests. Some of my favorite episodes were in a two-part series called “The Candidates.” This series featured two in-depth examinations of the presidential candidates and explained their agendas and their promises. The episodes covered every part of both campaigns, from stances on climate change to economic plans. For Joe Biden’s episode, the hosts spoke with New York Times political correspondent Alexander Burns about Biden’s plans as well as his long history in politics and experience in the White House. For Trump’s episode, they dug into what he promised he would accomplish four years ago versus what he actually has accomplished, and they spoke with Peter Baker, New York Times Chief White House Correspondent, about his plan to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act and his commitments on deregulation, taxes and military spending. They fairly compared the two candidates and made sure to maintain an equal amount of criticism and praise. I loved these episodes because they felt truly non-partisan which with the current political climate is hard to find. I would recommend “The Daily” to someone who has the time to listen to it, as it does run a little long. However, the show’s length means listeners really do get the whole story and a full understanding of current events.



Political Gabfest

“Political Gabfest” is a weekly American politics podcast, with each episode running from one hour to an hour and 15 minutes. The hosts typically talk about what they would consider the biggest story that week, and go into great detail while highlighting reputable sources. When the election was near, they posted specials specifically about debates, town halls, and rallies. The show is hosted by David Plotz and co-hosted by Emily Bazelon and John Dickerson. David Plotz is the Editor at Large at Business Insider as well as the former CEO of Atlas Obscura, and Emily Bazelon is a staff writer for the New York Times Magazine and author of several books. John Dickerson is a “60 Minutes” correspondent as well as a host of the podcast “Whistlestop” and an author of many books. The hosts are extremely well-versed in politics and keep conversations casual and understandable. When they cover controversial topics such as abortion, climate change and foreign relations, they do so with a neutral position. One of my favorite episodes was posted on Oct. 16 called “Empty Notepad.” In this episode they discuss the Amy Coney Barrett Supreme Court confirmation hearings, the First Amendment and disinformation. For those who didn’t have the time to watch the entirety of the confirmation hearings, the hosts of “Political Gabfest” went over main ideas and “the highlight reel” of what happened that week and also what this meant for the rest of the hearing. Overall this podcast is great for someone who wants to dive deeper into what happened that week and really understand the government and the foundations of American democracy.



5 Things

“5 Things” is run by USA Today. The show is released seven days a week and covers the top five news stories from the day before along with a brief description of the implications of these events. It’s posted every morning and usually runs for about 10 minutes. Hosts Taylor Wilson and Claire Thornton interview professionals such as scientists and senators as well as reporters from USA Today. When the hosts do talk about partisan issues, they make sure they remain balanced by explaining both sides. This is a short podcast to start your morning, and all the information is very digestible and easy to understand. One of my favorite episodes was posted on Oct. 25 and talks about environmental racism and why minority groups have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. The episode told the story of a minority neighborhood on a chemical plant in Reserve, Louisiana. This specific area had extreme quantities of toxic gasses and as a result, an abnormally large rate of cancer. I hadn’t seen this story discussed on other podcasts, and I thought it was very relevant. This podcast has a lot of information but with that comes a lot of ads. On Spotify you are able to skip past some of them but they are so frequent it seems like you’re always skipping forward. Overall “5 Things” is a surface level podcast that tells you the bare minimum of the top 5 stories. They limit their content by stopping at only five things that happened the day before. If you’re running low on time and like the simplicity of only having to hear about the highlights, or aren’t very interested in politics but want to know the basics, this podcast is for you.



Global News Podcast

The BBC “Global News Podcast” is a great podcast for several reasons: not only does it encompass key events around the world and focus on relationships between nations, but it also contains an outside perspective of what’s happening inside American politics. The show is released twice daily on weekdays and once every Saturday and Sunday. This podcast covers stories that are not traditionally heard on local and national podcasts. It ranges anywhere from 25 to 35 minutes long and uncovers global events from business to government corruption to international economies. Some of the most interesting topics covered in this podcast have been conclusive evidence about NASA’s information on the moon, the opposition government in Libya, and the conflict with Brexit. Most of the stories brought up on the show I haven’t heard on American News sources and I find them extremely interesting. What makes this podcast special is that, aside from being posted twice a day, it spans different time zones so in most cases episodes break just hours after the news occurs. The episodes cover a plethora of topics as they spend a good amount of time on the first story and briefly skim the ones following it. The episodes are extremely well rounded and cover everything from global economies to military efforts. The hosts speak to local reporters, making the listener feel immersed in the events. I really like this podcast and its global perspective; however, since it is crucial to also be well-informed in American politics, especially now, I think this podcast should be supplemented with a U.S.-based news source. That said, it is vital that Americans are also aware of international events, and this podcast is perfect for that.

