Introduction:

Hello everyone! If you don't know already, my name is Inshara, and I'm Ellie. The topic today will focus on representation of individual identities in the media such as tv, movies, and the news. We feel this is an important topic to discuss because representation affects everyone differently. It is important to have representation because it gives viewers the ability to feel inspired by someone that looks like them, and we feel that society sometimes has trouble providing everyone with this. Not only have we observed the trend of featuring primarily white characters in TV shows and movies, but evidence also supports this. Before we get to the interviews, we want to tell you why representation of identities is so important in today's society. A study done by *Variety* magazine shows that during the 2016-2017 television season, 90% of showrunners were white. Another study from 2007-2014 shows that 75.14% of characters were white. Furthermore, I do not know about other people's opinions on this, but I loved Disney princess movies growing up. Something about seeing (what sometimes was) a strong female lead that looked like me inspired me to believe that I could provide myself with an incredible life and go on grand adventures. Additionally, when a princess looked like me, it would draw me closer to the story and made me, and millions of other kids, feel like we were royalty too. One may ask why that's such a big deal for children? Well, when you're a kid, your mind is full of wonder, and being able to feel special, like a princess, can be the most magical thing in the world. By feeling this magic, children feel special, and everyone deserves to feel special. However, African American children did not experience this feeling until 2009, 72 years after the first Disney princess movie. (and) Even though they finally got a princess - Tiana in the *Princess and the Frog* - that looked like them, she was a frog for over half the movie. Also, other ethnicities and races, like Latina and Indian children, are still waiting, 83 years later, to see that strong female lead that looks like them. This is a big deal because no one should feel excluded for such a long time just because of their skin color. When a young child sees someone that looks like them accomplishing incredible things, it can give them the mindset that they can make a difference too...everyone deserves to experience this type of inspiration. Everyone has their reasons why they may or may not feel represented and it is important to listen to them because that gives us an open-mind about what others go through. We brought a few students onto this podcast to interview them about their opinions of representation in the media. But before we do that, we would like to give our insight on media representation.

Inshara:

Being a Pakistani-American Muslim, I think it's pretty obvious why I've never felt represented in the media. Every character in the media that even remotely resembles me has almost always been an amalgamation of racist, islamophobic, or culturally offensive stereotypes. I think people forget how impactful this is on a person. Growing up, I never saw a brown person on TV who

simultaneously acted and looked like me or anyone in my community. Because of this, and this happens to a lot of underrepresented groups, I would sometimes reject my identity to fit the characters that I wanted to be like, but didn't look like. For example, when I was a kid I used to pray for the pale skin Snow White was praised for or Cinderella's iconic blonde hair. The thing is, I'm very light-skinned, so I can't even imagine how dark skinned-desis and other severely underrepresented groups feel. The interview we conducted really resonated with me, as it was a crucial reminder that while the media is becoming more inclusive, we still have a long way to go.

Ellie:
Personally, I have always felt represented in the media. While my father is Hispanic, I am very white-passing. Due to this, growing up, I always saw people who looked like me. Whether it was in advertisements, movies, or tv shows, I never felt like an outsider when I watched them. However, just because this is my experience, does not mean it is everyone else's. During these interviews, I, along with the listeners will be able to hear other people's opinions, that might just differ from our own. Now it's time for the interviews.

Conclusion:
The topic of misrepresentation has always been important to us, so we urge everyone listening to explore this topic further. The next time you start a new TV show or movie, pay attention to the minorities and see what POC, women, and minorities are saying when they want proper media representation. Obviously the root of the problem is in Hollywood, but recognizing the problem at home is the first step to media that accurately represents our diverse communities.

Another way to help uplift diversity in the media is to use your social media platforms. Support POC and minority creators, movements, and repost a diverse range of media. For example, the #ShareTheMic movement was a great movement where black women took over white women's instagram accounts for a day in order to amplify black voices.