

Name of Program:

Detecting Media Bias

Target Audience:

All Classes

Strategy for Implementation:

Large and Small Group Discussion and Activity

Time of Year to Implement:

Fall or Spring or During Elections Time/World Events

Relevant Learning Goal:

Social Responsibility

Specific Lesson Outcomes:

- Students will gain a deeper understanding of how to analyze news sources and determine media biases.

Purpose:

The program is intended to help students develop media literacy; it allows them to understand the news's biases in everyday life. There are no such things as entirely unbiased news. We're all biased, making it challenging to curate entirely objective news, which results in a culture of intense political polarization. News organizations have the power to decide which topics are important enough to cover and where to position those topics within their TV program, newspaper, or website. Those of us who seek news on the internet are bombarded with information, but not all of that information is reliable. Students will learn to cultivate news literacy skills so that they can evaluate facts from opinion. Also, to help students recognize that we live in a society where many people seek out news to confirm their own biases rather than get factual information.

Resources on Media Bias:**Abstract**

Media can influence the opinions of the masses, which conditions and influences one's day-to-day decisions. In recent years, there has been controversy over the credibility of media outlets in reporting news. Factors influencing bias include ownership of the source of income of the media outlet or a specific political or ideological stance of the outlet and its audience. On social media, the effects of

biased coverage are amplified. People who follow news on social media tend to follow news that conforms with their established views and beliefs, resulting in one's internal biases being reinforced. Therefore, we must detect bias in the news and think more about the news we are receiving.

What is media bias?

Media bias is the perceived bias of journalists and news producers within mass media in selecting events and stories reported and how they are covered.

What is media literacy?

- Media literacy is an umbrella term encompassing a variety of approaches.
- Develop critical thinking skills around all types of media.
- Build an understanding of how media messages shape our culture and society.
- Give people the tools to advocate for a changed media system.

What is confirmation bias?

Confirmation bias is the tendency to search for, interpret, favor, and recall information in a way that confirms or supports one's prior beliefs or values.

What is the Freedom of the Press?

Freedom of the press is a fundamental liberty guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution. Freedom of the press or freedom of the media is the principle that communication and expression through various media, including printed and electronic media, primarily published materials, should be considered a right to be exercised freely.

Media Bias Videos

Below are some examples of videos to showcase students that introduce media bias. Feel free to use any of the videos or a different video for the introduction of the program.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKVRVBSWspg>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_oRTDdbHwE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-Y-z6HmRgl&t=60s>

Same News, Different Perspectives

- News stories can be told from different perspectives by highlighting or omitting certain characters and facts. For instance, journalists select events, sources, and sources of the information they want to publish in their news piece, which results in bias. Journalists can also affect the reader's perception of a topic through word choice, images, attention, etc. the news media are free to publish any information or opinion they desire. This freedom, however, does not immunize them from liability for what they publish.
- For the activity, find one news story with four different media sources since students will be put into four groups. You are more than welcome to choose any news event/source. (Facebook, Twitter, Video Clips from CNN, MSBC, Fox News, etc., newspapers, etc.).
- Below are some examples of the same news, different perspectives.





AP Associated Press AP - Tue Aug 30, 11:31 AM ET

A young man walks through chest deep flood water after looting a grocery store in New Orleans on Tuesday, Aug. 30, 2005. Flood waters continue to rise in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina did extensive

[Email Photo](#) [Print Photo](#)



Two residents wade through chest-deep water after finding bread and soda from a local grocery store after

[Email Photo](#) [Print](#)

RECOMMEND THIS PHOTO

Recommend it:



RELATED

• Katrina's Effects, a PM ET

[Hurricanes & Tr](#)



AP Associated Press AP - Tue Aug 30, 8:10 PM ET

As one person looks through their shopping bag, left, another jumps through a broken window, while leaving a convenience store on the I-10 service road south, in Metairie, La. Tuesday, Aug. 30, 2005, in the

[Email Photo](#) [Print Photo](#)

RECOMMEND THIS PHOTO [Recommended Photos](#)

Recommend it:



Average (87 votes)





Planning & Preparation:

- Read through the program a week beforehand at minimum to become familiar with the content and activities. The RSL(s) may be able to help facilitate. Allow sufficient prep time to go over this with your RSL(s).
- Review the resources provided above.
- Select one news event but from different media sources (Facebook, Twitter, Video Clips from CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, etc., newspapers, etc.). Students will be paired into four groups for the activity, so you will need to select one news event from four different media sources.
- Create a Slido for asking students where do they read the news on social media, news outlets, newspapers, radio, etc., and where specifically? Whom do they follow?
- This is a guide; if you feel that presenting and portraying the program differently will help your students, feel free to do so. Also, feel free to utilize the wing liaison in any way you see fit.

Program Agenda:

Introduction

- Explain the purpose of the program. Give a general overview of what we mean by detecting media bias.
- Ask students where do they read the news on social media, news outlets, newspapers, radio, etc., and where specifically? Whom do they follow? It is highly recommended that you use a Slido to ask this question as we do not want anyone to feel uncomfortable or attacked for how they receive their news.
- Show the video of your choosing that touches on media bias.

Body of the Program

- Break students into four groups.
- Provide students with the same current event, but from different media sources (Facebook, Twitter, Video Clips from CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, etc., newspapers, etc.)
- Explain to students that while they will learn about a news event, they need to consider the following things.
 1. How the information is written.
 2. The point of view and purpose of the author or news reporter.
 3. Where does the source come from? Is the source reputable?
 4. Which source do they feel best presented the facts about the events?
 5. Did the author or news reporter share a direct opinion?
 6. How was the news presented?
- After some time, bring everyone back and ask each group to share their findings.

Conclusion

Explain to students that news topics can change over time. As news outlets report on an issue, the event may continue to unfold, and more information may be revealed later. As new evidence and information emerge, what appears to be “true” about news can shift. Encourage students to conduct substantive research beyond news sources as it will help them gather more perspective on the topic. Also, explain to students that it is essential to recognize that media outlets can report news in a biased way, potentially affecting news consumers' beliefs and altering their behaviors.

Assessment:

1. Why do you think news literacy is an important skill?
2. How does media bias impact you, your friends, peers, or family?
3. Is it the media outlets' responsibility to report events in an unbiased and neutral manner, and why?

References:

www.elsevier.com/journals/array/2590-0056/open-access-journal

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s00799-018-0261-y>

https://www.scholastic.com/americanjustice/pdfs/ABOTA_TE_Instructions_Stu%20Wksts.pdf

<http://newslit.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/To-Trust-or-Not-Media-Literacy.pdf>

<https://ed.stanford.edu/news/stanford-researchers-find-students-have-trouble-judging-credibility-information-online>

<https://www.remc.org/professionalllearning/learn-at-your-own-pace/media-literacy/detecting-bias-in-the-news/>

<https://medialiteracynow.org/what-is-media-literacy/>

<https://www.freedomforuminstitute.org/about/faq/does-freedom-of-the-press-mean-the-news-media-can-say-or-write-anything-they-want/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKVRVBSWspg>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_oRTDdbHwE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-Y-z6HmRqI&t=60s>