



Lesson Plan

Comparing Bias Across News Outlets

Lesson Overview

This lesson is aimed at improving news literacy skills through the analysis of bias in context. In this lesson, students will practice comparing the use of bias across similar stories published by different news outlets. At the end of the lesson(s), students will understand how different news outlets use bias and the impact bias has on readers' interpretation of news and events.

Level: 9th - 12th grade

Estimated Time: 2-3 45-minute class periods

Skills:

- News media literacy
- Critical analysis
- Critical reading

Objectives:

- **Analyze** media bias in context
- **Compare** media bias across different sources
- **Evaluate** how bias affects the meaning of a news article

Questions:

- Do different news sources write differently about the same topic?
- How do different news sources interpret the same story?
- How does this bias affect readers' perception of the story?

Recommended Tools:

- [AllSides Guide to Types of Media Bias](#)
- [AllSides Topics & Issues](#)
- [AllSides Balanced Newsfeed](#)
- [AllSides Media Bias Ratings™](#)



Step-by-Step Guide

Introduction

Everyone is biased — and that's okay. There's no such thing as unbiased news. Hidden media bias misleads, manipulates and divides us, so everyone should learn how to spot media bias. Many news outlets often report the same news in vastly different ways. If we don't consume a balanced news diet, we risk only hearing one perspective.

Key Terms

- Bias
- Polarization
- Balance

Activity:

- As a class, briefly review the [AllSides Guide to Types of Media Bias](#) or open with a recap of what the class learned if they completed Lesson 1.1: *What is Media Bias?*
- Introduce students to the [AllSides Balanced Newsfeed](#). The AllSides Balanced Newsfeed includes a Headline Roundup in which we compile three articles, one from the left, the center, and the right, that report the same story.
- Choose a Headline Roundup of interest and read the AllSides Summary as a class.
- Break students into three groups and determine which group will read the article from the left, center, and right.
- Students will annotate the article for instances of bias, referring to the [AllSides Guide to Types of Media Bias](#) as necessary.
- At the end of the reading period, each group will present their findings. Students should discuss and take note of the differences they see in their articles compared to the other groups.

*Watch out for this symbol, which indicates possible limited access to articles:  Possible Paywall

Homework/Formative Assessment

- Students write a brief reflection on the class discussion:
 - What is the title of the AllSides Headline Roundup discussed in class today?
 - What is the title of the article and news outlet your group was assigned?
 - What types of media bias are present in this article?
 - Did any or all of the three articles present the Headline Roundup topic differently than the others? Explain.
 - How do different types of bias affect the meaning of the story?
 - In your opinion, would a reader miss out on other perspectives if they *only* read your article? Why or why not?



Summative Assessment

- Each student chooses a Headline Roundup of interest to them and presents their findings either in a presentation or a written report. Projects should include the following:
 - The AllSides Headline Roundup title
 - A brief summary of the topic
 - The title of each article and news outlet included in the Headline Roundup
 - A brief summary of each article, including types of bias found (*occasionally*, there will be very little or no bias found)
 - An explanation of how bias affects the interpretation of each article
 - An a conclusion that outlines how each outlet covered the same story differently

*AP Language students may want to consider how different rhetorical strategies/bias affect the same topic, resulting in three distinct pieces of writing.