



AllSidesTM
for schools

Congratulations!
you received 5 Stars!



App Name: AllSides for Schools

App Link: <https://www.allsides.com/schools>

In App Purchases? No

In App Ads? If yes, are they 1st party or 3rd party ads?

No

Subject: Apps for Students, News and Magazines, PHSE and Citizenship, Reference, Social Studies, Teaching Resources

Learning Outcomes: Organisational and Productivity Skills, Engagement and Usability

Ages: Secondary School Apps (13-18 Years), 18+ Years of Age

EAS Star Rating: 5



Summary:

AllSides helps news-seeking readers navigate the bias and misinformation sadly common in modern media. It presents each news story with content from news outlets with different biases giving a left, center and right perspective. The AllSides for Schools section of AllSides provides educational materials and lesson resources to help students understand the bias intrinsic in any article and within their own beliefs.

You can access AllSides through its iOS and Android apps and website on any device. However, the AllSides for Schools content which forms part of this review, is only available on the website. For direct use of the AllSides content, we recommend kids are aged 13+.

EAS Review:

What is AllSides app?

The AllSides service aims to correct misinformation and reveal bias in news sources and its audience of readers. Current events stories appear on the service but are from other sources. Each news event has articles from different sources providing information and opinion from different perspectives.

For example, when you access a news event, there will be three separate sources of coverage dealing with that issue. The three sources have the headings, 'From the Left', 'From the Center', and 'From the Right', reflecting their bias.

More general information on the site explains how writers' biases manifest differently. Seeing how publishers might consciously or unconsciously adjust the emphasis to influence their audience helps readers spot and question it.

The site also has tools and resources to help its users recognise their personal biases. Knowing how they are predisposed to interpret events helps readers reflect on their opinions and prompt them to look more at facts than feelings.

For this review of Allsides, we have looked at the AllSides for Schools service. This adds lesson plans, classroom activities, and general resources to the main content.

What we love about AllSides app

You may have heard of the filter bubble. Algorithms and personalised searches filter the information we view according to our past actions and known preferences leading to everything we see confirming our opinions and rejecting other standpoints.

The filter bubble is this limited and highly personal view of the world unchallenged by counterpoints.

In challenging this unwanted side-effect of digital information, AllSides provides valuable services to general users by showing different points of view without prioritising them.

The AllSides for Schools sections help build an awareness of bias and the importance of diverse sources into the foundations of kids' information-gathering skillsets. The good-quality teaching resources support teachers in directly addressing the problem.

AllSides acknowledges that bias is unavoidable but strives to achieve a fair balance. It highlights, manages and mitigates bias with an open and clear set of processes. The site details these in articles explaining how the AllSides staff measure and detect bias, respond to it, and what strategies they follow.

This openness provides a firm foundation for readers to build their trust in AllSides's editorial content.

This trust is important because the site is fulfilling a valuable role. Staying up to date with current events is important, but few people can dedicate enough time to understand them from all perspectives, even if they do want to step out of their echo chambers or, even more importantly, not pass on biases to students.

What skills does it teach?

AllSides helps its users learn to detect and reflect upon bias in the media. These are important skills that kids will find beneficial in many subjects.

Kids using the site will learn about current events and their implications.

What age is it appropriate for?

The content presented by AllSides reflects the output of media organisations, so it will touch on adult themes, although not graphically. It is text-reliant with a similar required literacy level to what is needed to read a newspaper.

However, teachers may use the site to gather information, perspectives and ideas which they can use and adapt for kids.

Is AllSides app easy to use?

The AllSides website presents its articles very similar to any other news site except for the three perspectives accompanying each one. These are clearly labelled to help readers identify them.



The AllSides for Schools content comes in convenient formats for teachers to use, with the lesson plans available as downloadable PDF files.

How will students benefit?

Kids are growing up in a world where the norm is to expect content to be delivered to them rather than seek it out. They also expect it to match their preferences. This might be acceptable (albeit potentially limiting) for entertainment, but it does not do kids any favours for the future when it comes to their worldview.

A constantly reinforced viewpoint might lead to an inability to collaborate with others with different opinions. Rather than viewing differences of opinion as part of life, the filter bubble can result in an us-and-them or right-and-wrong mentality that is not good for society or individuals.

AllSides for Schools will help students avoid this trap.

How will parents benefit?

AllSides is a great choice for anyone to use to keep up-to-date on current events. The stories are from well-known news outlets, and the multiple sources for each event help readers build a holistic worldview rather than a reinforcement of existing prejudices and unchallenged opinions.

Understanding bias and reflecting on the news from a more balanced perspective is a great example to set for kids. It is great for kids to build opinions, but we want them to be able to justify them and reflect on their validity. The information on AllSides will help parents converse with their kids and guide them to considered opinions rather than knee-jerk reactions.

How will teachers benefit?

As well as helping teachers to understand multiple perspectives regarding current events, which can help inform many conversations teachers might have with their students, AllSides provides lesson materials.

Many teachers will not have had training on addressing bias and the problem of the filter bubble, and off-the-shelf teaching materials are limited. The updating stories give teachers current and relevant news to illustrate bias, and the lesson resources will speed up and inspire planning for learning sessions.

How much does AllSides app cost?

You can access the AllSides articles for free, but the site will display advertisements alongside them. The AllSides for Schools content is very usable but limited if you do not subscribe.

Individual educators can subscribe at a 50% discount over the usual rate. They gain an ad-free experience, educational-focused newsletters, extra lesson plans, and a save-article option.



Schools and districts can subscribe to receive the same benefits plus a COPPA and FERPA-compliant account that supports multiple simultaneous student log-ins.

An interesting option is available for altruistic individuals or organisations that want to help students make sense of the current news. They can sponsor a school or district to receive the AllSides for Schools content.

Is AllSides app safe to use?

Unless accessed through a subscription, AllSides shows advertisements alongside its content.

The articles it publishes are from various media outlets and cover the current news. As such, adult themes will appear if part of a news event such as a crime. This could potentially include bad language. The general tone and level of detail are similar to what you would find on any mainstream news website or newspaper.

What can AllSides app improve on?

AllSides is a US-based website with most of its coverage focused on domestic US events. Readers based in the US might wish for more international news coverage, although it is not entirely absent.

The information about bias and how to detect it is relevant to all countries, but the articles they are applied to are less likely to interest non-US residents.

Overall rating of the app.

AllSides for Schools is responding to an important issue with a responsible and useful service. The website's general news outlet provides an excellent news source enhanced by how easy it makes it for readers to seek alternative interpretations of events.

The school-specific content is an excellent source of material to help teachers and students navigate the issues of media bias and misinformation. AllSides for Schools is a five-star app.

