

Analysing Bias in the Media

Instructor Robin Perez

Course: Research

Grade level: 6-8

Unit: Research Process

Time Length – 5-6 days

Materials needed:

- access to technology for the media clips
- printed worksheets
- colored pencils or highlighters

Rationale: News and other media is polarized by opinions and sensationalism. Students need the skills to be able to rate the reliability and validity of the media they are watching. Not only that, but they also need to be able to identify the biased words, sights and sounds that are used to persuade an audience to think or feel that way. Students will be able to use these skills in order to analyze persuasive media.

Standards Indicator(s)

LAFS.6.RI.3.8: Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

LAFS.7.RI.3.8: Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.

LAFS.8.RI.3.8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

Learning objectives:

- Students will be able to evaluate the validity and reliability of a news article.
- Students will be able to identify bias in text, audio, and visual content and analyze the impact it may have on viewers.
- Students will be able to create a version of the text that shows less bias by removing loaded language and adding, removing or revising the types of evidence used.

Accommodations: Students have been given a written version as well as the video version of their media clips to facilitate learning styles. Students who are English Language Learners will have access to google translate to help facilitate language issues as well as a group of peers to converse with. Extra time is allowed for individuals who need it as well as small group instruction to help facilitate learning.

Background: Students should already be familiar with the CRAAP validity and reliability checklist. If not, use a separate day to introduce it and role model how it should be used. You should do the same for the Bias Analysis. A separate much simpler bias analysis worksheet has also been attached for struggling students.

Procedures:

DAY 1: Validity and Reliability

Part 1 (15-20 minutes) Introduction:

Students will be put into groups and will unpack the learning objectives, steps and expectations for the project. Students will read the rubric and write out their goals for the project on the board. Group roles will be revisited and outlined.

Part 2 (30 minutes): Activity:

Students will watch their video clips and use the CRAAP checklist to find out all they can about the source and determine how valid and reliable the source is.

Closure/Evaluation:

Student groups will share how valid or reliable their source is with the class and explain the score the media clip was given.

DAY 2: Bias Analysis

Part 1 (15-20 minutes): Students will sit in their groups and rewatch the media clips. Students will be given a written version of their clip. Students will color negative connotative words in blue and positive connotative words in yellow.

Part 2 (20-30 minutes):

1. Students will answer the questions about the words, sights and sounds in their clip and analyze the impact that the biased words or phrases have on the audience. Students may not finish this step in one class period.

Closure: For closure and assessment, each student will answer an exit ticket answering the following question:

Which words in this sentence have a negative connotation?

Lupita eventually decided to obey her annoying parents by heaving the noxious smelling trash out to the sidewalk.

Assessment: Students will be assessed on their exit ticket.

DAY 3: Bias Analysis and Rewriting the Text

Part 1 (15-20 minutes): Students will sit in their groups and finish the Bias Analysis questions.

Part 2 (5 minutes): In a teacher led moment, students will be reminded of the expected outcomes of the project.

Part 3 (25-30 minutes): As a group, students will rewrite the text of their media clip without bias. This will be handed in to the instructor for use tomorrow.

Closure: For closure and assessment, each student will answer an exit ticket answering the following question:

Rewrite the following sentence to eliminate bias.

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Lupita eventually decided to obey her annoying parents by heaving the noxious smelling trash out to the sidewalk.

Assessment: Students will be assessed on their exit ticket.

DAY 4: Peer Editing

Part 1 (15-20 minutes): Students will sit in their groups and be given another group's rewritten text. Students will take a look at the text and color code it just as in the Bias Analysis worksheet. (Words with a negative connotation are colored blue and words with a positive connotation are marked in yellow.) The group will come up with 3-4 suggestions to further eliminate bias.

Part 2 (25-30 minutes): Students will return the texts and implement the advice into creating a final draft of the revised media clip and preparing for their presentation the next day.

Closure: Class members will leave their answers to the following question on a whiteboard, stick it notes or digital discussion board. Then the teacher and students will discuss trends and responses as a group.

Question: What is the most difficult thing about making a text that is unbiased?

DAY 5: Presentations

Part 1 (5 minutes): Review the rubric with students and remind everyone of the learning goals and expectations.

Part 2 (40 minutes): Groups will

1. show the media clip,
2. share the validity and reliability of the clip
3. read the group's analysis of the bias in the clip
4. read the revised text

Closure & Assessment (5 minutes): Class members will turn in their projects to the teacher for final assessment. Students will reflect about whether or not they feel that they have reached their learning goals and how efficient this learning process was.

Bias in the Media

This project is designed for you to not only find and identify bias in the media but be able to write the same information in a more neutral tone in order to allow others to make up their own opinion on the subject, rather than being blindly led by other's opinions. There are 4 video clips from mainstream news sources on a related topic. Each group will be in charge of analyzing and rewriting their news article so that it does not reflect bias.

Use the following steps to complete your assignment:

1. Rate the validity and reliability of each of a media clip using the CRAAP checklist.
2. Then identify and analyze the bias in your clip by using the Bias Analysis worksheet.
3. As a group, rewrite the text of the media clip to remove bias. Replace the biased words and phrases with more neutral terms. Delete biased evidence or add other evidence to promote a balance of evidence.
4. Check your work with a different group. To peer edit another group's work, repeat step 2 on the rewritten media clip. Give 3-4 recommendations to the group on improving their work.
5. Report back to the group by showing the original media clip. Tell the class about how reliable and valid your clip is and give your analysis of the bias. End by reading your revised text.

Align your response according to the following rubric which will be used to grade your group.

	Excellence-50 Points	Proficiency-40 Points	Emerging-30 Points
Validity and Reliability Check	Accurately assesses the validity and reliability of the source	Overlooks some issues that impact the validity or reliability of the source	Overlooks important factors regarding validity and reliability
Identifying Bias in the Source Document	Accurately identifies biased words, phrases, images, and sounds	Identifies many biased words and phrases but may be missing images and sounds	Fails to identify key biases in words, images, and sounds
Presenting Unbiased Information	The rewritten text replaces 85% or more of biased words and phrases with more neutral terms	The rewritten text replaces 70% or more of biased words and phrases with more neutral terms	The rewritten text replaces less than 70% of biased words and phrases with more neutral terms
Revising and clarifying biased evidence	Adds, removes or clarifies most of the biased evidence.	Adds, removes or clarifies much of the biased evidence.	Fails to add, remove or clarify much of the biased evidence.

Validity and Reliability C.R.A.A.P. Checklist

Use this list to determine how valid your source is. Answer the questions and rank each category by how reliable the source is. (1 is completely unreliable and 10 is very reliable). Add up the scores to give you an idea of the quality of the source. The higher the score is, the more reliable and valid the source.

Currency.....

- When was it published? _____
- Has the information changed or updated since then? _____
- Is the information current or out of date? _____

Relevance.....

- Is the information related to your topic or answer your questions? _____

Authority.....

- Who is the author or the sponsor of your information? _____
- What organizations are affiliated or connected to the information? _____
- Does the URL tell you anything about your information? _____
- Is the author qualified to write about the topic? _____
- What experts are used to present the topic? _____

Accuracy.....

- Is the information supported by credible evidence? _____
- Can you verify the information on another credible source? _____
- Are there spelling or grammar errors? _____
- Has the information been reviewed or changed? _____

Purpose.....

- What is the purpose of the information? Inform, Persuade, Entertain _____

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- Does the author/sponsor make their purpose clear? _____
- Is the information a fact, an opinion, or propaganda? _____

Add up your score. 40-50 is very reliable. 25-30 is somewhat reliable. Under 25 is not reliable.

Analysing Bias for Beginners

Bias is a way of thinking that tells only one side of a story. Most media has a bias in one way or another. It can lead the person to have a false impression of a situation or an incomplete picture of events. It is very important to be able to identify how biased your information is in your potential sources so that you are not misled or spreading false information unknowingly.

Bias can be found by looking closely at how the author describes something as well as by examining the quantity and type of evidence used. Examine the following sentences and look at the individual word choices used which will give a clue to the bias. Text that has a heavy bias is often said to be using loaded language. To help you analyze these sentences, underline verbs, adjectives, nouns, and adverbs that seem to mean more than what the word means in the dictionary. Then determine if those words have a positive or negative connotation to them. Words with a positive connotation are colored yellow, and negative connotation words will be colored blue. If a word seems neutral, don't highlight the word.

Example: Native Americans were forcibly removed from their ancestral lands by white settlers.

Using evidence, what bias does this sentence seem to hold? The author feels that the Native Americans were unfairly treated because he uses the words "forcibly removed" instead of choosing something with a more positive connotation.

Now you try it!

1. European settlers, fleeing persecution in their homeland, gradually took over the lands of the native inhabitants.

Using evidence, what bias does this sentence seem to hold? _____

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- Native Americans left their lands to European colonists, sometimes with a treaty and sometimes only leaving after much bloodshed.

Using evidence, what bias does this sentence seem to hold? _____

What impact might a textbook have on students if it used the first sentence to teach history? _____

What impact might a textbook have on students if it used the example sentence to teach history? _____

Which of the three sentences do you feel should go into a textbook and why? _____

Bias Analysis

Complete your analysis of your news report by following these steps.

Step 1. Watch the media clip assigned to you. Go to your written transcription and underline verbs, adjectives, nouns, and adverbs that seem to infer more than what the word means in the dictionary. Color negative connotations in blue and positive connotations in yellow.

Step 2. Analyze the bias in the words said on the newscast. Answer the following questions:

1. What type of words does the author use to describe the topic?

2. What type of bias does the author show because of this word choice?

3. What type of evidence does the author use (statistics, interviews with individuals, expert opinions, video, etc.)?

4. Are any of the facts or evidence used seem shocking or surprising? Take a moment to check facts by using online fact checkers. What are the correct facts?

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5. Are multiple points of view represented? If so, what are the examples, if not, what examples would be needed?

6. Does the amount of evidence or type of evidence show a bias? How does it show a bias?

Step 3. Analyze the pictures and sounds on the newscast. Answer the following questions:

1. What types of images are used in the newscast? Do they have a negative or positive emotion attached to them?

2. What type of bias does the author show because of the images used?

3. What types of sounds are used in the newscast (think of the tone as well as sounds)? Do they have a negative or positive emotion attached to them?

4. What bias is shown through the sounds used?

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didn't get the vetting it should have had I think we need to be careful we don't have religious tests in this country senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham slamming the move is a self-inflicted wound in the fight against terrorism Trump firing back on Twitter accusing the two of always looking to start World War three.

The reaction worldwide was swift. Canada's Prime Minister tweeting this photo welcoming a refugee said his country would take those banned by the US, and Iran's Foreign Minister attacked Trump's order blasting it as a "great gift to extremists and their supporters".

Late Sunday, the new head of homeland security John Kelly tried to clear up confusion insisting green card holders will not be blocked from returning to the US saying it's in the national interest. White House officials backed up their boss comparing Trump's ordered action taken by President Obama in 2011 restricting visas to Iraqi refugees after a threat. "I can't imagine too many people out there watching this right now think it's unreasonable to ask a few more questions from foreigners traveling in and out of Libya and Yemen before being let loose in the United States".

"I think in terms of the upside being greater protection of our borders of our people it's a small price to pay."

TODAY. "President Donald Trump's Travel Ban Sparks Nationwide Protests | TODAY." *You Tube*, YouTube, 30 Jan. 2017, www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xd7Dqe7F90.

Media Clip # 2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ns0JdlYKz14> (0:01 to 3:26 on the video)

"The president can act 100% lawfully to keep people out of this country from 7 countries that we did not have the proper information to ensure that they were coming into this country with the appropriate means and motives. If at some point the president doesn't have the power as given to him in law to protect this country, I think that really questions what a slippery slope we are on." That was White House press secretary Sean Spicer earlier today insisting that President Trump's temporary travel ban is completely constitutional and of course necessary. Now we are still waiting for the decision from the 9th circuit of appeals regarding that executive order. And earlier today President Trump took to Twitter to slam the court system tweeting, I quote "Big increase in traffic into our country from certain areas, while our people are far more vulnerable, as we wait," you know "for what should be EASY D[ecision]."

Joining us now with reaction, senior advisor to the President, Stephen Miller. Steve, good to see you, my friend.

Hey, good to be back on, thanks Sean.

All right, the fact that this keeps being referred to by a very dishonest media as a muslim ban, even was brought up by one of the judges in the 9th circuit. And he even by his own estimation said about 85% of muslims worldwide are not impacted. Let me put up on the screen so everybody can see the 43 plus muslim majority countries which is about 90% of muslims worldwide aren't impacted by this. You know, all of these countries are not impacted, so the question is, how do you react to the dishonesty, A, in the media and in the response of these groups and before the 9th circuit?

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Sean you are right, it is extremely dishonest and it is frankly contemptible the way that false statements have been made about the President's lawful, necessary and fully constitutional action. You've done a great job, Sean in putting up the statutes up on the screen for everyone on the screen to see clear. 212 F, 8 U.S.C. 1182, this is the apex of presidential power delegated to the president by Congress and by the constitution to suspend the entry of aliens into the United States. Let's be very clear about this. No alien in a foreign land has a right to demand entry into the United States of America. They can never have such a right. Rights adhere to people living inside the United states of America. Period.

And politicians Stephen, should not have the right to gamble with the lives of Americans for the convenience or lack of inconvenience for those that we are generously, I would argue, allowing to visit this country.

That's such a great point. We admit 80 million people a year into our country as travelers every single year through airports, land ports, sea ports. The idea that even modest sensible restrictions can't be put in place to protect the safety and security of the American people defies description, Sean. It's just as simple as that. I can give you example after example, chapter and verse of individuals admitted into our country that went on to commit or attempt to commit heinous acts of terror. Now many of these individuals implicated in terrorism or terror related activities are from these seven countries, Sean.

News, Fox. "Stephen Miller: Travel Ban Is Lawful and Necessary." *You Tube*, YouTube, 8 Feb. 2017, www.youtube.com/watch?v=ns0JdIYKz14.

Media Clip # 3

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Zlru8gsqWw

The sights and sounds of Mogadishu mingles with the aromas of Africa, but this is Minnesota-home to the largest population of Somalis in North America. They are proudly Somali, avidly American, and newly fearful. "You know, we Muslims we haven't done anything. You know, we've got the community, we contribute to the well-being of the community." "We're all American no matter if you're white, black, African, Mexican- anybody. We all, we all the same we all bleed the same." "Say hello to the new America about to pack our bags and get out of here, maybe."

President Donald Trump's ban on refugees from Somalia and six other countries has spawned protests at airports across the US, but it strikes especially close to home here in the Minneapolis neighborhood known as Little Mogadishu. "And a lot of people are angry out there, including me, because I have family in Yemen and I can't go visit because I can't come back into the United States and this is where I consider my home."

Ilhan Omar, the first Somali American woman elected to public office says the order makes many Muslim Americans feel unwelcome here. "It feels as if the country that we believed would be

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welcoming to all of us, is now turning its back on us. This is clear it's a Muslim ban and it's supposed to further divide and exploit the ignorance and the fear that some people might have.

Even before President Trump, the US government has found there is a problem with violent extremism here. A study by Congress in 2015 found 250 Americans that either left or tried to leave to join ISIL. Of those, one in four was from Minnesota. In September, a knife-wielding Somali American college student wounded ten people at a Minnesota shopping center. An ISIL linked website called him a warrior, but many here say targeting all residents of several Muslim nations is unfair and in the case of Iraq and Syria, it's persecuting the victims of US military policy.

“We have the mechanisms, we have the resources to monitor people we suspect. Okay, but that does not mean that they're for every old lady or every old man, every child who carries a name Abdi, or Jama, or Abdullah, or Muhammad should be seen as a suspect.”

That fear strikes not just the huddled masses who yearn to live here, but also the hyphenated Somalia, Yemeni, and Iraqi-Americans who were born here. John Hendren, al Jazeera, Minneapolis

English, Al Jazeera. “US-Somali Community Fears Trump's Travel Ban | Al Jazeera English.” *You Tube*, YouTube, 31 Jan. 2017, www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zlru8gsqWw.

Media Clip #4

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A2v0NrWr_DE

In 90 seconds, Donald Trump's travel ban explained

Trump's controversial new executive order has sparked global protests. It bars citizens of 7 Muslim-majority countries from entering the US. These citizens are blocked from entering the US for 90 days. Refugee admission are suspended for 120 days with “case by case” exceptions. Preference is given for Christian over Muslim refugees from the Middle East.

The order reduces the no. of refugees allowed to enter the US in 2017 and suspends the entry of all Syrian refugees indefinitely. The ban will help “keep radical Islamic terrorists out of the US”, claims Trump. “We know who is coming into this country. The safety of the American citizens, the safety of our country has got to be paramount.” But it doesn't apply to the nationalities of those behind the 9/11 attacks... such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Egypt.

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Opponents argue the ban violates the fifth amendment right to due process. While its preferential treatment of Christians... violates the first amendment on freedom of religion.

Telegraph, The. "Donald Trump's Travel Ban Explained - in 90 Seconds." *You Tube*, YouTube, 30 Jan. 2017, www.youtube.com/watch?v=A2v0NrWr_DE.