

**News Analysis Assignment:
Identifying Framing Strategies in the News**

Due date: Friday, Mar 14, 6 pm

Purpose and Skills

In this assignment, you will analyze the “frames” news organizations use to convey information to the public and employ framing techniques to create your own news headlines. Through this process, you will develop the following skills that are foundational both in this discipline and in other disciplines/careers:

- **Media literacy skills:** Recognize and analyze how different frames are employed by news media in the real world
- **Creative thinking:** Apply class concepts (such as framing) by using these concepts to inform your thinking and writing
- **Reflection:** Active and thoughtful reflection is an important aspect of learning as it helps you identify what you’ve learned and think about how it might be useful in your future

Knowledge

This assignment will also help you to become familiar with the following important content knowledge in this discipline:

- Framing as an analytic concept for understanding media
- The use of specific media frames – including episodic, thematic, strategy, and policy framing – in real world contexts
- Visual and text-based framing strategies

Individual Assignment: This work needs to be completed on your own. While it is okay to talk to other students about the assignment, you should not collaborate in actually completing the assignment. All the work you turn in needs to be your own work.

Task

This assignment consists of five key parts. First, you will read and analyze the frames employed in two articles (Activities 1-2). Then, you will step into the reporter’s role by creating headlines for and choosing photos to accompany two additional articles (Activities 3-4). Finally, you will respond to a brief reflection prompt (Activity 5).

IMPORTANT: for some of the tasks you are asked to complete, you will add comments. When you save the document to turn in, save it as a Word document, which will maintain your comments. If you save it as a pdf, your comments are likely to be cut off. Make sure the document you turn in has all of your comments on it.

Framing Definition Reminders

- *Episodic Framing*: Focuses on an individual person or example related to an issue
- *Thematic Framing*: Focuses on an issue at large, the “bigger picture,” conditions that led to issue/context
- *Strategy Framing* (horse race coverage): Focuses on winners v losers; treats politics like a sport/game
- *Policy Framing*: Focuses on candidates’ platforms, details about policies and issues

Checklist

☒ **Activity 1:**

- ☒ Highlight two instances of strategy framing (5 points)
 - ☒ Explain why it is strategy framing in comment on document (5 points)
- ☒ Highlight two instances of policy framing (5 points)
 - ☒ Explain why it is policy framing in comment on document (5 points)

☒ **Activity 2:**

- ☒ Highlight two instances of episodic framing (5 points)
 - ☒ Explain why it is episodic framing in comment on document (5 points)
- ☒ Highlight two instances of thematic framing (5 points)
 - ☒ Explain why it is thematic framing in comment on document (5 points)

☒ **Activity 3:**

- ☒ Write a strategy frame headline (5 points)
- ☒ Insert strategy frame photo into document (5 points)
- ☒ Write a policy frame headline (5 points)
- ☒ Insert policy frame photo into document (5 points)

☒ **Activity 4:**

- ☒ Write a thematic frame headline (5 points)
- ☒ Insert thematic frame photo into document (5 points)
- ☒ Write an episodic frame headline (5 points)
- ☒ Episodic frame photo into document (5 points)

☒ **Activity 5:**

- ☒ Complete the reflection (20 points)

All activities can be completed within this document. Please make a copy for your own use.

Activity 1: Read and highlight “Biden Marks 1-year Anniversary of Climate, Health Law, Says ‘We’re Investing in All of America’” (AP News)

- First, read the article below
- Then, use the comment function to highlight and comment on **two** instances of **strategy framing** and **two** instances of **policy framing**. **Make sure to highlight all of the language you are referring to.**
- In your comment, identify whether the passage uses strategy or policy framing, and why you identify it as such

Article: Biden marks 1-year anniversary of climate, health law, says ‘we’re investing in all of America’ (AP News)

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden proclaimed Wednesday his administration is “turning things around” for Americans when it comes to the economy, with his signature climate, health care and tax package giving people “more breathing room” on prices and investing anew in clean energy jobs.

“We’re leaving nobody behind,” Biden told a packed East Room filled with lawmakers, advocates and people who have benefited from his economic policies. “We’re investing in all of America — in the heartland, and coast to coast.”

His remarks were delivered on the anniversary of the so-called Inflation Reduction Act. Through corporate tax increases, stronger tax enforcement, drug pricing reform, and investment in renewable energy, the bill proposed to reduce the federal deficit by 300 billion dollars and reduce carbon emissions by 40 percent over the next ten years.

The White House is on a sprint to connect what they say is a popular economic agenda with an unpopular incumbent president, as polls show a majority of voters consistently disapprove of Biden’s handling of the economy even amid signs of a U.S. economic upswing.

The inflation rate has cooled over the past year to a more manageable 3.2% annually, while job growth has stayed solid and the economy has avoided the recession that many analysts said would be needed to bring down prices. On Tuesday, the Census Bureau reported that retail sales have climbed 3.2% over the past 12 months.

That level of consumer spending led the investment bank Goldman Sachs to raise its expectations for overall growth in the third quarter to an annual rate of 2.2%. The Atlanta Federal Reserve’s GDPNow estimate jumped even higher with the forecast of third-quarter growth reaching 5%.

The evidence of economic strength has yet to translate into political gains for Biden, who has devoted the past several weeks to traveling the U.S. He’s emphasized the roughly \$500 billion worth of investments by private companies that have been spurred by his policies.

Democrats have also sought to highlight the health benefits of the bill for the American electorate, which include lowering Affordable Care Act health premiums and capping out-of-pocket Medicare costs to \$2,000.

Aides say the mood of the American electorate has been dampened in recent years by outside forces such as a once-in-a-century pandemic and said it would take time for laws signed by Biden to have an impact on voters' sentiments. As of September, 2023, President Biden's nationwide approval rating sits at just 40%, yet staffers remain optimistic.

"Once those investments happen, once those jobs are created, once those people are at work, in red districts, purple districts, blue districts, it's very hard to walk away from that," White House energy adviser John Podesta said Wednesday. "And so I'm quite confident that as the public really begins to feel the presence of this law in their lives, particularly on that workforce side, it's here to stay."

Activity 2: Read and highlight “High cancer risk plagues Louisiana town near chemical plants” (CBS News)

- First, read the article below
- Then, use the comment function to highlight and comment on **two** instances of **thematic framing** and **two** instances of **episodic framing**
- In your comment, identify whether the passage uses episodic or thematic framing, and why you identify it as such

Article: High cancer risk plagues Louisiana town near chemical plants (CBS News)

Reserve, Louisiana — In a Louisiana town of 10,000 people, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said there is some of the most toxic air in America. More than 100 petrochemical plants and refineries dot the corridor between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, often referred to as "cancer alley."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that, nationwide, "for every 100,000 people, 403 new cancer cases are reported and 144 people die of cancer" annually. However, in the town of Reserve—situated in the center of "cancer alley"—the cancer risk is almost 50 times the national average, according to the EPA.

Robert Taylor has lived there most of his 78 years. Even his family cemetery is surrounded by a refinery. He said his mom, sister, uncle and nephew all died of cancer.

"As I stand here, it's overwhelming to me. All of my folks are here. I will eventually wind up here," he said.

For decades, people in Reserve have had health problems ranging from dizziness and severe headaches to liver and lung cancer. Many believe a plant, hundreds of yards from some of their homes, is the source.

The Denka Performance Elastomer plant, owned by DuPont until 2015, makes chloroprene, a chemical the EPA calls a "likely human carcinogen." While the EPA reports the U.S. is home to 13,500 chemical plants, Denka is the only plant in the country producing this especially deadly chemical.

In a new study obtained first by CBS News, the University Network for Human Rights found actual cancer rates surrounding Denka are higher than expected. Those living in homes surveyed within a mile of the plant had cancer rates of nearly 7%. Go a half mile farther away and the cancer rate drops significantly, by almost 40%.

Denka said it hasn't had the opportunity to see the new study and cites a state tumor registry that does not show a cancer increase in Reserve. The company said the EPA's chloroprene concerns are "based on faulty science," resulting in a "dramatically inflated risk factor."

Taylor said he's concerned about children in the community. "What really drove us was the fact that we've got a school right here, with 400 to 500 black children in it, 1,500 feet from the fence line," Taylor said.

Taylor is a lead plaintiff in a suit against Denka. He recently took his fight 7,000 miles to Denka's headquarters in Tokyo. CBS News was there as his team tried to confront company executives. They were turned away. Denka later told them they couldn't meet because of pending litigation.

"They demonstrated to us, today that they don't care about what's happening to the people in Reserve, Louisiana," Taylor said.

He said he shouldn't have to move.

"Why should I move? How can I move?" he said. "I struggled all my life to build this. Here's the American dream, to own your own home. Right now, in good conscience, who would I actually sell this house to? What poor, unsuspecting family would I trick into moving into this death trap?"

Activity 3: Come up with headlines and photos to accompany the article below about a 2020 Presidential debate

For this activity, first read the anonymized article below and then answer the following questions:

1. Imagining that you were the reporter, come up with a headline (one sentence) to accompany the article that uses strategy framing
 - a. **Strategy frame headline:** Who was the Victor, Dominating the Second Presidential Debate: Biden, Trump, or the Mute Button?
 - b. **In 1-2 sentences, explain how your headline demonstrates strategy framing:**
This headline demonstrates strategic framing by referring to the debate as “**sport**,” highlighting the candidates' debate tactics or behavioral adjustments given the mute button which embeds “**rules**” or “**referees**” the debate alongside the discussion moderator. This headline is strategy framing since it strays from focusing on the content of the candidates' claims and instead emphasizes the effectiveness of their strategies in helping them be the “**Victor**” of the debate.
2. In the space below, paste a photo to accompany the article that uses strategy framing
 - a. **Strategy frame photo:**



- b. **In 1-2 sentences, explain how your photo demonstrates strategy framing:**
This photo demonstrates strategy framing since it depicts Trump and Biden in the Second Presidential Debate like horserace coverage, treating politics like a **game or sport**. It is strategy framing since the politics are being treated like a **game/sport**, being “**refereed**” or “**officiated**” by the discussion moderator and the

mute button to see who (Biden or Trump) is “winning/dominating” or “losing” this debate or “competition.”

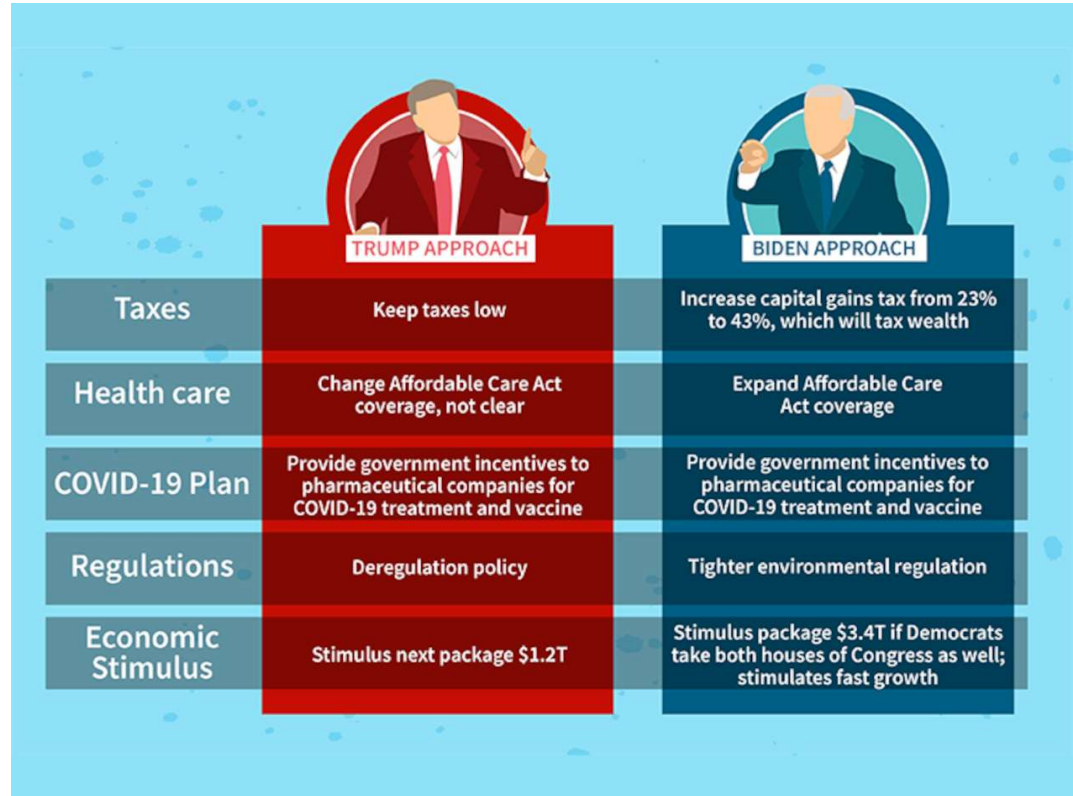
3. Come up with a headline (one sentence) to accompany the article that uses policy framing

- a. **Policy frame headline:** Tensions Arise as Biden and Trump Exchange Their Opposing Policies Including Coronavirus During the Lively Second Presidential Debate

- b. **In 1-2 sentences, explain how your headline demonstrates policy framing:** Policy Framing is demonstrated in this headline by focusing on the **candidates' differing approaches** to handling the Coronavirus Pandemic platform and providing specific **details** about policies and issues. It highlights that one of the specific issues being debated, is the **different platforms** regarding handling coronavirus, rather than the candidates' behavior or debate strategies.

4. In the space below, paste a photo to accompany the article that uses policy framing

- a. **Policy frame photo:**



	TRUMP APPROACH	BIDEN APPROACH
Taxes	Keep taxes low	Increase capital gains tax from 23% to 43%, which will tax wealth
Health care	Change Affordable Care Act coverage, not clear	Expand Affordable Care Act coverage
COVID-19 Plan	Provide government incentives to pharmaceutical companies for COVID-19 treatment and vaccine	Provide government incentives to pharmaceutical companies for COVID-19 treatment and vaccine
Regulations	Deregulation policy	Tighter environmental regulation
Economic Stimulus	Stimulus next package \$1.2T	Stimulus package \$3.4T if Democrats take both houses of Congress as well; stimulates fast growth

- b. **In 1-2 sentences, explain how your photo demonstrates policy framing:** This photo demonstrates policy framing by clearly visualizing the **different policies brought up during the debate**, especially regarding Coronavirus, as mentioned in the article below and emphasized in the headline as it was a prevalent policy debated over. It is policy framing since it highlights the specific details on the issue being debated over, the handling of coronavirus, through each **candidate's policies** rather than the candidates' behavior or debate strategies to emphasize their political agenda, policies, and positions.

2020 Presidential Debate Article:

The mute button, or at least the threat of it, seemed to work. In the second presidential debate, Donald Trump and Joe Biden were more restrained.

The candidates allowed each other to speak. They used respectful tones. Even when they went on the attack, they did so in a calm, deliberate manner.

After a pugnacious first debate, during which Donald Trump's constant interruptions may have cost him support in subsequent opinion polls, the president has very visibly dialled down the volume - and it made him a much more effective debater.

This time, the content of what the candidates are saying might be what the American public remembers from the debate - not the chaotic manner in which it was delivered.

Once again, Biden largely held up under fire - avoiding the kind of gaffes and stumbles that could have played into Republican attempts to question his age and mental acuity.

The Trump campaign will try to make an issue out of Biden's call for a "transition" from oilbased energy - a risky thing to throw in at the tail end of the debate. In an era of hybrid cars and energy-efficient homes, however, when even petroleum companies employ similar language, it may not hit Americans as hard as Republicans imagine.

In the end, the raucous first debate probably will be what the history books remember. And with polls showing most Americans already having made up their minds - and more than 45 million already having voted - the chance that this evening has a lasting impact on the race seems slim.

Covid takes center stage

The Trump campaign complained that this debate was supposed to be focused on foreign policy - perhaps allowing the president to tout what he sees as his accomplishments in the Middle East, trade and Syria and go after Biden on his son's business ties to China.

Instead, like earlier debates, it started on the coronavirus pandemic - a topic the American public cares most about, polls suggest.

Donald Trump, once again touted a vaccine he said would be ready "in weeks". He offered personal testimony to the power of the new drugs to treat the disease and boasted that he was now "immune".

Biden, not surprisingly, went on the attack. He pointed out Trump had repeatedly promised the disease would disappear on its own. He said there were 220,000 Americans dead and there could be another 200,000 by the end of the year.

In the back and forth between the two candidates, Trump continued to offer hope that things were getting better and businesses and schools should reopen. And when Trump said that people were "learning to live" with the disease, Biden pounced.

"People are learning to live with it?" he asked. "People are learning to die with it."

At one point, Trump offered an answer that he said was "perhaps just to finish this". The president, clearly, was eager move on to different subjects.

Trump finds his footing on criminal justice

In the first presidential debate, Trump talked himself into trouble when the topic turned to race relations, as he danced around whether to directly condemn white supremacist groups. This time around, the president was considerably more nimble.

He boasted about his cross-party criminal justice reform and funding for historically black colleges. He attacked Biden for his sponsorship of a draconian crime bill in the 1990s that led to a sharp rise in the number of black Americans in prisons. And, perhaps most potently, when Biden began talking about his proposals for reform, he questioned why the former vice president didn't accomplish more when he served with President Barack Obama.

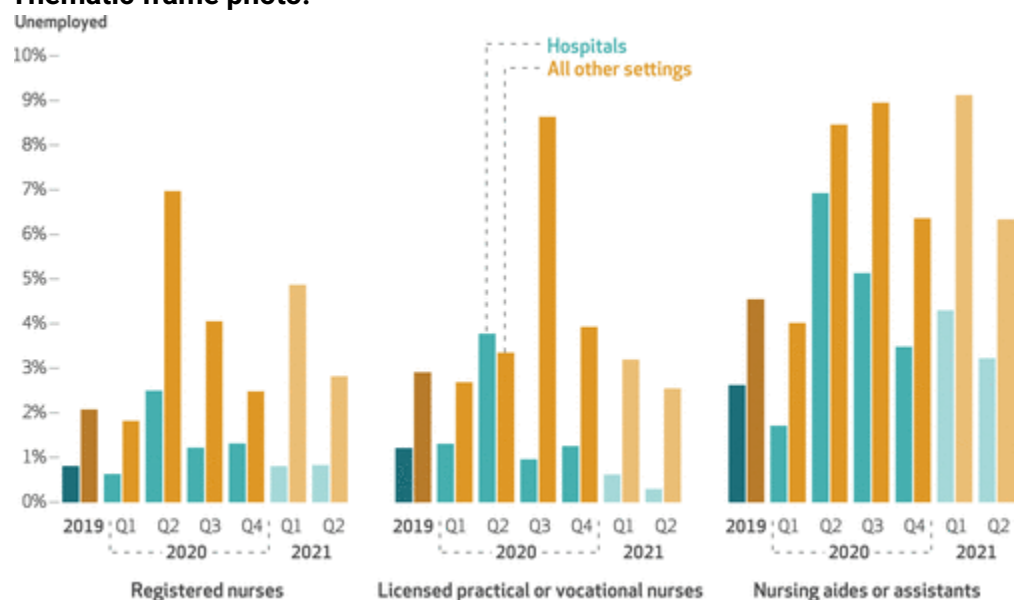
"It's all talk but no action with these politicians," Trump said. "Why didn't you get it done? You had eight years to get it done."

Anyone who lived through the "tough on crime" 1990s in the US would probably be shocked by this debate exchange, where both candidates talked about the number of felons to whom they gave clemency and their efforts at reducing the number of incarcerated Americans. As the mass demonstrations against institutional racism demonstrated earlier this year, the times have indeed changed.

Activity 4: Come up with headlines and photos to accompany the article below about the Covid-19 pandemic

For this activity, first read the anonymized article below, then answer the following questions:

1. Imagining that you were the reporter, come up with a headline (one sentence) to accompany the article that uses thematic framing
 - a. **Thematic frame headline:** Nurse Burnout and Staffing Shortages, Sparked by the Covid-19 Pandemic, Pose a Nationally Growing Crisis for U.S. Healthcare System
 - b. **In 1-2 sentences, explain how your headline demonstrates thematic framing:**
My headline demonstrates thematic framing since it focuses on an **issue at large** and additionally what **led to this issue**. I tried to emphasize these crucial characteristics to thematic framing by using keywords like “Nationally” to show the issue was being represented at large, “Nurse Burnout and Staffing Shortages...Growing Crisis for U.S. Healthcare System” to display what the issue was, and “Sparked by the Covid-19 Pandemic” to indicate what the cause of this issue was.
2. In the space below, paste a photo to accompany the article that uses thematic framing
 - a. **Thematic frame photo:**



- b. **In 1-2 sentences, explain how your photo demonstrates thematic framing:**
This photo demonstrates thematic framing by visualizing the **overall** strain, burnout, and stress placed on nurses within the U.S. healthcare system **nationally** that forced them to leave their jobs. This thematically emphasizes the nurses' daily challenges through **statistics and national trends** to display the “**bigger picture**” of the nature of burnout and staffing shortages in hospitals due to COVID as reflected in the article.
3. Come up with a headline (one sentence) to accompany the article that uses episodic framing

- a. **Episodic frame headline:** Newburgh Nurse Amy Dunkin and Her Coworkers Face Growing Burnout: The Covid-19 Pandemic's Impact on New York Healthcare Workers
- b. **In 1-2 sentences, explain how your headline demonstrates episodic framing:**
Episodic framing focuses on **an individual person or group of people related to an issue** which in this case is "Amy Dunkin and her Coworkers" in a smaller city in New York, which is one state where this large-scale U.S. issue was occurring. This headline demonstrates episodic framing by focusing on the **individual perspectives and personal experiences** of Amy Dunkin and her coworkers experiencing burnout in New York.

4. In the space below, paste a photo to accompany the article that uses episodic framing
- a. **Episodic frame photo:**



- b. **In 1-2 sentences, explain how your photo demonstrates episodic framing:**
This photo demonstrates **episodic framing by focusing on a specific event example** related to the issue of hundreds of thousands of nurses leaving the workplace due to stress, illness, and exhaustion during the COVID-19 pandemic. By highlighting the **specific event of the strike and the cause of the strike** (listed in the previous sentence), it emphasizes **individual actions** and depicts the nurses' frustration, making the story feel more personal and immediate rather than a broad global trend or statistic.

Covid-19 Pandemic Article:

About 100,000 registered nurses in the US left the workplace due to the stresses of the Covid-19 pandemic, according to the results of a survey published Thursday by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing.

Another 610,388 registered nurses, who had more than 10 years of experience and an average age of 57, said they planned to leave the workforce by 2027 because of stress, burnout or retirement. The same was true of 189,000 additional nurses with 10 or fewer years of experience and an average age of 36.

The survey found that there were over 5.2 million active registered nurses and 973,788 licensed practical nurses or vocational nurses in the US in 2022. The researchers analyzed data from 29,472 registered and advanced nurses and more than 24,000 licensed practical or vocational nurses across 45 states. More than a quarter of those surveyed said they plan to leave the industry or retire in the next five years, the study says.

About 62% of the nurses surveyed said their workload increased during the pandemic, and 50.8% said they felt emotionally drained at work.

Almost half of nurses said they felt fatigued or burnt-out: 49.7% and 45.1%, respectively. These concerns were seen most in nurses with less than 10 years of experience.

Maryann Alexander, chief officer of nursing regulation at NCSBN and one of the authors of this study, said she is shocked by the findings of the study, especially related to younger nurses.

Soon, the industry will rely on nurses with less than 10 years of experience to act as mentors, managers and leaders in nursing care, Alexander said.

"It will send us into a health care crisis of huge proportions," Alexander said.

She said that while it is common to see young nurses leaving the industry to go back to school and get more education, it is uncommon to see young nurses leaving due to stress and burnout.

"That is a huge cause for concern," Alexander said.

This exhausted tone was a driving factor behind a strike in New York in January, when over 7,000 nurses took to the streets to call attention to staffing shortages and burnout.

"We are sick and tired of the hospital only doing the bare minimum," said Danny Fuentes, a union official who spoke to the crowd during the strike. "Time and time again, we are forced to take unsafe patient loads. We are humans, and we are burnt-out. And we are tired. And the hospital doesn't seem to care. All they see are profits. We don't want to be out here. We would much rather be with our patients. We need a fair contract to protect our patients."

The strike ended when the New York State Nurses Association reached tentative deals with the two hospitals involved, Mount Sinai Health System and Montefiore Health System. The union said the deal would provide enforceable "safe staffing ratios" for all inpatient units at Mount Sinai and Montefiore.

Montefiore agreed to financial penalties for failing to comply with agreed-upon staffing levels in all units.

Activity 5: In 1-2 paragraphs, respond to the following reflection prompt:

If you were a reporter covering poverty in the U.S., would you find it more important to prioritize contextual, thematic information, including statistical and historical details, or episodic information, including specific stories and experiences? Choose one that you think is most important and explain your reasoning (you might think both are important, but make an argument for which one you think is most important). How do you think these different types of information affect the ways in which people perceive and make sense of the news?

If I were a reporter covering poverty in the U.S., I would find it more important to prioritize thematic information, including statistical and historical details nationally, rather than use episodic information including specific stories and experiences. Episodic framing focuses on an individual person or example related to an issue while thematic framing focuses on an issue at large, the “bigger picture,” or conditions that led to the issue. Thematic framing allows for a national understanding of the issue by highlighting the causes or what led to these issues of poverty in the U.S., such as income inequality, limited access to education, and the historical context of policies that have inflicted poverty. By focusing on the wide-scale presence of poverty through statistical data on the percentage of people living in poverty, distribution of wealth, and social factors contributing to poverty, thematic information helps readers understand the severity of poverty. It provides full “proof” through statistics, facts, graphs, data, and more. Rather than emotional, individual stories within a larger context, I would find it more important to use thematic information to allow the audience to fully see the issue as a wide-scale and deeply rooted problem requiring systemic change.

Episodic framing is still an important framing tactic. It serves an important role providing a human element or an emotional aspect for relatability, inviting the readers to connect with the individual's struggles they are reading about. While episodic framing provides a human element to display an issue, pulling on the viewer's or readers' heartstrings, an individual's perspective can sometimes take away from the severity of a wide-scale issue since it separates from the “broader” context. When poverty is episodically framed, I would worry that as a reporter the personal stories and angles would risk people assuming poverty is the individual's fault, misfortune, and a minor issue, rather than seeing it as the complex, global issue and inequality it is. Personally, I think thematic framing would be most important to prioritize since it would lead people to realize the severity of poverty globally and the need for policy reforms, collective action, and long-term solutions. When covering poverty with thematic framing, I could use data from sources including the U.S. Census Bureau to show exact percentages of the population living at, near, under, and above the poverty level to illustrate the severity of the issue. By providing national, historical, and statistical context, thematic framing educates people on how poverty affects millions of people in the U.S. and worldwide, possibly perceiving it as motivation to advocate for change. In conclusion, while thematic and episodic are both effective framing techniques, thematic framing/information provides a more complete and total view of poverty and can more affectively expand the reader's perception of this issue.

Rubric for Evaluation

Identify and Analyze Framing (40 points)		
The student highlighted four passages in “Biden Marks 1-year Anniversary of Climate, Health Law, Says ‘We’re Investing in All of America’”	Yes	No
The student highlighted four passages in “High Cancer Risk Plagues Louisiana Town Near Chemical Plants”	Yes	No
The student identified the framing strategies they highlighted.	Yes	No
The identifications of different framing strategies are correct.	Yes	No
Create Framing with Headlines and Images (40 points)		
The student submitted four headlines and four images.	Yes	No
Do the first headline and image combination complement each other and serve as a good example of strategy framing?	Yes	No
Do the second headline and image combination complement each other and serve as a good example of policy framing?	Yes	No
Do the third headline and image combination complement each other and serve as a good example of thematic framing?	Yes	No
Do the fourth headline and image combination complement each other and serve as a good example of episodic framing?	Yes	No
Reflect (20 points)		
Did the student respond thoughtfully to the reflection prompt?	Yes	No