

Types of Bias

PART 1: Bias Notes (READ ONLY)

- ★ **Objectivity** is a style of writing that is completely unbiased. It is not touched by the writer's previous experiences or tastes. It is verifiable by looking up facts (things that can be proven).
- ★ **Subjectivity/Bias** is a style of writing that has been influenced by the viewpoint or feelings of the writer. It often reflects the perspective through which the writer views an issue or topic. It cannot be verified using concrete facts and figures.
1. **Bias** is any opinion that influences a person's thoughts, feelings, or actions. A person can be biased against something or have a bias for something. An author's bias is any opinion or prejudice that affects that author's writing and prevents the author from being completely neutral about the topic or issue about which s/he is writing.
 2. When looking at the author's use of evidence, ask yourself:
 - Does the author present more positive evidence for one side of an issue than the other?
 - Does the author present more negative evidence for one side of an issue than the other?
 - Does the author use evidence that is unreliable or from an unknown source?
 3. These are both clues that the author may be biased for or against a particular side
 - Does the author use words with more negative connotations when referring to one side of an issue or particular people?
 - Does the author use words with more positive connotations when referring to one side of an issue or particular people?

PART #2: Types of Bias

Directions: In groups, fill out the below chart. Work together, but record findings on your OWN chart. I filled out the first type of bias for you, please follow the same format for the rest.

Vocabulary Review		
Bias Type	Definition	Guiding Questions

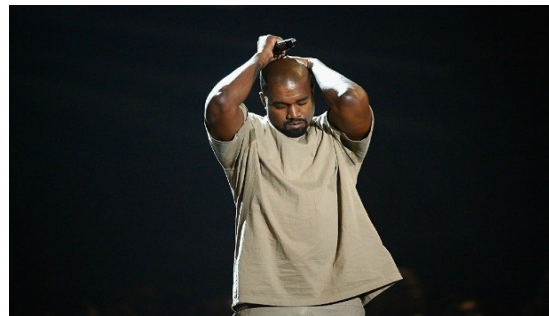
<i>Bias through selection and omission</i>		
<i>Bias through placement</i>		
<i>Bias by headline</i>		
<i>Bias by photos, captions and camera angles</i>		
<i>Bias through statistics and crowd counts</i>		
<i>Bias by source control</i>		

PART #3: Guided Practice

Next, we are going to review how to identify types of bias. Identifying types of bias is important because bias is a subjective way of thinking that tells only one side of a story, sometimes leading to inaccurate information or a false impression. When you research sources, it is crucial that you identify the level of bias in potential sources. This is an important step before you can determine if the source is **reliable or unreliable**. Below, there are practices and your task will be to identify what type(s) of bias are in each example. ***I will do the first example as a model for you.***

Practice #1 (Model Example)

Kanye West's has Nervous Breakdown after Rift with Kim, Beyonce and Jay-Z



What types of bias were you able to identify in the passage above? Explain why.

- *Bias by headline* - The writer condemns Kanye West by declaring that he had a nervous breakdown after an apparent fight with other well known celebrities.
- *Bias by photos* - The article shows a picture of Kanye West looking distressed and holding his head. After reading the headline, the picture confirms to the reader that he is having a mental breakdown, even before reading the article. Also the timing of the picture can be manipulated in the eyes of the viewer because he could have been dancing or performing.

Practice #2

All three networks have failed to report on an alleged attempted hate crime against two men leaving a Jewish synagogue last Friday in Los Angeles. While another anti-semitic hate crime in Pittsburgh October 27 received mass coverage, the alleged suspect's identity in this recent attack may be one reason why it hasn't received any coverage on the major networks thus far.

What type of bias were you able to identify in the passage above? Explain why.

- *Bias through placement because they are picking certain stories to show on their network*
- *Bias through selection, because they reported on one story, but not the other*

Practice #3

BAVARIA, Germany -- At least nine people are dead and 50 seriously injured after a head-on collision between two trains in Germany's southern state of Bavaria, according to police. Altogether, 100 to 150 people suffered injuries in the collision, police say. Authorities have issued an urgent call for blood donations to help treat the injured.

What type of bias were you able to identify in the passage above? Explain why.

Bias through statistics and crowd control: They included numbers to show how devastating or shocking the event was

Practice #4

Following months of anticipation, millions around the world watched as the royal wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle went off without a hitch at St. George's Chapel in Windsor Castle on Saturday. Now, a photo and exclusive interview of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex celebrating their big day can be located on page 2 of this month's TIME commemorative issue. Refer to page 30 for a report on how the E.U.'s new online privacy law could benefit users everywhere.

What type of bias were you able to identify in the passage above? Explain why.

Bias through placement because the more important story is on page 2, and the less important one is pushed to page 30

Practice #5:

If the student as athlete can find a way, he/she should be able to endorse products, to have paid-speaking gigs, to sell memorabilia, as Allen Sack, the author and professor at the college of business at the University of New Haven has suggested in recent years. The best college athletes in the two revenue-producing sports have always been worth much more than tuition, room, board and books. -- Michael Wilbon is a featured columnist for ESPN.com and ESPNChicago.com.

What type of bias were you able to identify in the passage above? Explain why.

Bias by source control because the author works for a sports network



THIS IS A CHECKPOINT. HAVE MR. GIAIMO REVIEW YOUR WORK BEFORE MOVING FORWARD.

PART #4: Independent Practice

Directions: Look back at your notes on the types of biases. Below are **two editorials** that report on the same event from two different sides. **HIGHLIGHT** any types of biases that you come across in both editorials.

<i>Bias through selection and omission</i>	<i>Bias by headline</i>	<i>Bias through statistics and crowd counts</i>	<i>Bias by source control</i>	<i>Bias by photos, captions and camera angles</i>
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Editorial #1: Facebook Photos Sting Minnesota High School Students

The Associated Press

1. EDEN PRAIRIE, Minn. — For 16-year-old Nick Laurent, walking out of Eden Prairie High School yesterday to protest the school's punishment of students seen partying on Facebook pages was about asking administrators to be fair.
2. More than a dozen students joined Laurent after learning of the walkout from fliers the junior handed out the day before. The students said school administrators overreacted to the impression that students in the photos were drinking.
3. It's the loudest thing we could do," said Laurent, who organized the walkout but said he wasn't one of the students in the photos.
4. Laurent tried to make his point by passing out red plastic cups that were similar to those seen in some of the photos. He noted that it was impossible to see what was inside the cups, so administrators couldn't prove that students were drinking.
5. Laurent agreed that athletes and other students who sign a code of conduct to be involved in activities should face consequences if they break the rule against drinking alcohol. But he said the punishments were too harsh.
6. They don't have (the) support of the students to hand out unfair punishments and punishments that don't fit the crime," he said.
7. Once the photos on the social-networking Web site came to the attention of administrators, 42 students were interviewed and 13 face some discipline over the pictures, school officials said.
8. **[BIAS BY OMISSION: Students were disciplined]**, and Minnesota State High School League penalties start with a two-game suspension for the first violation. Laurent and other students said they knew of classmates who were banned from their sports teams for five weeks.
9. Principal Conn McCartan did not return a call seeking comment on the walkout, but students said they expected they'd be punished.
10. In earlier statements, the school's principal said school officials did not seek out the pictures. But he didn't say who gave the school the photos.
11. We do not go out looking at student social networking sites. We do however take action when we are given legitimate information about school or Minnesota State High School League violations," McCartan said in an e-mail to families of his students.
12. McCartan said interviews with students suggested, however, that the pictures might have been posted on such sites, and warned of the dangers.
13. "These sites are not private places," he wrote. "Their content forms a permanent and public record of conversations and pictures."
14. In an e-mail to parents and guardians, Superintendent Melissa Krull said, "We are not legally at liberty to discuss further details of this investigation."
15. Fourteen-year-old Ali Saley said cutting class for the cause was worth it. She held signs such as, "They walk or we do," in togetherness with the students who were punished. A few cars honked in support of the students as they gathered on a footbridge over the road in front of the school.
16. The Eden Prairie High School students who got into trouble ran afoul of a new reality: digital cameras and social networking sites make the entire world a public space.
17. It's becoming increasingly common for schools and potential employers to check social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace, and to penalize kids or other people for what they find, said William McGeveran, a professor at the University of Minnesota Law School and an expert on data privacy.
18. "Facebook is largely a public space. Users don't always perceive it that way, but that's what it is," McGeveran said.

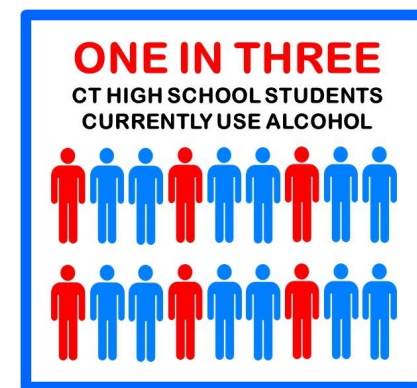


19. Even when young people are cautious about what they put on the pages, he said, friends or acquaintances can post pictures of them in questionable situations without their knowing about it.
20. McGeveran cited research by the Pew Internet & American Life Project that suggested most teens were aware of the risks of posting personal information on the Internet. A report issued last month found that most teens restrict access to their posted photos and videos at least some of the time, and that few consistently share them without any restrictions.
21. “But some students are still foolish about what they put on their pages,” he said.
22. Eden Prairie High School has about 3,300 students, and Facebook lists about 2,800 members in its network for the school, including more than 500 from the current senior class. A spot check on Jan. 9 showed that some had posted dozens and even hundreds of pictures of themselves and their friends. However, most members used a privacy setting to limit access to their profiles to friends and other authorized people.
23. Schools in Minnesota have limited ability to regulate the conduct of students after hours. When students participate in sports or certain fine-arts activities, however, they must agree in writing to abide by the long-standing rules of the Minnesota State High School League, which prohibit the use of alcohol, tobacco and controlled substances, even over the summer.
24. League spokesman Howard Voigt noted that parents must sign the forms, too, certifying that they understand the rules and penalties. Still, he said, complaints are common.
25. “We run into that all the time here—parents call and accuse us of being too hard on their kid,” he said.
26. Voigt said there had been several cases of students’ running afoul of league rules because of potential violations posted on social-networking sites.
27. It’s not safe for kids to assume what they do in small groups won’t be broadcast to the entire world, McGeveran said.
28. “I don’t think most of us would have liked to have lived our teen years in an era of camera phones and social networking,” he said. “It really changes the perception of what places are private and which ones aren’t.”

Editorial #2: Students Facing Consequences at Eden Prairie High

StarTribune.Com

1. This just in: Some high school students drink alcohol and, in the Internet age, some underage drinkers are foolish enough to post party photos on popular websites. In the case of [Eden Prairie](#) High School vs. the partying Facebook students, we give administrators credit for their judgment and flunk the students on common sense.
2. Similarly, any parents considering taking legal action because they think the school went too far in disciplining students need a reality check. Teen drinking remains a serious problem in this state, and Eden Prairie administrators deserve praise -- not legal threats or complaints from parents -- for taking decisive action that they knew would be controversial. Face it, parents, the Facebook kids screwed up, and here's a chance to talk about personal responsibility in the context of an underage drinking escapade that, thankfully, did not involve death or injury.
3. Go to the search field at startribune.com and type in these names: Jenna Foellmi, Rissa Amen-Reif, Amanda Jax and Brian W. Threet. In the past four months, these four young people all died in drinking-related incidents in Minnesota. Brian's funeral was Thursday afternoon in Farmington.



4. With that backdrop, protests over invasion of privacy are ridiculous. School administrators weren't surfing social networking sites without cause. They received a complaint and had a responsibility to investigate and act according to school policies. Students who think the Web has been used against them unfairly should fast-forward a few years and consider how they'll feel when a potential employer uses Facebook or MySpace in a background check, with a job offer on the line.
5. Some are viewing the athletes among the students who were caught red-cupped in Eden Prairie through a surprisingly sympathetic lens. That's wrongheaded. The Minnesota High School League requires student-athletes and their parents to pledge that the students will abstain from alcohol and illegal drugs. Break the pledge, lose the privilege.
6. We were encouraged by the reaction of Eden Prairie High School parent Larry Burke, whose daughter was not involved in the drinking incident. "The posting is very foolish," Burke told the Star Tribune. "But from a perspective of a parent, I'm glad it happened. There are a lot of discussions going on in a lot of households about alcohol and consequences."
7. Let's hope other parents bring as much common sense to those conversations as Burke.

Directions: For both editorials, refer back to what you underlined and explain how each editorial used the different types of biases.

Q1. Which article was more bias? Which article was more objective? Explain.