Introduction to Media Bias

What is it and why should I care?

Learning Target: I can define media bias in general terms and understand why it is important to study.

What is Media Bias?

Bias- A preference towards a particular attitude about a subject, often accompanied by a refusal to accept other viewpoints.

- one-sided
- lacks neutrality

What is Media Bias cont…

Bias applied to media-

Bias in news programs, political advertising, or any other form of mass media.

- Journalists
- Producers

Why should I care?

"Get your facts first, then you can distort them as you please."
-Mark Twain

In order to make our own choices about events, laws, politics, etc., we must first be able to deconstruct the narrative built around facts.

Types of Media Bias

What to look for in terms of bias in media

Learning Target: I can name and define the different types of media bias.

Author's Purpose

Why is the writer, journalist, newscaster, pundit, etc., presenting this information?

Types & Forms of Media Bias

We will cover:
1. Loaded Language
2. Source Selection
3. Omission
4. Story Selection
5. Placement
6. Labeling
7. Spin

1. Loaded Language

What to look for?

- Is this the best possible choice of word here?
- Is this the least biased way this idea could have been phrased?

*Subtle form of bias

EX: "mainstream sports"

EX: "human interest"

2. Bias by Source Selection

General Definition

- When there are more sources to support one side of an issue compared to the other or certain sources are selected over others.

What to know & look for

- Affiliations between the quoted and the people in story

- How images present a person or event

- Over quoting same source

- What does the quote say?

3. Bias by Omission

What is left out?
- A side of the story
- Opposing facts

Where does it occur?
- Within an article
- Over entire coverage of a story through time

Look for the opposing views to be identified. For example, Conservative and Liberal.

Compare to another article/broadcast on the same story.

3. Bias by Story Selection

General Definition

- The action of selecting or omitting some stories over others to highlight particular events & perspectives.

What to know & look for

- Know the sides of the issue

- Look at amount of coverage on a story (both number of times it is covered and time given on air)

4. Bias through Placement

General Definition

- A measure of importance related to the placement of a story in the paper, the order presented in broadcast, and even location of quotations in articles.

What to know & look for

- Look at what stories get the front cover or top of the hour

- Look at amount of coverage on a story (both number of times it is covered and time given on air)

- How far into the article are they providing quotes for each side?

5. Bias through Labeling

General Definition

- 1st- Tagging politicians with extremes such as "Conservative Republican" or "Liberal Democrat"

- 2nd- Labeling people as "Experts" when they don't have the credentials.

What to know & look for

- Extremes "Ultra Conservative" or "far right"
- Lack of label when another is

6. Bias through use of Spin

General Definition

- A one sided interpretation of an event usually through the use of tone; objective facts presented in a subjective manner. Must be spun in one direction.

What to know & look for

- Look for which ideological view it aligns with

- Look at the tone of the article or voice of presentation