



...global**news**.org.uk worksheet...

Activity: Bias Detectives page 1

This sheet can be completed individually or can be discussed in groups.

1. Read the article from the UK newspaper, the Daily Mail, entitled: *Refugees a drain on UK, think young*
2. Now look at the article: *How to detect bias in the news*
http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/handouts/broadcast_news/bw_bias_in_the_news.cfm
3. Examining carefully the Daily Mail article, think about which forms of bias may be present in this article. If there is an example of a particular bias in the article write down or discuss what this is, if not, place a cross in the table.

Type of bias	Example in <i>Refugees a drain on UK, think young</i> article
By headline – what message does the headline convey? Is this fair and accurate?	
Through selection and/or omission of information	
Through placement – does the structure of the article make it appear biased?	
By photos, captions and camera angles	
Through use of names and titles – positive or negative names/titles/words?	
Through statistics – how are these used in the article?	
By source – what are the main sources? Are they given 'equal space' in the article?	
Through word choice and tone – are any positive, negative or emotive words used?	

4. Could this article be rewritten to convey a different message about young people's attitudes towards asylum seekers? If so, what might an alternative headline be?

What would you chose as the opening paragraph to reflect this headline? How would you continue the article?

Is there information you would exclude from your article? Why? What additional information might you want to include? Why?



...global**news**.org.uk worksheet...

Activity: Bias Detectives page 2

This activity can be completed individually or can be researched and developed by groups.

Extension activity

Examine the following links to help you design a small leaflet, article or website aimed at helping young people understand more fully why people become asylum seekers and refugees. In contrast to the Daily Mail article, you will find the stories from these links are based on interviews with refugees or written by refugees themselves. The facts on The Rights Site are from UNICEF, an organisation that promotes the rights of young people, including refugee and asylum seeker children.

The Rights Site

http://www.therightssite.org.uk/html/issues_raas.htm

Key issues and Questions and Answers on refugees and asylum seekers from UNICEF, an organisation that supports the rights of child refugees. Look at other parts of the site for interesting facts and figures.

CBBC News story

http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/club/your_reports/newsid_3090000/3090559.stm

A true story about the Kurdish refugees now forced to live in a detention centre in Scotland.

Road to Refuge

http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/static/in_depth/world/2001/road_to_refuge/persecution/story.stm

A powerful real life story by one refugee from Rwanda. Part of the BBC Road to Refuge site that contains further information and real life stories.



...globalnews.org.uk in the news...

Activity: Bias detectives

This news story has been selected to use in conjunction with the Bias Detectives activity

Daily Mail, 16th June 2003

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/news.html?in_article_id=184828&in_page_id=1770

Refugees a drain on UK, think young

Most young people believe asylum seekers are bogus and a drain on the country, according to a new report.

But youngsters are also largely supportive of refugees' rights and believe Britain has a responsibility to help them, the poll found.

Young people think refugees should be given safe haven in the UK and that they have the same rights to education, freedom and work as any British person.

Refugee rights groups say the findings suggest that there is a "gap" in young people's attitudes and opinions.

What many believe should be offered to those fleeing war and persecution does not match how they feel overall towards asylum-seekers and refugees in the UK.

Rights groups say unfair and biased media coverage and harsh Government policies are to blame for the negative attitudes.

The survey found that 48% of those polled believed that few asylum-seekers in the UK were genuine, while 33% disagreed.

It also showed that 58% believed asylum-seekers and refugees did not make a positive contribution to the UK, while only 20% thought they did.

But although 23% believed that Britain should not offer safe haven to people fleeing war or persecution, 57% said the country should do so. In fact the UK has a legal obligation, under international law, to allow people to seek asylum.

Men and those in their early 20s were more likely to take a hard line attitude to asylum-seekers, rather than women or teenagers, according to the MORI survey, which commissioned by Amnesty International UK, Refugee Action and the Refugee Council to find out youngster's attitudes to asylum-seekers.



...globalnews.org.uk in the news...

Activity: Bias detectives

This article on the various types of bias that can creep into news stories is from the Media Awareness Network

How to Detect Bias in the News

http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/handouts/broadcast_news/bw_bias_in_the_news.cfm

At one time or other we all complain about "bias in the news." The fact is, despite the journalistic ideal of "objectivity," every news story is influenced by the attitudes and background of its interviewers, writers, photographers and editors.

Not all bias is deliberate. But you can become a more aware news reader or viewer by watching for the following journalistic techniques that allow bias to "creep in" to the news:

Bias through selection and omission

An editor can express a bias by choosing to use or not to use a specific news item. Within a given story, some details can be ignored, and others included, to give readers or viewers a different opinion about the events reported. If, during a speech, a few people boo, the reaction can be described as "remarks greeted by jeers" or they can be ignored as "a handful of dissidents."

Bias through omission is difficult to detect. Only by comparing news reports from a wide variety of outlets can the form of bias be observed.

Bias through placement

Readers of papers judge first page stories to be more significant than those buried in the back. Television and radio newscasts run the most important stories first and leave the less significant for later. Where a story is placed, therefore, influences what a reader or viewer thinks about its importance.

Bias by headline

Many people read only the headlines of a news item. Most people scan nearly all the headlines in a newspaper. Headlines are the most-read part of a paper. They can summarize as well as present carefully hidden bias and prejudices. They can convey excitement where little exists. They can express approval or condemnation.

Bias by photos, captions and camera angles

Some pictures flatter a person; others make the person look unpleasant. A paper can choose photos to influence opinion about, for example, a candidate for election. On television, the choice of which visual images to display is extremely important. The captions newspapers run below photos are also potential sources of bias.

Bias through use of names and titles

News media often use labels and titles to describe people, places, and events. A person can be called an "ex-con" or be referred to as someone who "served time twenty years ago for a minor offense." Whether a person is described as a "terrorist" or a "freedom fighter" is a clear indication of editorial bias.

Bias through statistics and crowd counts

To make a disaster seem more spectacular (and therefore worthy of reading about), numbers can be inflated. "A hundred injured in air crash" can be the same as "only minor injuries in air crash," reflecting the opinion of the person doing the counting.

Bias by source control

To detect bias, always consider where the news item "comes from." Is the information supplied by a reporter, an eyewitness, police or fire officials, executives, or elected or appointed government officials? Each may have a particular bias that is introduced into the story. Companies and public relations directors supply news outlets with news releases, photos or videos. Often news outlets depend on pseudo-events (demonstrations, sit-ins, ribbon cuttings, speeches and ceremonies) that take place mainly to gain news coverage.

Word choice and tone

Showing the same kind of bias that appears in headlines, the use of positive or negative words or words with a particular connotation can strongly influence the reader or viewer.