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## Teaching Japanese University Students How to Identify Bias in the Media

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### Abstract

University is a period when students are becoming more independent, forming individual opinions, and starting to participate in society, making it an ideal time to teach news media literacy. With the plethora of news outlets available and the increase in fake news, this skill has become essential to navigate the news landscape responsibly. Although students may be adept at finding information on the internet, they are vulnerable users who may lack the ability to spot skewed, unbalanced, or even fake news. Thus, teaching young adults how to identify bias in the news is crucial in helping them to cultivate informed and balanced opinions. This paper explains why news media literacy is especially important for Japanese university students, then introduces a classroom activity to help students identify and understand bias in the news. The author also includes ideas for possible culminating projects and several extensions or applications for the types of bias covered.

### 要旨

大学在籍期間中は学生が自主性を育み、自分の意見を持つようになり、社会参加を始める時期であるため、メディアリテラシーを教える理想的なタイミングである。大量の報道機関が存在し、フェイクニュースも増える中、責任を持ってニュースを理解・活用するためにメディアリテラシーは必須である。学生はインターネットでの情報検索には長けるかもしれないが、虚偽または歪曲された報道を見分ける能力を欠く脆弱なユーザーであるため、正しい知識に基づいたバランスの取れた意見を持つようサポートする上で報道におけるバイアスの特定方法を教えることは非常に重要である。本稿では特に大学生にとって報道に関するメディアリテラシーが重要な理由を解説し、ニュースのバイアスを特定・理解するために有効な、授業中に行える活動を紹介する。最終プロジェクトについてのアイデア、本論文で取り上げた種類のバイアスの拡張・適用方法についても言及する。

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The stage when adolescents come of age is a crucial time to teach young adults (or to reinforce) how to gather information about ongoing affairs and how to participate in society, as this is a time when they gain the right to vote and are becoming more independent. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) (2013) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Newby et al., 2009), a majority of Japanese 18-year-olds attend university. Moreover, the voting age in Japan was recently lowered from 20-years-old to 18-years-old, in the hope of increasing young people's civic engagement (Kyodo News, 2018; Kyodo News, 2016; Yamamoto, 2022). Japan faces various societal issues such as gender inequality, an aging population crisis, and a sluggish economy, so young adults' political engagement is crucial in addressing these problems. Yet, young Japanese tend to have negative views about the future, low civic participation and low voter turnout, and an apathetic political stance (Nguyen, 2022). Research has also found that this cohort's opinions are greatly influenced by social media, as well as television and web news (Inoue, 2003; Sakamoto et al., 2022). Thus, tertiary education is an ideal place for students to learn how to gather information responsibly and make rational decisions to actively participate in society. This paper illustrates the importance of news media literacy for Japanese university students and outlines a classroom activity to aid students in identifying and understanding bias in the news. An example culminating project and various extensions or applications for the classroom activity are also provided.

### **Civic Engagement and the Media**

Understanding of local, national, and global affairs is necessary to cultivate opinions and to cast informed votes. "Unrestricted access to unbiased information is crucial for forming a well-balanced understanding of current events" (Hamborg et al., 2019, p. 391) and while the news is often the main source that people turn to, not all news is created, consumed, or perceived as unbiased. Firstly, news may contain media bias, "which journalists and other involved parties implement purposely to achieve a specific goal" (Tye, 2002, as cited in Hamborg et al., 2019, p. 392). Many types of media bias exist, such as bias in headlines (where a story's "title" can be misleading), bias in photos (where a photo can make a person or situation appear a certain way), and bias through names and titles (where labels and titles of people, places, or events can influence the reader's perception) (Johnson, 2021; Mastrine, 2022; University of Washington, 2024). To avoid overwhelming students with the numerous types of bias, seven have been selected for students to learn about and are outlined in the subsequent "Bias in the News Worksheet" section.



Bias is not always bad, and may develop as a result of the creator having a certain viewpoint or attitude toward something (Johnson, 2021; Mastrine, 2022). Yet, slanted coverage of a story can skew the reader's perception and thus affect the consequent actions of the reader (e.g. their votes) and the impact on society (e.g. outcomes of elections). For example, Della Vigna and Kaplan (2007) found that the introduction of Fox News in 1996 in the United States contributed to an ideological shift where small changes in voting patterns could be decisive later in close presidential elections. Bias is most easily identified when comparing two or more sources. Therefore, having a diversity of news sources should be advantageous in balancing skewed news and helping citizens to form unbiased opinions.

Recently, the number of news media outlets has grown, giving consumers more choice in the stories they read and more opportunities to participate in politics (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2017). The wide variety of news outlets also provides people with a chance to curate the amount and type of news that they are exposed to (Choi et al., 2009). This increase in options may seem beneficial in combating media bias, as consumers are able to hear from an assortment of sources and compare the information. Yet, despite the many outlets available, people tend to choose only a few, and thus build "echo chambers" where they only encounter views similar to their own and their opinions are confirmed (Hamborg et al., 2019; van der Meer & Hameleers, 2020). Because media bias may be most easily identified by comparing various sources, those within an echo chamber may not realize that they are being exposed to media bias or are creating their own bias.

Finally, perception of a news outlet may also influence a consumer's opinions. Soontjens and van Erkel (2020) found that despite being neutral or balanced, media coverage may be perceived as biased, where "citizens even perceive their preferred news outlet to systematically disadvantage their preferred [political] party, while advantaging parties they do not endorse" (p. 134). Being critical is important for healthy media consumption, as it encourages people to check and verify information. However, outright suspicion of news coverage may create distrust in news media which "decreases citizens' willingness to accept, and to retain the information news media provide" (Soontjens & van Erkel, 2020, p. 134).

### **News Media Literacy**

Thus, to responsibly utilize the increased number of news media options and to combat negative effects of media bias, news media literacy is required. The Center for Media Literacy (Thoman & Jolls, 2005) defines media literacy (for all types of media, not only news) as:

a framework to access, analyze, evaluate, and create messages in a variety of forms – from print to video to the internet. Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of democracy. (p. 21)

Increasingly, young people have access to the internet and can easily find information there. While this may be an opportunity for them to cultivate their curiosity and learn about personal interests and societal issues, young adults may not possess the skills needed to use the internet consciously and responsibly. Considered to be “digital natives” (De Leyn et al., 2020), “digital citizens” (Musgrove et al., 2018), or “cyber experts” (Livingstone & Helsper, 2010), adolescents and young adults are highly-skilled at using the internet to find information yet lack the ability to analyze that information leaving them vulnerable to attendant risks. Anecdotally, Japanese university students get their information from one news source or primarily from social media. Sakamoto et al. (2022) found that social media (such as Twitter and YouTube) had a major influence on young Japanese people’s beliefs about COVID-19 vaccination, with more students having negative attitudes towards vaccination when they obtained their information from YouTube. So, university students may not be able to distinguish true or useful information from untrue or biased information. In contrast, Lin et al. (2022) found that university students who had higher media literacy skills may have lower levels of perceived threat and blind patriotism, and they may then have less xenophobic beliefs compared to those with fewer media literacy skills. In Japan’s homogenous culture, these benefits could help students to reduce stereotypical thinking, increase appreciation of cultural diversity, and broaden students’ thinking. Given the considerable amount of time that young people spend using the internet and especially social media, media literacy is therefore essential. As Japanese university students are starting to participate more in their communities (e.g. working part-time jobs, job-hunting, volunteering, or voting), media literacy can help them to avoid potential dangers when accessing and utilizing the internet, and to become more socially aware and responsible citizens in society.

Regarding the news in particular, van der Meer and Hameleers (2022) assert that news literacy “helps [users] to understand how information is produced, what (political) considerations are driving its production, and how to navigate...information in a thoughtful manner” (p. 479). Increased news media literacy helps consumers to understand how biases are created in the production and consumption of news (Flynn et al., 2017). Additionally, this knowledge may give people the tools to discern true and untrue information (Jones-Jang et al., 2019). Learning news media literacy helps young adults know how to navigate

the news media landscape and avoid unintentionally forming biased opinions based on an unbalanced news diet.

### Teaching About News Media

Before teaching about news bias, students need an understanding of basic news terms and familiarity with the layout of news outlets and news articles. News jargon for both articles (e.g. headline, caption, lead) and newspapers or outlets (e.g. front page, editorial, broadsheet, tabloid) should be introduced, as well as news values (criteria that determine whether or not a story is newsworthy). Journalists consider news values such as impact, proximity, currency, conflict, and prominence when deciding which events to cover (Charles Perkins Centre, 2019; Harcup & O'Neill, 2001; Roberts, 2016; University of Nebraska at Omaha, n.d.). Discussion of news values is also an opportune time to introduce news bias. Proximity (the location of an event in relation to a news outlet and its readers) and impact (how many people are affected by a story) can exemplify unintentional bias where journalists choose to cover certain stories over others but are not trying to promote a specific opinion (Hamborg et al., 2019). This introduction of bias created by news values can lead then into a conversation of how unintentional bias differs from or can become intentional bias and why intentional bias should try to be avoided in the news. This provides a smooth segue into a deeper examination of types of bias in the news.

In this paper, the following two activities will be presented as a means to provide a practical way to instill in the students the knowledge and critical thinking needed for identifying and understanding bias in the news.

### Bias in the News Worksheet

The Bias in the News worksheet (see Appendix A) presents seven types of bias found in news media, each section starting with a short description of the type of bias, followed by examples and finally reflection questions. As bias is more easily identified by comparing one or more sources, examples for each section contain two "sides" for one or more topics so students can readily compare news items. The seven types of bias covered in the worksheet are as follows:

- 1. Bias in the headline looks at how titles of articles present news stories as good, bad, or neutral (e.g. 1.1a. *Zimbabwe President Attempts to End Conflict* versus 1.1b. *Zimbabwe Dictator Launches Genocide Plan to Eliminate Opposition*).

- 2. Bias by photos, captions, and camera angles compares how photos and the accompanying captions may influence the reader's perception of an event or person (e.g. 2.1a. *G7 leaders with serious faces* versus 2.1b. *G7 leaders with smiling faces*).
- 3. Bias through use of names and titles introduces students to the impact of connotation of words and phrases (e.g. 3.1a. *Terrorist* versus 3.1b. *Freedom fighter*).
- 4. Bias through selection and omission shows how writers may include or exclude information to give a different view of an event (e.g. 4a. *"Germany beat England 4-1 in an exciting game..."* versus 4b. *"England suffered a heartbreaking defeat after a mistake by a referee..."*).
- 5. Bias through statistics examines how numbers can be misleading (e.g. 5a. *"...a minor earthquake"* versus 5b. *"...a 4.6 magnitude quake..."*).
- 6. Bias through placement goes over how the order of information within a single article as well as the order of articles in the news influence the consumer's sense of importance (e.g. 6.1a. *Stories of war refugees are often front-page or top headlines* versus 6.1b. *Stories of climate change refugees are often not found on front-pages or at the top of news*).
- 7. Bias by source control considers where information comes from and whether those sources are experts or not (e.g. 7.2a. *A university's statement about a university gender discrimination scandal* versus 7.2b. *A university student's statement about a university gender discrimination scandal*).

### **Culminating Project Options**

**Article Comparison Project.** After completing the worksheet and ensuring students understand the seven types of bias covered, a culminating project can have students select two articles from two news sources (one article from each news source) and compare them for examples of media bias (see Appendix B). Students can then present examples of bias they found in the two articles and explain how media bias may affect the reader. This project option serves as an effective way of applying new knowledge of bias in the news and consolidating learning.

**Biased or Fake News Project.** Another possible culminating project could be for students to write a fake or biased news story. In creating such an article, students not only consider how news is produced and that news outlets may write attention-grabbing or exaggerated headlines to attract more readers, but they may also realize that consumers must be critical thinkers when reading the news, all of which are elements of news media literacy (Geers et



al., 2020; van der Meer & Hameleers, 2022; Vraga et al., 2021; Vraga et al., 2015). This option has the added benefit of utilizing students' creativity which may increase engagement in rather serious topics. For this project, students can be required to explain the types of bias they used to create their slanted or fake story as a way to check their understanding of news media bias.

### ***Possible Adaptations for Other Types of Media***

Although this worksheet and the suggested culminating projects focus on the news in particular, the types of bias covered in the worksheet are found in other types of media as well and can be explored as extensions of the worksheet or subsequent units.

- Social media such as Instagram or TikTok are likely familiar to students and can be examined for bias in photos and captions, and selection or omission. Creators usually choose attractive photos or write sensational captions to gain views, likes, or followers. Analyzing influencers such as Bree Lenehan (n.d.) or "Instagram versus reality" type trends (Hosie, 2019) can help students to see photos or content that are not often shared and become more critical of the posts or creators they like or follow.
- Advertising is another type of media in which creators have an obvious goal. Inspecting ads for bias in photos, statistics, selection and omission, and placement can teach students how advertisers create a desire through the production process.
- Societal issues are complex and numerous but each topic can be examined for bias in names and titles, captions or descriptions, statistics, and selection and omission. Looking at how textbooks, articles, or websites depict issues, such as gender inequality, climate change, or healthcare, differently can demonstrate how various sources influence students' perception of the issue's significance and/or urgency.

### **Conclusion**

University students are at an age when they have gained the right to vote and are learning to be independent. While these young adults are adept at finding news on the internet, they may lack the skills to analyze the information to use it responsibly or to avoid believing false information. Therefore, news media literacy is a vital skill they should be taught, in order to avoid xenophobic attitudes, media echo chambers, and skewed beliefs. Systematically studying the seven types of bias presented in this paper can help students understand how bias is created through news production and consumption, thereby

increasing their news media literacy skills. Equipped with these abilities, young people will be ready to actively and responsibly engage in local, national, and global affairs.

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# Appendix A

## “Bias in the News” Activity

### 1. Objective

#### Learning Objective

General Objective	To elicit students' awareness of bias in news media and to strengthen students' ability to identify various types of bias in news media
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### 2. Activity Context

This activity was designed for a university CLIL course on Media. The aim of the course is to teach students media literacy by studying various forms of media (the news, social media, advertising, books, etc.). This lesson on bias in the news follows lessons on news basics (e.g. news terms, format of articles, photo captions). The goal of this lesson is to raise students' awareness of how news can contain bias, despite its portrayal as being a neutral source of information, and to help students to identify types of bias.

#### Students

Number of students	10 Min. 30 Max.
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Do students need to use a second language?	Yes
What is the second language?	English
Level(s) in target language: * See table at the end of these activities description for reference about these mastery levels.	Intermediate   CEFR B1   IELTS 3.5-4.5 ITOEIC 500-700

### 3. Activity Materials & Prep

#### Activity Duration

Total duration in minutes:	90
How many sessions?	1
Any homework?	<b>No</b>

#### Materials

Material # 1 Title:	Bias in the News
Material Type:	Digital Document
Material Access:	<a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wyU052MwbWN3GRv-nAl_nj6tlc3LKJfW/edit?usp=drive_link&amp;oid=110907596192827234753&amp;rtpof=true&amp;sd=true">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wyU052MwbWN3GRv-nAl_nj6tlc3LKJfW/edit?usp=drive_link&amp;oid=110907596192827234753&amp;rtpof=true&amp;sd=true</a>

#### Set-Up Instructions

1. Students should have access to the "Bias in the Media" worksheet, either digitally or physically.
2. Before the "Bias in the Media" worksheet is taught, it is helpful if students understand news basics. These include news terminology (e.g. headline, caption, lead, source, front page, tabloid), the format of articles (information is presented in an "inverted triangle" - the most important details are presented first), and the layout and sections of newspapers (both physical and digital).
Estimated Set Up Time (min.): 5 (plus an additional class teaching news basics)

#### 4. Activity Description

Suggested Time	Activity Instructions
5 minutes	<p>Start with a warmer to get students thinking about what is "true" and "neutral". Have students discuss in pairs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do you believe everything you see/hear in the news? Why or why not?</li> <li>2. Which news sources do you trust? Why do you trust it?</li> <li>3. Do you think news stories include the reporter's opinion? Why do you think so?</li> </ol>
5 minutes	<p>Introduce the word "bias" and have students brainstorm or discuss the meaning of "bias". Elicit answers from students.</p> <p>Show the definition of bias: "to favour one opinion or point-of-view over another usually without evidence".</p> <p>Explain to students that they will learn about different types of bias in the news.</p> <p>Hand out the worksheet (or have students access the worksheet digitally) - Material #1.</p>
10 minutes	<p>Show students example 1a/1b:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1a. Zimbabwe President Attempts to End Conflict</li> <li>1b. Zimbabwe Dictator Launches Genocide Plan to Eliminate Opposition</li> </ol> <p>Have students discuss the differences between the two headlines:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What's the difference between 1a and 1b?</li> <li>2. What does each headline make you think? (Example: Do you think the Zimbabwe leader is a good or bad person?)</li> </ol> <p>Elicit answers from students. Explain that headlines are the first thing that people read, so the way headlines are written is important.</p> <p>Have students go over the remaining examples (2a/b, 3a/b, 4a/b) and elicit answers from students.</p> <p>Finally, tell students to discuss the reflection question: Do you think it is possible to write a headline that doesn't make an event seem good or bad? Why or why not?</p>

10 minutes	<p>Transition the students to the next type of bias: #2 - Bias in photos, captions, and camera angles. Show the two G7 photos on the board. Ask students: What's the difference between these photos? How might the left photo influence readers? How about the right photo's influence?</p> <p>Explain that news outlets can only select a few photos, so their choice is important for neutrality.</p> <p>Have students discuss in pairs the photos of Brock Turner:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How do these two photos influence a reader differently?</li> <li>2. Which photo do you think the media captioned "All-American swimmer"? Which do you think the media captioned "Stanford rapist"?</li> </ol> <p>For these questions, the teacher may need to briefly explain that "All-American" means he was the best swimmer, and that Stanford is a famous university in the US.</p>
50 minutes	<p>Continue in a similar fashion through the remaining types of bias (#3-7), presenting the examples, having students discuss the differences, and reflecting on how each type of bias can influence a reader's ideas or opinions.</p>
5 minutes	<p>After completing all 7 types of bias, have students reflect on their own experience with the news in Japan. Possible reflection questions include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have you seen any of these types of bias in Japanese news? If yes, where did you see it? What type of bias was it?</li> <li>2. Do you know what Japanese newspapers (like Asahi, Mainichi, Nikkei, Sankei, or Yomiuri) support? For example, do they want a stronger military? Do they want the government to be changed a lot? Do they want a strong relationship with the United States? Do they want less immigration (a more closed country)</li> </ol>
5 minutes	<p>Wrap up the lesson by reviewing the types of bias discussed in class and asking students if they have any questions.</p> <p>Announce any homework (none is included in this activity but one option could be for students to find examples of bias in Japanese news).</p>



## 5. Additional Information

### Post-activity suggestions:

Once students have completed the "Bias in the News" worksheet, an optional homework activity could be to ask students to find examples of bias in Japanese news.

An optional extension project for this worksheet is the "Bias in the News Project". See Appendix B.

### Additional application scenarios:

This worksheet could be divided into separate lessons, each lesson covering only one type of bias. For example, in the first lesson, the class could look at #1 - Bias in the Headline, then students could look at various news sources to see if they can identify bias in the day's headlines. The benefit of this strategy would be that one day's trending stories would be similar, so many news sources would likely have articles about the same story. Comparing articles about the same story (e.g. a new tax cut, the death of a celebrity, an election, a weather crisis) allows students to more easily see bias.

### Acknowledgements:

This worksheet includes information from Media Smarts (Johnson, 2021), The University of Washington (2024), and AllSides (Mastrine, 2022). Please see References for more information.

# Appendix B

## “News Media Bias Unit Project” Activity

### 1. Objective

#### Learning Objective

General Objective	To consolidate students' learning and understanding of bias in news media
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### 2. Activity Context

This activity was designed for a university CLIL course on Media. The aim of the course is to teach students media literacy by studying various forms of media (the news, social media, advertising, books, etc.). This project on bias in the news follows the lesson(s) on bias in the news (see Appendix A).

#### Students

Number of students	10 Min.      30 Max.
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Do students need to use a second language?	Yes
What is the second language?	English
Level(s) in target language:* * See table at the end of these activities description for reference about these mastery levels.	Intermediate   CEFR B1   IELTS 3.5-4.5 ITOEIC 500-700

### 3. Activity Materials & Prep

#### Activity Duration

Total duration in minutes:	180-270
How many sessions?	2-3
Any homework?	<b>No</b>

#### Materials

Material # 1 Title:	News Media Bias Unit Project Guidelines
Material Type:	Digital Document
Material Access:	<a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-h1Ni2jidUdZz4gkXn6JIn2DCRzWN-TsL/edit?usp=drive_link&amp;oid=110907596192827234753&amp;rtpof=true&amp;sd=true">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-h1Ni2jidUdZz4gkXn6JIn2DCRzWN-TsL/edit?usp=drive_link&amp;oid=110907596192827234753&amp;rtpof=true&amp;sd=true</a>

Material # 2 Title:	News Media Bias Unit Project Worksheet
Material Type:	Worksheet
Material Access:	<a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1E7Mz65qm43eMDSEhs2dL-eDm3djR9DVh/edit?usp=sharing&amp;oid=110907596192827234753&amp;rtpof=true&amp;sd=true">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1E7Mz65qm43eMDSEhs2dL-eDm3djR9DVh/edit?usp=sharing&amp;oid=110907596192827234753&amp;rtpof=true&amp;sd=true</a>

Material # 3 Title:	News Media Bias Unit Project Example Slideshow
Material Type:	Slideshow

Material Access:	<a href="https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1mLMipqPk9lKwXBDox9ztO1TqTGT-GivlO/edit?usp=drive_link&amp;ouid=110907596192827234753&amp;rtpof=true&amp;sd=true">https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1mLMipqPk9lKwXBDox9ztO1TqTGT-GivlO/edit?usp=drive_link&amp;ouid=110907596192827234753&amp;rtpof=true&amp;sd=true</a>
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### Set-Up Instructions

1. The unit project works best in pairs, so a list of pre-determined student pairs (if desired) needs to be completed before presenting the project.
2. The key to finding bias is to compare two articles that are about the SAME story, so preparing additional examples (two are given in the project guidelines) is helpful for students.
3. Providing news sources for students to use may be necessary, if students are unfamiliar with news sources in English. Additionally, some news sources require a subscription to access articles, so preparing a list of free news sources is an idea (or provide login information for access, if possible).
Estimated Set Up Time (min.): 10-15

## 4. Activity Description

Suggested Time	Activity Instructions
(Day 1) 5 minutes	Review the types of bias in the news. This can be done by showing two photos, two headlines, or two captions side-by-side (taken from the Bias in the News worksheet - see Appendix A) and asking students 1) What type of bias is this? 2) What does the left side make you think? How about the right?
(Day 1) 10 minutes	Introduce the News Media Bias Unit Project and handout the guidelines (or have students access it digitally) (see Material #1). Tell students they will be working with a partner to compare two news articles about the SAME story. Show the example of inappropriate selections (#2.a.i. and #2.a.ii. in the guidelines) and explain that different stories will not show bias.

	<p>Show the example of appropriate selections (#2.b.i. and #2.b.ii in the guidelines). Emphasize to students that their news articles must be about the SAME news story and should come from different news sources. Point out the list of news sources in the Bias in the News worksheet (see Appendix A) or provide students with a list of news sources they can use.</p> <p>Tell students they will present three examples of bias in the news articles. The example slideshow (Material #3) can be shown. Alternatively, it could be given to students to view on their own time.</p>
(Day 1) 5-20minutes	<p>Have students sit in pairs and start looking for news stories and articles to use. Circulate to check on students' progress and to answer any questions or provide support.</p> <p>Once students have found a story and two news articles, have the pair write their story on the board. It is best if pairs have different stories, so each pair can present about different topics.</p>
(Day 1) Remaining	<p>Instruct students to use the remaining time to read their news articles and to start comparing the articles. Students may use the News Media Bias Project Worksheet (Material #3) to help organize their information and to find types of bias.</p>
Day 2	<p>Project Time</p> <p>Have students continue comparing the two articles. Students should also start preparing their slideshow and practice their presentation.</p>
Day 3	<p>Presentation Day</p> <p>Have students prepare their presentations. Options for presentations include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Whole-class presentations</li> </ol> <p>Each pair presents together in front of the whole class. Students can be given a listener's sheet to complete and/or time to ask questions to the presenter.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Individual round-robin presentations</li> </ol> <p>Partners do "janken" (rock-paper-scissors game). Winners make a circle around the edge of the room and present individually (using a laptop or tablet to present). Losers will rotate around the room, listening to one Winner at a time. Keep a timer on the board (between 3-5 minutes,</p>



	depending on the level of the students) so Losers all move to the next presenter at the same time. Once the Loser has listened to all the Winners and returns to their partner, they will switch. Losers will present individually while Winners listen and rotate.
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## 5. Additional Information

### Tips during the activity:

The articles students choose should be about the same news story ideally from the same day (e.g. Radiotherapy treatment for prostate cancer could extend lives of thousands of men, major trial finds (Bodkin, 2018) from The Telegraph, and Prostate cancer: radiotherapy could extend thousands of lives, study finds (Boseley, 2018) from The Guardian).

There are a few caveats for this project. First, many online news outlets require paid subscriptions, so students may not have access to full articles. To sidestep this, teachers could subscribe to several news outlets and provide students with either the login information or the articles themselves. Similarly, teachers could pre-select two articles and assign students to compare the two articles, rather than having students choose the articles themselves.

Another limitation is that students may choose news stories about similar stories but from different days or about slightly different aspects of the news story. For example, Thousands of Amazon workers receive food stamps. Now Bernie Sanders wants the company to pay up (Bhattarai, 2018) from The Washington Post and Bernie Sanders praises Jeff Bezos for hiking Amazon minimum wage to \$15 (Haselton, 2018) from CNBC are both about the same topic of Bernie Sanders and Amazon but are about different events and from different days. Teachers can address this by carefully checking the contents and date of the articles. Another option is to utilize Breaking News English (n.d.), a website with graded news stories written for English language learners. Each scaled article lists the primary news articles at the end, so students have an opportunity to first read a news story, then compare how various news outlets have portrayed the same story.

A last obstacle may be that students do not have a deep understanding of politics and how news outlets may have a political slant. Similarly, they may choose two news outlets that have similar political leanings and may then struggle to find news bias. Teachers should consult and introduce to students media bias charts such as those from Allsides (2023) or Ad Fontes Media (2024) to show the spectrum of news outlets available. Students will likely find it easier to select and compare articles from either end of the spectrum, rather than from two on the same side.

**Post-activity suggestions:**

A reflection activity (written or spoken) could be done to review the news stories and biases that the students covered in the unit and projects.

**English Mastery Reference Levels**

TOEFL	IELTS	TOEIC	Cambridge exam	CEFR Level	Skill level
118-120	9		CPE	C2	Mastery or proficiency
<b>115-117</b>	<b>8.5</b>		<b>CPE</b>	<b>C2</b>	
110-114	8	975-990	CAE / CPE	C2/C1	
102-109	7.5	966-974	CAE	C1	Effective operational proficiency
<b>94-101</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>945-965</b>	<b>CAE</b>	<b>C1</b>	
79-93	6.5	900-960	FCE	C1/B2	Vantage or upper intermediate
<b>65-78</b>	<b>5.5-6.0</b>	<b>785-940</b>	<b>FCE</b>	<b>B2</b>	
53-64	4.5-5	785-795	FCE	B2/B1	Threshold or intermediate
41-52	4	670-780	PET	B1	
<b>35-40</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>550-665</b>	<b>PET</b>	<b>B1</b>	
<b>30-34</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>225-545</b>	<b>KET</b>	<b>A2</b>	Waystage or elementary
19-29	2.0-2.5	171 -220		A1	Breakthrough or beginner
<b>0-18</b>	<b>1.0 - 1.5</b>	<b>120 -170</b>		<b>A1</b>	

Source: <http://www.higheredme.com/2017/04/11/english-test-comparison/>

**Author's Biography**

Sharon Sakuda is a visiting faculty member at Asia University teaching conversational English, TOEIC skills, and global issues. She also has experience teaching academic writing, health and fitness, and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Her research interests include motivational interviewing, curriculum development, and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). Correspondence should be sent to: [sharon.sakuda@gmail.com](mailto:sharon.sakuda@gmail.com)