

Bias in Digital Media: News, Social, and Algorithmic

60 minutes

ICT Specialism 4: The internet and digital literacy

Outcome M4.U3.2

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

In this lesson students examine bias in news, social media and algorithmic content. They identify types of bias, discuss framings of the same event and analyse a source for bias with concrete evidence.

CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Outcome	What the specification asks for
M4.U3.2	Identify, critically examine and comment on digital media texts that highlight bias.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Identify traditional news bias, social bias, and algorithmic bias
- Observe and discuss how the same event can be framed differently across broadsheet, tabloid, and partisan social posts
- Analyse one article or social post from the investigation for bias flavour and evidence

BEFORE THE BELL

- Prepare three examples of coverage of the same event from different media sources for projection.
- Have materials ready for the opinion line activity such as markers or position cards.
- Pin the three bias flavour names (traditional news, social media, algorithmic) where the class can see them during the opinion line.
- Prepare three short coverages of the same event: broadsheet-style, tabloid-style, and partisan social post.
- Use the three same-event coverages prepared for step 1; project them in the next step after this table.
- Project the three prepared same-event coverages (broadsheet, tabloid, partisan social).
- Open the opinion-line on the board before this step. Pin the three bias flavour names where everyone can see them.

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HOW THE LESSON RUNS

5 min	introduction	Introduction
8 min	content	Key concepts
6 min	content	Same event, three frames
12 min	activity	Opinion line: where do you stand on bias?
3 min	content	Common issues
20 min	activity	Portfolio build: Bias Analysis
3 min	content	Reflection
3 min	summary	Lesson summary

TEACHING MOVES

- After the key concepts table, project the three prepared coverages and ask what is put first and what is missing; allow a one-minute pair share of one difference.
- During the opinion line, read statements aloud and take voices from different parts of the room before moving markers. Three statements only.
- Circulate during the portfolio build asking which bias flavour they have identified and where the clue is on the page.
- Keep the reflection oral and limit to two voices if time is short.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Students call something biased simply because they disagree with it. Solution: Insist on naming a concrete clue such as a loaded word or missing detail.
- Students treat framing as a fourth flavour. Solution: Remind them framing and omission sit inside the three flavours.
- Incorrect file naming for the portfolio. Solution: Check that the file is saved as sm4_bias_analysis in the Specialism sm4 folder.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Support: Sentence starters are on the student Portfolio build card (Source / Bias flavour / Evidence / How I know).
- Extension: Ask students who finish early to add a second short entry comparing two sources.
- Support: Pair students during the opinion line to discuss their positions before sharing.