



Bias Analysis with Allsides - Coverage of Trump's Tariffs

Overview

Democracy only works when 'we the people' are informed. With the overwhelming number of news sources in the modern age, students need to learn how to identify bias in how evidence is selectively presented and analyzed. This lesson helps train them to be critical consumers of information.

Activity Instruction

1. Preteach the concept of tariffs, using CLP's current event here. Decide if you, as the teacher, will select the two articles and do this activity as a whole class or if you will have students each working off articles they find themselves that have been identified as LEFT or RIGHT using the search bar on the Allsides home page and typing in 'tariffs.' You may want to peruse the website first to be familiar with the format.

<https://www.allsides.com/unbiased-balanced-news>

2. Present the Ad Fontes Media Bias Chart (*7 minutes*)

Project the chart on the screen to the whole class or have them bring it up on their own screens if you have individual devices. Here's the link: <https://adfontesmedia.com/interactive-media-bias-chart/>

Have students examine this and then ask for impressions, comments. Discuss the usefulness of this tool. Notice which version of the chart this is. It's being updated constantly. Point out the difference in utility between fact-oriented sites and opinion-oriented ones. Both are useful, as long as you know WHY you are using them.

3. Transition to examining a single issue through two different biases (*3 minutes*)

Hand out copies (or distribute digitally) of the Allsides worksheet for comparing and contrasting two sources. Preview the tasks in the worksheet before setting them to work reading then comparing.

4. Selection and reading of two articles (*20 minutes*)

Help students navigate online to the Allsides website and show them how to pick a topic and then find articles.

5. Comparing and contrasting (*20 minutes*)

Give students time to work on filling out the worksheet, either in pairs or individually.

6. Share out (*10 min*)

In small groups, have students share their observations about similarities and differences in the articles and especially focus on the last two questions about a free press and for profit media.

7. Assessment options (*varies*)

Follow up with exploration of the FACTs of tariffs from one of the sources at the top of the Ad Fontes Media Bias Chart, or have students write their own opinion about Trump's proposed tariffs. Explore how other countries are reacting to the proposals by looking at international news sources.



Bias Analysis with Allsides

Directions: This is a current event assignment. Follow the directions in order.

- Open the website [Allsides.com](https://www.allsides.com) on your device: <https://www.allsides.com/unbiased-balanced-news>
- Identify an issue that interests you from the Top Stories menu on the top.
- Click on the issue. Then, read an article from the left AND an article on the right.

Compare and Contrast the Facts

Identify three important facts on which the articles AGREE and write them in full sentences here:

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-
-

What facts are in one article but NOT in the other? (record them here)

Left Leaning Article:	Right Leaning Article:
Facts ONLY in this article, not the other:	Facts ONLY in this article, not the other:

If you had only read one article, not both, how different would your understanding of the issue be? Explain.

There are more than two sides to most issues. What did BOTH of these articles leave out that might make sense of this issue?



Compare and Contrast the Commentary (or Analyze the Analysis)

Sometimes the facts are the same but the analysis or interpretation of the facts vary. This often is apparent right from the title. Compare the titles:

Left Leaning Article:	Right Leaning Article:
Title:	Title:

You can often identify bias by the vocabulary used in the commentary of the article. Identify the word choice and phrasing that shows how the author feels.

Left Leaning Article:	Right Leaning Article:
Words/phrases that show what author feels about the facts:	Words/phrases that show what author feels about the facts:

The First Amendment of the Constitution protects the freedom of the press. The opposite of a free press is one in which a government controls the messaging and information the public gets. Why is it so important for democratic societies to have access to a free press?

What's the danger in for-profit media sources? How could the need to make money affect the news or how it is presented?

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