



Point of View

Labels

Magazines, newspapers, broadcasters and organizations may have a reputation for being politically left or right. The mental model is a horizontal line starting on the left with progressive, liberal, moderate or centerist, continuing right with conservative, ultra-conservative sources. Such publications may be associated with a particular political party, religious movement, or they may have a one-issue cause (environmentalists). Some media outlets readily acknowledge a bias while others have unacknowledged bias, and still others strive to present a variety of viewpoints. Bias is neither positive or negative but indicates the filters through which a source may interpret the information they present. Individual contributors to any of the media outlets or organizations listed below may not conform to the source's label. Evaluate each document within a source for the individual author's point of view.

Editorials and talk shows — Newspapers devote columns to editorials and personal commentaries. These are clearly statements devoted to expressing the opinion of the news agency, its editors or the commentary's author. Such pieces can be helpful resources for papers on controversial topics as they provide various points of view and may help back up a thesis statement. Similarly, broadcast media features talk show hosts with clearly defined political agendas whose aim is to persuade listeners or views to that point of view.

Magazines & Newspapers

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| Advocate (gay/liberal) | Nation (progressive) |
| America (Catholic) | National Review (conservative) |
| American Legion (conservative veterans) | New American (ultra-conservative) |
| American Prospect (liberal) | New Republic (liberal) |
| American Spectator (conservative) | New York Daily News Newspaper (liberal) |
| Atlantic (leans liberal) | New York Post Newspaper (conservative) |
| Chicago Tribune Newspaper (liberal) | New York Times Newspaper (liberal) |
| Christian Century (protestant liberal) | New Yorker (leans liberal) |
| Christian Science Monitor (liberal) | Newsday Newspaper (liberal) |
| Christianity Today (evangelical) | Newsweek Magazine (centerist/liberal) |
| Commentary (conservative) | Progressive (progressive) |
| Commonweal (Catholic) | Rolling Stone (pop-culture/liberal) |
| Congressional Digest (government policy) | Sierra (environmentalist/liberal) |
| Dissent (progressive) | Skeptical Inquirer (evidence-based scientific) |
| E: The Environmental Magazine (environmentalist) | Tikkun (Jewish/liberal) |
| Economist (conservative) | Time Magazine (centerist/conservative) |
| Foreign Affairs (moderate/centerist) | USA Today Newspaper (centerist) |
| Guardian Newspaper - UK (liberal) | US News and World Report Magazine (centerist) |
| Harper's Magazine (leans liberal) | Utne Reader (liberal) |
| Houston Chronicle Newspaper (liberal) | Village Voice (liberal) |
| Humanist (secular) | Wall Street Journal Newspaper (conservative) |
| Insight on the News (conservative) | Washington Post Newspaper (liberal) |
| Los Angeles Times Newspaper (liberal) | Weekly Standard (conservative) |
| Mother Jones (progressive) | World Press Review (international perspectives) |
| Ms (feminist/progressive) | World Watch (environmentalist) |

Radio & Television Networks

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| ABC TV (attempts objectivity) | NBC TV (attempts objectivity) |
| Air America Radio (liberal) | NPR Radio (leans liberal) |
| BBC News Radio (international/moderate) | PBS Radio (leans liberal) |
| CBS TV (attempts objectivity) | PRI Radio (international perspectives) |
| CNN TV (attempts objectivity) | Clear Channel (conservative) |
| FOXNews TV (conservative) | |



Point of View

Institutes and Foundations

Think Tanks - Think tanks are organizations that investigate and advocate such topics as public policy, economics or politics. Their studies are often quoted by the media to support an argument. While many claim to be non-partisan, careful reading of their mission statements and their reports may indicate otherwise. It's helpful to know an organization's reputation before using their report to support or refute a claim.

Think Tanks and Foundations:

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| American Enterprise Institute (conservative) | Hoover Institution (conservative) |
| Brookings Institution (liberal) | Institute for Policy Studies (liberal) |
| Cato Institute (libertarian) | Pew Charitable Trust (liberal) |
| Center for American Progress (progressive) | Public Citizen (liberal - consumer advocacy) |
| Center for Economic Policy and Research (progressive) | Reason Foundation (libertarian) |
| Goldwater Institute (conservative) | Twentieth Century Fund (liberal) |
| Heritage Foundation (conservative) | Urban Institute (liberal) |

Unstated Bias — Not all opinion is clearly labeled. Persuasive writing, whether in a book, magazine article, or on the web, may have an unstated point of view that the reader must detect based on language used and information included or neglected. The more the reader knows about a topic, the easier it is to detect bias. Because there is no oversight for quality on the web, anyone can upload content to a web page. Judging the value of online content can be difficult if the bias of the website's author is disguised by how the website looks and reads. Of all the sources available to students, the web requires the most critical analysis before use in a research paper.

Detecting Bias

When deciding if a source is being objective about the information presented, look for some of the following techniques used to convince readers that what they are reading is fact when it may not be:

1. **Persuasive ("loaded") language** — using words and sentences that solicit a positive or negative response from the reader or that lead the reader to a specific conclusion.
2. **Misquoting a source**— this often happens in the media when reporters reword, paraphrase, or manipulate a statement or source's information.
3. **Selective facts**—taking information out of context or selective use of data—picking only information that supports the argument and leaving out the rest.
4. **Distortion or stretching the facts**—making issues more extreme by using misinformation or exaggeration.
5. **Flawed research**—basing a claim on too small a sample, manipulating statistics, using "fuzzy science" or "bad math," failing to report contrary conclusions from other scientists.

Website Evaluation

Many websites are self-published. Beyond the criteria mentioned for all resources, look for additional proof of value in websites. Some hoax sites look very credible until viewed with a critical eye. Look for:

1. **Mission/Vision/Purpose Statement**—reveals purpose of the website and point of view.
2. **Credentials**— a well-regarded sponsoring organization or an expert author. (Webpage content may not list an individual author.)
3. **Date of last revision**—this reveals how recently the content of a website has been reviewed.
4. **Contact information**— is there a physical address and telephone number the researcher can use to contact a real person with questions?
5. **Loaded language**—words that assign emotional value can be used to manipulate attitude. "Patriot" sounds better than "vigilante." "Insurgency" sounds less scary than "civil war."
6. **Links**—do other reputable websites link to the website and does it link to other reputable sites?

Order books, find and read articles, read full-text journals and e-books 24/7 at
<https://myportal.lakelandcc.edu/web/about/library-departments-home>

For additional help, contact the **Lakeland Library Reference Desk** at 440.525.7425 or reflibrarian@lakelandcc.edu