

News Analysis: Assessing Credibility

Comment [A1]: INFO LIT THRESHOLD CONCEPTS... 1) Context & Construction of Authority, 2) Search as strategic exploration, 3) Research as iterative Inquiry, 4) Info creation as Process, 5) Scholarship/research as Conversation, 6) Information has Value.

GUIDELINES

Use the methods below, from *social science & info literacy*, to guide weekly discussion & make sense of the news. Assess news credibility & balance -- and explore *if 'fake news' is even a real thing!*

Overview

- Find an article, length 500 - 1,500 words, from news outlet types including: 'mainstream' / corporate-chain, 'alternative' / independent, or foreign (see 'Finding...' below). Start daily by surfing major news headlines (print or online). AND listen weekly to 1 hour of general news broadcast, Mon-Fri. At 7am or 4pm, try radio/online 91.5 FM/ [OPB.org](#), 90.7 FM/ [KBOO.fm](#), or try [The World](#) or [BBC](#) webcasts any time.
- To Analyze your individual article before next class meeting: Follow steps **below**, 1) – 3) & Prep/Debrief Questions, to complete [Analysis Form, pg. 2 BELOW](#). (Allow 1 hour.)
- Discuss your Analysis in group breakout near end of class-time. Then hand to instructor if you want feedback.

Finding Your Article

1) News outlet types?

If you choose mainstream/corporate-chain news, then next time please do alternative/independent OR foreign (IF in English & about international issues) -- and vice versa.

Outlet types...	Alternative ('Left' to 'Right')	Mainstream	Foreign
FOR EXAMPLE (e.g.): ...Magazines/Web...	<i>The Nation</i> In These Times The Progressive <i>Mother Jones</i> <i>National Review</i>	<i>Time</i> <i>US News & World Report</i> <i>The Week</i> <i>Rolling Stone</i> <i>The New Republic</i>	<i>Der Spiegel</i> (Germany) <i>The Economist</i> (UK) <i>Le Monde diplomatique</i> (FR) New Internationalist (UK) <i>TheWeek.in</i> (India)
...Web only...	Commondreams.org , Vox.com Real News Network	<i>CNN.com</i> , <i>Newsmax.com</i>	world-newspapers.com
...Newspaper/Web...	<i>Willamette Week</i> The Village Voice <i>Portland Tribune</i> The Christian Sci. Monitor	<i>Washington Post</i> <i>The New York Times</i> <i>The Oregonian</i> <i>USA Today</i> , <i>The WSJ</i>	<i>The Guardian</i> (UK) al Jazeera (Qatar) <i>Globe & Mail</i> (Canada) The Straits Times (Singapore)

- Get news where? [PCC.edu/library](#) (log in) ...other libraries ...News org's (e.g. [AP](#), [BBC.com](#), [NPR.org](#), [TPM](#))
CAUTION: Google? (Use only [news.google.com](#) or advanced search settings.) BEWARE: 'Social' media / Facebook.
- Use only news stories dated from **the past 3 years** -- and length **500 - 1,500 words!**

Prep / Debrief Questions (for Analysis Form, next page below, & for discussion)

- How do news media represent societies?
- What is news? (uses **sources** to tell Who/What/When/Where/Why) ...What makes news credible?
- How do *alternative/independent* differ from *mainstream/corporate-chain* news media?
- What is a **SOURCE**? (In article: who/what speaks? [Who/what does author quote or cite to give info?])
- What is an **ATTRIBUTION**? (each time a source gives info: "says, according to, reports, claims, notes"...)
Tally total number (#) of...
 - ✓ **Government:** # ("public": K-12 school, city, county, state, federal, police, military [.gov / .us / .mil])
 - ✓ **Business:** # (for-profit product / service [.com])
 - ✓ **Citizen / Independent:** # (nonprofit / charity / religious [.org], "Jo Citizen")
 - ✓ **Academic:** # (college or university, staff ONLY [.edu])
- Which *institutional category* [of G/B/C/A above] fits a source? See above, or do more research. (Hint: See the source's internet domain, '.gov/.com/.org/.edu', or their website's 'About...' page.)
- See Syllabus Resources for current, critical analysis & review of major news media.

News Article Analysis Form

Your Name _____

** see PREP / DEBRIEF QUESTIONS*

Discuss in Group/Breakout # _____

NEWS OUTLET TYPE: independent-alternative / corp.-chain-mainstream / foreign (*mark one*)

REFERENCE (*Author. Date. News outlet. "Title". Full web address/URL*):

SUMMARY (*Beyond just the title, key verifiable story elements [what/who/when/where/why]*): _____

SOURCES (*names quoted in story*): _____

ATTRIBUTIONS (*Each time a source is cited, tally number by category of...*)

Government: _____

(*Source categories*) Business: _____

Citizen / Independent: _____

Academic: _____

(*anonymous*: _____)

EVALUATING BALANCE & CREDIBILITY:

1) *Why is this news? Is the story relevant to the living conditions or core values of many people, AND does it fit the wider context ...of human knowledge? (...of other news? ...of history?)* [No=0 / Somewhat=0.5 / Yes=1]

2) *Is there inaccurate or misleading info, such as if the Title omits key facts?* [Y=0 / Some =0.5 / N=1]

3) *Are multiple sources (3 or more differing & verifiable views/voices) cited?* [N=0 / Just Two=0.5 / Y=1]

4) *Do anonymous sources/attribution dominate the story?* [Y=0 / Somewhat =0.5 / N=1]

5) *Does only one source dominate the story?* [Y=0 / Somewhat =0.5 / N=1]

6) *Do key sources have vested (\$...) interests?* [Y(most) =0 / Y(the ones most cited)=0.5 / N=1]

7) *Is the number tally of source category [G/B/C/A] attributions balanced?* [N=0 / Somewhat =0.5 / Y=1]

8) *Does the news outlet & author have a clear record of credible reporting?* [N=0 / Somewhat =0.5 / Y=1]

CREDIBILITY SCORE (0 [N=0/ Y=0/ N=0/ Y=0/ Y=0/ N=0/ N=0] to 8 [Y=1/ N=1/ Y=1/ N=1/ N=1/ N=1/ Y=1/ Y=1]): _____