

How Reporters Report Events

Reporters and news organizations make strategic and business-minded decisions about how to report events on print and digital media platforms. In the following activities, you examine differences in coverage of the 2016 Hong Kong Protests and then you act as a reporter and create or remix the news.

Print and television news reporters make multiple decisions about how they report the events they are covering, including who to interview, which perspective to present, which camera angles to use for capturing footage, and which audio to record. These decisions structure how viewers think about the causes and consequences of events.

An Historical Example

Historian Rick Perlstein (2020) described how, during the beginning of the Iran Hostage Crisis in 1979, ABC News vaulted to the top of the TV news show ratings with its late night broadcasts of "*America Held Hostage: The Crisis in Iran*" (the show that would soon be renamed *Nightline*). The network focused on showing images of a burning American flag, embassy employees in blindfolds, Uncle Sam hanged in effigy, and increasingly more people watched the broadcast. Perlstein (2020) noted, "the images slotted effortlessly into the long-gathering narrative of American malaise, humiliation, and failed leadership" (p. 649) - themes Ronald Reagan would capitalize on during his successful 1980 Presidential campaign.

Is There a Bad News Bias?

Does U.S. media have a "bad news bias?" Researchers including Dartmouth College economics professor Bruce Sacerdote say "yes," at least in terms of its coverage of the Covid pandemic during 2020 and 2021 ([The New York Times](#), April 22, 2022). Examining news coverage from CNN, Fox News, the New York Times, and social media, researchers found that coverage in the U.S. unlike news outlets in other countries, was more heavily negative, emphasizing rising cases and downplaying the impacts of vaccines. The social scientists concluded that news organizations were giving readers and viewers what they want, and that is more negativity rather positivity in stories; a bad news bias.

Do you find a bad news bias in the media you read or watch? Are some topics covered more negatively or positively than others?

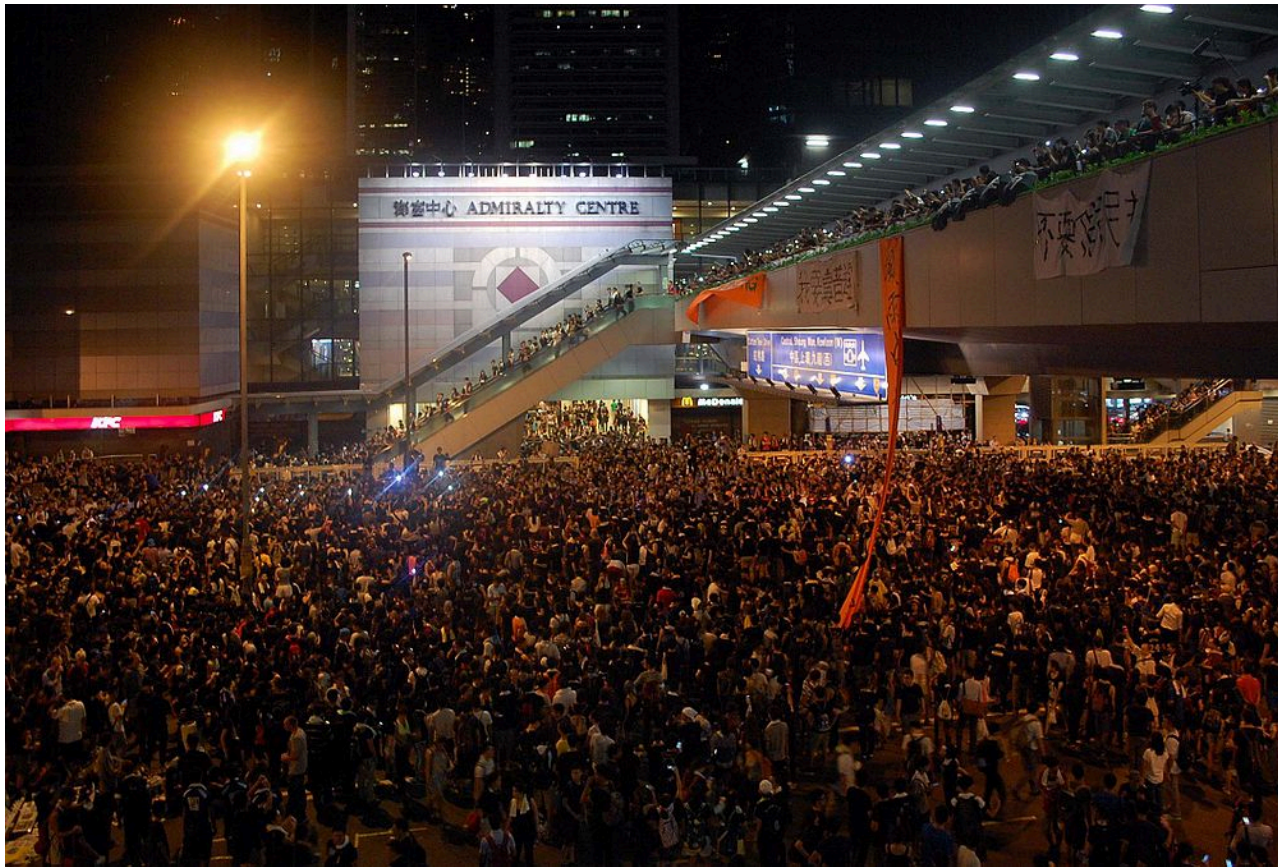


[Watch on YouTube](#)

Activity 1: Evaluate How Reporters Covered the 2016 Hong Kong Protests

Just as the accounts from [Marie Colvin, Nellie Bly, and other war correspondents](#) shaped public opinion during the past, photos and videos taken by reporters from today's conflict zones can have a huge influence over how people view and understand those events.

- Below are the links to two videos taken by two different correspondents covering the same event at the same time - the Hong Kong Protests in 2016:
 - [Hong Kong Protests 1](#)
 - [Hong Kong Protests 2](#)
- After watching the two videos, conduct a critical media literacy analysis using the prompts from the [Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing News and Newspapers](#).
- Then, consider the following prompts:
 - What is the primary message that each reporter is trying to communicate to the audience about the event?
 - If the goal of a correspondent is to inform the public about an event, which of these correspondents do you think accomplished that goal better? Why?
- **Report your findings in a Snapchat or TikTok video, presentation, blog, song, or [podcast](#).**



["Hong Kong protest Admiralty Centre"](#) by Citobun is licensed under [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

Activity 2: Report an Event From a Different Perspective

- Select a recent local, national, or international news event.
- Find news clips about this event on YouTube.
- **Remix these clips** (screen record the clips; add sound/narration/images) **to present a different perspective of the event.**
 - Screenrecording:
 - If you have a Mac computer, [use this shortcut](#).
 - If you have access to Quicktime, here's [how to screenrecord using Quicktime](#).
 - Otherwise, use a web-based screenrecording tool such as [Screencastify](#), [Screencast-o-Matic](#), or [Loom](#).
- After completing the remix, explain the reactions you sought to create through your selection of images, audio, and video.

Designing for Learning: Student-Created Activity Example

[How Reporters Report the News](#)

Additional Resources

- [Seven standards of quality journalism](#)
- [AllSides.com roundup of top weekly stories with articles from across the political spectrum](#)

Connecting to the Building Democracy for All eBook

[Building Democracy for All: How Are War Correspondents and War Photographers Essential to a Free Press?](#)

Connecting to the Standards

- [Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards](#)
 - *Explain the different functions of news articles, editorials, editorial cartoons, and “op-ed” commentaries.* (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) **[8.T7.3]**
- [ISTE Standards](#)
 - Digital Citizen
 - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
 - Knowledge Constructor
 - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
 - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
 - Creative Communicator
 - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
 - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
 - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.
- [DLCS Standards](#)
 - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
 - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
 - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
 - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
 - Research (DTC.c)
- [English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards](#)
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8



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