Simplified Rating Methodology

The Simplified Rating version examines overall Reliability and Bias and is a great way to begin learning our rating methodology. The simplified Media Bias Chart has two axes: the vertical axis rates for reliability and the horizontal axis for left-to-right political bias.

Reliability

There are many reasons that you might consider a news article to be "good" or "bad," and determining reliability is not just a matter of whether something is fake or real.

Stories with **Original Fact Reporting** are the highest ranked. Real journalists find facts from the most direct sources possible, uncovering things that would be impossible for the public to find out otherwise. Other news articles would not exist without it.

Fact reporting stories present a series of facts, such as the who, what, when, and where of a story. These can include stories that are not original reporting but which solely re-report the original reporting of others.

Articles that rate as **Complex Analysis** provide <u>thorough</u> explanation and context about news events and are full of factual information.

Analysis articles provide <u>a moderate amount</u> of explanation and context. The difference between "complex analysis" and "analysis" is that "complex analysis" articles are typically longer and provide more facts.
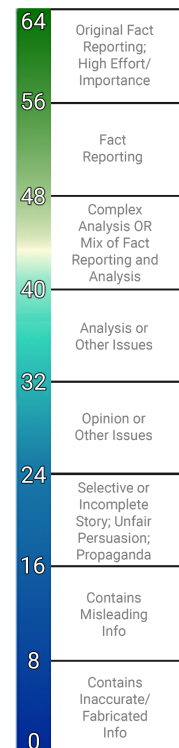
Articles that are **Opinion/Fair Persuasion** try to convince the reader of a particular point of view, but generally remain fair.

Articles rank as **Selective or Incomplete/Unfair Persuasion** if they leave out important facts, the presence of which would make the story come across differently. They also use unfair rhetorical tactics such as bringing up irrelevant or untimely points.

Articles are **Misleading** when they frame facts in such a way that it leads to a false understanding of the story. An article can be only partly misleading and still fall into this category.
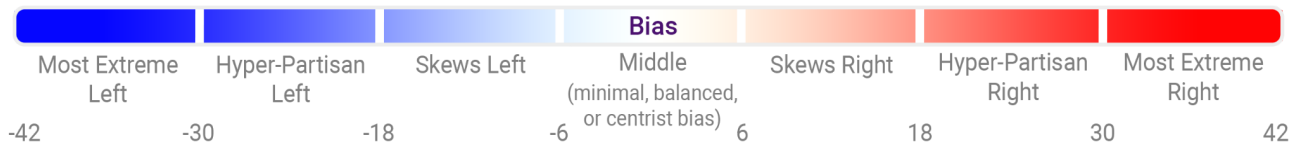
Stories are **Inaccurate/Fabricated Info** when their information is incorrect or made up. An article can be only partly inaccurate or fabricated to fall in this category.

To rate an article for Reliability, <u>read the entire article,</u> paying attention to each part of it, including the headline, graphic(s), and each sentence.

Scale	Category
64	Original Fact Reporting; High Effort/ Importance
56	Fact Reporting
48	Complex Analysis OR Mix of Fact Reporting and Analysis
40	Analysis or Other Issues
32	Opinion or Other Issues
24	Selective or Incomplete Story; Unfair Persuasion; Propaganda
16	Contains Misleading Info
8	Contains Inaccurate/ Fabricated Info
0	

Bias (0-42)

Bias prefers one thing over another, frequently unfairly. Reliability and Bias are often correlated, but not always. Our methodology considers bias separately to determine its degree.

Most Extreme Left	Hyper-Partisan Left	Skews Left	**Bias** Middle (minimal, balanced, or centrist bias)	Skews Right	Hyper-Partisan Right	Most Extreme Right
-42	-30	-18	-6 6		18 30	42

These category definitions assume you have some reference level of understanding of what constitutes "left" and "right" in contemporary U.S. politics, and what is extreme by comparison. If you have some basic understanding of these concepts, you can rate an article for bias simply based on your personal experiences and beliefs.

If you believe you can make an educated guess about where to rate an article for bias, pick a number that lands within the category you have chosen. If you don't think you can make an educated guess, do not rate the article for bias. Over time, your classroom discussions and experience reading and rating more articles will allow you to develop a basis for rating articles in the future.

The main factors you need to consider to rate bias are:
- Political Position (whether the article advocates for one).
- Language (how the article refers to political issues or opponents).
- Comparison (to other articles you have read).

Your reasoning for rating an article for bias should revolve around these considerations. When you move to the full rating methodology, you will consider each one of these factors individually.

Other Factors

There are other factors that can lower your scores:
- Stories containing grammar and spelling errors.
- Stories making inferences about future events that are not well-supported by facts.
- Stories that include ad hominem arguments, vilification, or dehumanization of a person or group.

Summary of Simplified Rating Methodology

1. Read and understand the descriptions of the Reliability and Bias Categories.
2. Read the entire article, including the headline and graphic.
3. Rate for Reliability.
4. Rate for Bias.