



## News, Perspective, Bias - Intermediate

### Overview

Students think critically about presenter bias and how it can influence public perception. Next, they compare and contrast headlines presented by different news outlets and reflect on the importance of recognizing bias and taking multiple perspectives into account when reviewing stories and drawing conclusions about events.

### Teacher Background

- [Boston Massacre](#) Encyclopædia Britannica
- [A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre in Boston](#) Internet Archive
- [A Fair Account of the Late Unhappy Disturbance at Boston in New England](#) Massachusetts Historical Society
- [Media Bias chart](#) ad fonts media

### Digital Resources

- [Symbols and Propaganda from the Boston Massacre](#) WGBH Forum
- [Primary source 1 record](#)
- [Primary source 2 record](#)

### Materials

- Computer with Internet access & digital display
- Digital document, white/chalkboard or chart paper
- [Primary source 1](#) 1 for each group (half of the groups)
- [Primary source 2](#) 1 for each group (half of the groups)
- [Event Happenings worksheet](#) 1 for each student

### Implementation

#### Spark Inquiry (15 minutes)

1. Briefly discuss perspective (the way in which someone thinks about and interprets situations that is influenced by personal knowledge and experience) and how that can affect the interpretation of an event.



2. Show an [excerpt from the Symbols and Propaganda from the Boston Massacre](#) video (to 4:14) to provide historical context to the events leading up to the Boston Massacre, directing half the students to take notes to identify the grievances/complaints of the colonists and the other half to take notes to identify the grievances/complaints of the British.
3. Discuss and list the grievances/complaints of both sides in a digital document, on the board, or on chart paper.

### **Deepen Inquiry (25 minutes)**

4. Divide students into groups of 3. Give half of the groups a copy of Source 1 and the other half of the groups a copy of Source 2 and each student an Event Happenings worksheet (see Materials). Inform students that each source represents an account of what happened on March 5, 1770. Direct them to work together to analyze their source and for each student to complete the worksheet.
5. Instruct groups who analyzed the image to create a brief report of the event as if written by someone who was there and groups who analyzed the deposition to create an illustration of the event based on the text.
6. Combine groups so that each new group of 6 has both sources. Direct students to share their work and discuss the different perspectives represented by the 2 sources.
7. Define bias: showing a preference for one side or version of events over another. Inform students that the image's creator was not present at the event and, in fact, had copied the scene from someone else's image, who also wasn't present. Ask: Which source do you think is more reliable? Why? Whose story would you like to hear in order to get a better understanding of what happened that day?
8. Inform students that five people were killed on March 5, 1770 and that, eventually, Captain Preston and 6 out of 8 soldiers were acquitted of any crime owing to self-defense. Then tell students that two narratives were written shortly after the event and based on reports from alleged eyewitnesses, writing the titles of each in a digital document, the board, or on chart paper: A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre in Boston and A Fair Account of the Late Unhappy Disturbance at Boston in New England. Instruct groups to look up and define massacre (the killing of a large number of peaceful or unresisting persons) and disturbance (the breakdown of peaceful, law-abiding behavior), then discuss the bias of each title.
9. Review student definitions then ask them to recap points raised in their group discussions. Remind students which narrative is remembered in this country today.



**Connect & Act (15 minutes)**

10. Discuss how people find out about news and events related to their friends, school, community, and country (e.g., social media, websites, television news, magazines, newspapers, etc.). Brainstorm a list of current events and select one issue to investigate further.
11. As a class, search for news about the issue. Record headlines from sources across the spectrum (see Teacher Background) and discuss the differences in perspective and bias the headlines reflect. Note: if time is short, you may choose to prepare article headlines ahead of time.
12. Discuss why it is important to consider perspective and bias when reviewing stories and drawing conclusions about events.