

How Do You Read Your News?

Learn to Recognize Point of View!

THE DAILY TRIBUNE Today's Latest ...

Committed activist groups moved up and down the street yesterday sharing their ideas with the world.

The Gazette News Flash!

Yesterday, a mob of protesters charged up and down the street hurling verbal attacks.

TRUE OR FALSE?

- _____ These two news “clips” could be covering the same story.
- _____ Sometimes the opinion of the writer influences how a story is told.
- _____ Readers can get a positive or negative impression of the story from the way the reporter chooses to tell it.

Did you write “True” for every answer? If so, you probably already know something about how to read news. In covering the news, most reporters try to avoid letting their personal opinions influence the way they write. They aim to be balanced and neutral so that their readers can form their own opinions based on the facts.

Still, the reporter’s point of view, or the way she or he sees things, affects which words are chosen to describe the event and which facts are highlighted or downplayed. So, in subtle ways, the reporter’s point of view could influence you without your being aware of it. It might cause you to come to a conclusion that may be false or only part of the story.

How can readers learn to recognize when a reporter’s point of view is affecting the story? There are words and phrases that often give clues. Look, above, at the two news clips on the same event. For most people, the second clip leaves a more negative impression than the first. That’s because the phrases “a mob of protesters charged” and “hurling verbal attacks” have a negative tone and are clues to the writer’s *opinion* of the event.

POSITIVE, NEGATIVE, NEUTRAL?

Read each sentence below and ask yourself, "Does this sentence give me a positive, negative, or neutral impression of this event?" Circle your choice. Then, underline the clue words that made you feel that way. The first one has been done for you.

1. Throngs of unconcerned citizens failed to vote.

positive

neutral

negative

2. Many people did not vote this year.

positive

neutral

negative

3. The respected expert, Sam Nell, delivered a powerful and eloquent message.

positive

neutral

negative

4. The highly opinionated Sam Nell preached his beliefs to the crowd.

positive

neutral

negative

ANOTHER WAY TO TELL IT

Another way to recognize a writer's point of view is to ask yourself, "What is another way that this could be said?" Draw a line between the boxes that are most likely describing the same event.

1.

Thousands of protesters shouted angrily outside the Capitol.

a.

With only profit in mind, the management team fired hundreds of workers.

2.

Anxious and sweating, the runners trembled at the start line.

b.

Fit and ready, the athletes waited with determination.

3.

In order to balance the budget, the director was forced to initiate layoffs.

c.

Hundreds of thousands of citizens gathered to ensure that the government heard their concerns.