



Spotting Bias: How to Read Between the Lines

KS3 ENGLISH

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What is Bias?

Bias happens when a writer favours one side of a story and doesn't treat all sides fairly. Instead of giving you the whole picture, they lean towards their own opinions, beliefs, or what they want you to think. It's like they're wearing coloured glasses that make them see things one way only.

Think of it like: If your friend tells you about a football match but only talks about the great goals your team scored and ignores all the mistakes they made, that's biased reporting. A fair report would mention both the good and bad moments.

How to Spot Biased Language

Writers use special words and phrases to hide their bias. Look out for **emotionally charged words** — these are words that make you feel angry, scared, or excited. For example, saying someone "bravely stood up" sounds positive, but saying they "rudely interrupted" sounds negative, even if it's the same action.

Check if the writer uses **absolute words** like "always," "never," or "obviously." The real world is usually more complicated than that. Also notice if they ask **leading questions** that push you towards one answer, like "Don't you think that's unfair?" instead of just presenting the facts.

Missing Information and One-Sided Stories

Biased writing often leaves things out. A writer might tell you about all the problems with one idea but ignore the problems with their own idea. They might also use only **sources** (facts and quotes) that agree with them, ignoring expert opinions that disagree.

Think of it like: Imagine a menu that only shows the delicious desserts but hides the main courses. You'd think the restaurant only serves pudding! A fair menu shows everything.

How to Be a Smart Reader

To spot bias, ask yourself these questions: Who wrote this? What might they want me to believe? Are all sides of the argument explained equally? Are the facts proven, or are they just opinions? Where is the **evidence**?

Read multiple sources about the same topic. If different writers say completely different things, compare what each one includes and leaves out. Understanding bias makes you a stronger thinker and helps you make up your own mind based on real information.