

Bias

What is it?

Why did we need to recognise it?



Bias is putting across an unfair or unbalanced opinion.

Sports journalists need to be very careful of bias. As reporters they are expected to write fairly and accurately. They need to be objective - this means they are not biased in any way. They are meant to report the facts, not their opinions!

However, for many writers it is easier said than done...

If you were asked to write fair and balanced account of a football match between Manchester United and Arsenal you would have to describe exactly what happened truthfully.

If you supported Arsenal, you might describe any Manchester United goal as 'lucky', but any Arsenal goal as 'fantastic' or 'skilful'. Doing this would be biased. You would be putting across an unfair or unbalanced opinion.

**This is an account of a football match written by a Manchester United fan.
Manchester United lost 4-0 !**

"Arsenal were so lucky at the match. The superb and skilful Man United players were beaten by the lucky, cheating Arsenal players. The referee was totally biased, he allowed four goals that were all offside. I have never seen so much luck and cheating."

Here the writer is showing bias. Arsenal are always described as lucky or cheating, whereas Man United are always described as superb. He insults the referee and gives no credit to the Arsenal players.

Questions

1. Copy and complete the box on the right, adding in the words in the table below:

unbalanced	opinion
fantastic	beliefs
opinions	unfair
show	lucky
terrible	supports

Bias is where someone has an _____ opinion about something. We can recognise bias by finding _____. Bias is useful to us, as it helps us find out a person's _____ or _____.

If someone _____ a particular football team, they are likely to _____ bias when describing a match. Everything their team does would be described as _____, and everything the opposing team does would be described as _____ or _____.

2. Copy out the biased report of the football match. In your own words, explain why the report is biased.
3. Now rewrite the football report pretending you are an Arsenal supporter - how it would change?
4. What does a sports journalist have to do when reporting on a match?
5. Why might a journalist find it difficult to remain objective?

FINAL TASK: Produce a biased account of a football match.

You can make up the score and what happens - but remember to put across an unbalanced opinion!