



**Project
Website**

<https://pros4democracy.internprize.eu/>

**Activity
Video
Summary**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PedvKI_hP4c

Lesson Category

Media and News Literacy

Title

[Purpose of media sources – Information, Persuasion or Bias?](#)

Area(s)

Political argumentation in the media

Objectives

Students should be in a position to:

1. **differentiate between mainstream media and alternative or social media and compare them in terms of balanced/objective reporting**
2. **differentiate between sources providing information and sources expressing opinion**
3. **understand the purpose for which a source has been produced and the impact it is intended to make and how this could have affected the way the information is presented**
4. **distinguish between opinion and bias**



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Time needed

8 - 10 teaching periods

Materials needed

Newspaper and online articles, videos, PCs, worksheets

Age level(s)

14-18

Number of participants per group

4

Purpose of media sources – Information, Persuasion or Bias?

Originally designed by **G C School of Careers** as a part of the EuroVoters project

<https://eurovoters.eu>

Step-by-step description of activity

1. The teacher provides each group of students with an article or video each. All sources deal with the same issue, which, however, they present in different and sometimes contradictory ways. The groups should read the article or watch the video assigned to them and then shortly summarize its content and main message in a couple of sentences. It could be a short phrase or even a word about what the article deals with (e.g. migration, COVID19) and the overall impression the article conveys about the subject (e.g. positive or negative, approving or disapproving)
1. The groups come together and present their findings and perhaps have a first brief discussion on why the same issue is presented in such a different manner by each media.
1. The students go back to their groups and they are asked to
 - a. ascertain whether their article or video comes from mainstream or alternative/ social media and provide evidence for their findings
 - b. ascertain the purpose of their source, i.e. whether it focuses more on providing information or forming opinion and provide evidence about their findings (e.g. give examples of language, informative, emotive etc.)
 - c. detect any possible political or social affiliations of the particular media that could influence its content
4. Coming together the groups discuss their findings and compare notes. They are asked to compare the different purposes of each source and to see to what extent this affects their selection and presentation of information in each source.
4. The students are then asked to go back to their groups and prepare a worksheet with what they consider as the five most important points for balanced/ objective reporting.
4. The groups come together and through discussion and exchange of views agree on a list of five points that should characterize a balanced report, which they should then categorize in order of importance (i.e. first most important, second most important etc.). Appendix 1 can be used to be filled in as Balanced Report Evaluation Form
4. They go back to their group and try to evaluate the article they have read or video they have watched according to the balanced reporting criteria they have already agreed and fill in the form (see Appendix 1)

8. Once the students determine how balanced their sources are they could compare notes to decide
 - a. whether mainstream media are more or equally balanced/ one-sided as alternative media or vice versa
 - b. whether a source can retain its validity despite putting forward a specific claim (if, for example, it relies on substantial evidence)
 - c. whether a source can appeal to the wide public despite not being balanced and based on well-founded arguments – propaganda
9. Students are presented with extracts of propaganda articles and are shown propaganda extracts of videos or films (e.g. Nazi Germany or Cold War Era) in order to determine the difference between expressing opinion and propaganda. They are then asked to go back to their groups and prepare a table with 3 points of what constitutes opinion and 3 points of what constitutes propaganda
9. Students return with their findings to the group. A discussion should follow on whether there can be fully objective sources or whether there is an overt or covert purpose in most sources. Can sources still be valid and reliable despite serving a purpose? Are sources successful in achieving their aimed impact (e.g. necessarily reliable sources? How do people choose which sources to believe or not?

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Strategies of teaching and learning

Problem-based learning; critical-incident analysis

Evaluation

Students divide into two groups and prepare two powerpoint presentations on:

- Sources that Serve their Purpose (i.e. convey their message, view, opinion in a balanced and convincing way)
- Sources that Beat their Purpose (i.e. convey their message in a way which points to propaganda)

Notes to the educator

- The teacher's role should be one of facilitator and moderator
- The activity may be implemented in Language, History, Politics or Psychology classes

Notes to the students

- Students should be encouraged to do some research at home and find material, articles or videos where the same issue is presented from completely different perspectives

Suggestions for follow-up activities:

Students produce a short video about the difference between reporting with a purpose and propaganda.

Appendices

See Worksheet 1.

WORKSHEET 1 - Balanced Report Characteristics

Balanced report characteristics	Very good	Good	Adequate	Inadequate	Poor
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					