



English Virtual Learning

# English IV

May 6, 2020



Lesson: May 6, 2020

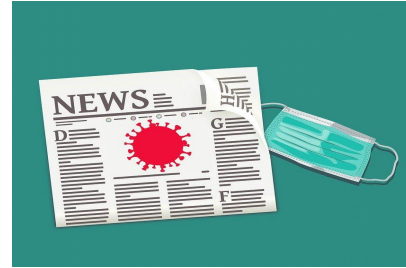
## Objective/Learning Target:

- I can evaluate a speaker's argument and claims, looking at point of view, reasoning, stance, and evidence, discuss, and ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue as well as clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions, and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
- I can respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives including those presented in diverse media; synthesize claims made on all sides of an issue, and, when warranted, qualify or justify my own views and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.
- I can explain my thinking in a well-organized and developed written response and include textual evidence.

## Bell Ringer:

On a sheet of paper or Google Doc that you will use for the remainder of this lesson, answer the following questions.

Where do you go to read the news? Whom do you follow? Why do you go there? What other options do you have?



# Review: Bias

To review: **bias** is a conscious or unconscious preference toward something, or away from something else. When offered two options for dinner, you would pick the option you like more, or are **biased** toward. In the news, this can show up in a couple of ways - some news sources only report on issues they're biased toward, whereas other news sources might show their bias more subtly, by using word choice or images that skew the reader and encourage them to believe something without saying it outright.

# Background

In today's lesson, you will examine where people in the U.S. get their news, how news selection amplifies one's political views, and how media organizations decide to cover stories.

You will view the *We The Voters* film "MediOcracy," and then examine current news stories and how they're covered by the three main cable news outlets. They will conclude by examining news stories for bias/point of view.

## Learn:

- Today, we are going to be looking at bias and ways you can identify it in the news and in other sources you read and find online by examining where people get their news, how news selection amplifies one's political views, and how media organizations decide to cover stories.
- To begin this lesson, watch this video, "[MediOcracy](#)." This video discusses not only bias, but also the way we consume media and how we evaluate it. As you watch, take notes paying special attention to bias, algorithms, and incestuous amplification.
- Then, read this article by [All Sides < http://allsides.com >](http://allsides.com) - observe how a news topic was written in three distinct viewpoints: left, center, and right. Take notes and consider that where you find your news can determine the angle from which you are receiving biased information.

## Practice:

- Use the information from your notes (refer back to the text and re-watch the video if needed) to answer the following prompt on your notebook paper:
  - ➔ **Based on the video and article from this lesson, how might the news you read be unintentionally biased toward your beliefs? Why can this be a problem? What can you do to prevent this?**

# Practice Answer Key:

*(Answers will Vary)*

- Check your answer to make sure it meets the following criteria:
  - Did you write in complete sentences and use standard conventions (spelling, punctuation, grammar)?
  - Did you answer every part of the prompt?
  - Did you support and explain your answer using 3 details from the source text?

Sample Proficient Answer on next slide.



# Sample Proficient Answer

*According to the video, “MediOcracy,” the news sources I watch may be limiting my exposure to accurate information and using propagandistic techniques to sway my opinions and further viewership of their programs. The video suggested that news sources use emotionally charged words such as thug, infamous racist, and assassination to increase their viewership by playing on my emotions in order to sway my opinions. The video also explained that where I get my news also impacts the accuracy of the information I receive. It claimed that social media creates “incestuous amplification” (selecting news sources to reinforce our own views). They use algorithms to determine what articles I see, therefore, limiting the information I receive and further polarizing my knowledge base. By only reading articles that further my own beliefs, I am limiting my ability to make sound judgments. Each news source, depending on their political agenda, limits the amount of information I receive. The organization All Sides shows how one topic - Judge Blocks Extension of Illinois Stay-at-home Order - was reported by three different news sources, which were reported from a politically different angle - left, center, and right. Each news source contained facts that the other two did not share. If I am only exposed to one of these angles based on my viewing habits, I can’t make sound judgments with only half the information. To rectify this problem, the video, “MediOcracy,” suggested that I intentionally search for articles and news sources in which I disagree. That way, I am at least exposed to additional varied information, which may help me determine what I believe to be accurate.*

## Reflection:

- In today's lesson, we talked about bias, and talked about identifying bias in other sources. However, the video we watched also talked about identifying our own bias in the way of “incestuous amplification,” otherwise known as **confirmation bias**. Confirmation bias is consuming media that supports your biases, and being more likely to believe information that matches your opinion.
- After finishing today's lesson, reflect on your own practices. How might confirmation bias influence the way people select and respond to news and information? In your own experience - be honest with yourself! - have you ever “confirmed” your own bias with news? How does that affect your understanding of an issue?

## Additional Resource:

For more information on detecting bias in the news and other sources, check out [this article](#). Try and apply it to some of the news websites we looked at today!

