

Different Perspectives

Levels

Intermediate +

Aims

Sensitize students to bias in authentic texts

Class Time

30–45 minutes

Preparation Time

45 minutes

Resources

Articles from newspapers or magazines

Caveats and Options

It is important for students to develop an ability to interpret how different texts on the same subject may present particular biases. Although this activity draws its text from the news media, it helps students practice the critical reading skills they need for any sort of purposeful reading.

Procedure

1. Select two newspaper articles of similar length, on the same news item. Make class sets of each article.
 2. Put students in pairs and give each student a different article.
 3. Have students read their articles individually. Then, without letting them look at each others' texts, ask them to discuss as many factual differences as they can find in the two texts. One of the students should make notes of the differences.
 4. Have students reveal their texts to each other and make a further comparative check between the two texts. In addition to looking for factual differences, they should also look for differences in language use and discourse organization. Ask them to note differences.
 5. Integrate the student pairs into larger groups of four and have them compare their findings, discussing the different perspectives of each article.
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1. For lower-level classes, modify the activity: Have students compare two recipes for the same dish from different cookbooks, for example.
 2. For more advanced-level students, ask them to compare newspaper editorials or news analyses.
 3. With lower-level classes, this activity is a good way to practice intensive reading. With suitable classes at a higher level, it is also a good way of analyzing and interpreting textual bias.

Contributor

4. The success of this activity depends largely on the choice and matching of suitable and interesting texts.

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