

# Lesson Plan: Differing News Reports (long) 2

Sharing examples and writing our own news reports (Part 2 of 3)

**Subjects:** Social Studies, History, Language Arts

**Time required:** 45 minutes

**Related links:** [Guampedia](#), [Pacific Daily News](#), [Guam Daily Post](#), [KUAM](#), [Pacific News Center](#)  
[Stripes Guam](#)

**Grade-level:** Middle [6-8], High [9-12]

**Materials required:** Printouts of news examples [optional; explained in lesson plan]

## Description

In this lesson, students will recap the previous lesson by sharing their examples of news articles that are open to interpretation. Students will also begin writing their own examples of news reports.

## Objectives/Skills

- Recap content that has been covered previously in class (or that is currently being studied).
- Experience, first hand, the possibility for skewing factual information through a self-written historical news report.
- Understand the importance of critically engaging with news.

## Questions or Assessment

- Were students able to identify the potential, or existence, or bias in their brought-in examples of news articles?
- Were students able to begin writing their news reports from a different point of view?
- Are students familiar with the resources available to conduct additional research for their assignment?

## Procedure

### *Teacher prep*

Find additional examples in the news of different interpretations of the same event (different from the previous day). If possible, print out copies or provide links for students to see. These may be needed if not enough students completed the homework assignment.

### *Sharing Homework Assignment (15 minutes)*

1. Have a few students (two or three) volunteer to share their news article with the class. There will not be enough time for them to read the entire article, but they should describe the general content and tone of the article.
2. Have each student describe where the article came from, who the author is, and any other background information they may have regarding the writing of the article.
3. Have students then explain if they think the article is biased or not. If the article is fairly neutral (and most will be), then encourage the student to imagine what changes could be made to the article in order to make it more biased.
  - This exercise will help students understand that small, subtle changes can make an article more biased.
  - Students may have some difficulty at the beginning of this exercise. Help them by providing some guidance; show how objective descriptive statements (e.g. dangerous, silly, unsupported, supported) can be added to change the tone of an article.
  - If students still have difficulty, provide them with two copies of the same, brief article that you've revised highlight the different tones that can be accomplished by making minor changes to a news report. Or, use an example as provided here. [Link provided in online version]
4. Have all students, in pairs, briefly share their articles with each other. They are to then repeat the above exercise for their own articles, and in so doing, identify the bias or potential for bias. Be sure to walk around the room to make certain that students are on task, and that questions can be answered.

### *Writing from Different Points of View (15 minutes)*

1. Present to students a specific time-period of Guam history (most likely, this will be a content field the class has recently covered, or is currently learning about). Simply state the time period along with some general background information (to prompt student recall). Next, identify a specific event that the class will be focusing upon.
2. Next, separate the class into two groups. Explain to students that one half will be writing from the point of view of one side of the event, while the other half will be writing from the point of view of an opposing side

- of the event. For example, if the event was the Japanese invasion of Guam, then one half of the class will be reporters for the Japanese, while the other half of the class will be reporters for the Guamanians (Chamorros).
- Using information collected from Guampedia or other reputable sources, list some factual information on the board regarding the event (e.g. date, participants, location). Then list additional information that may be up to interpretation (e.g. impact of the action, importance of the events, etc.). Provide the same information to the entire class.
  - Prompt each student to write his or her own brief news report on the event. Students/reporters should write from the point of view of one side (in accordance to which group they are in). Encourage students to be biased while maintaining a news-worthy tone; the purpose of this exercise is to understand how a news article, though reporting factual information, can still be slanted toward one interpretation or bias.
  - While students are writing, be sure to observe their progress and provide help. Some students may continue to be confused by the prompt. Be sure to further explain that they are to imagine themselves as a reporter writing from a specific point of view.

***Explaining the Homework Assignment – Additional Research (3 minutes)***

- Instruct students to include in their report at least three additional factual points that were not written on the board. Remind them that they have numerous resources which they can use, including:
  - Textbooks
  - Content authorities, including teachers
  - Reputable websites, including [Guampedia](#)
  - First-hand information [depending on the topic]
- Remind students to include facts that support their viewpoint on the issue.

***Recap (2 minutes)***

Recap what we've done and learned in the lesson:

“Today we used the news articles we collected in order to analyze the presence and potential for bias in media. We discussed how minor changes can change the entire tone of an article, which in turn would change our perception of the event. Even though the facts remain the same, it's the presentation that changes our attitudes. Lastly, in order to best understand this concept, we began writing our own news articles from differing viewpoints. Don't forget to finish them up tonight with additional information! We'll be sharing them with our peers during the next class period.”

Ask students for their favorite parts of the activity.