

Lecture 4
“FACT CHECKING”



The Critical Current
Summer Enrichment 2016

NEWS

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE WORLD WE
LIVE IN? WHY SHOULD WE CARE?



FACT v. OPINION

- What's the difference?
- Test out your skills:
 - http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/007256380x/student_view0/part4/chapter13/supplemental_exercises_1.html
 - https://www.lib.odu.edu/genedinfolit/1infobasics/subjective_vs_objective.html

- **News vs. News Analysis - What's the difference?**
- **News Organizations' opinions versus an Individual writer's opinions...**
 - **(columns, commentary, editorials, letters to the editor)**
- **Advertising...**
- **Advocacy Ads v. Advocacy Reporting**
- **GRAY LINES - That's why NEWS LITERACY MATTERS.**

We must know how to tell the difference!

News v. News Analysis

News Organizations' opinion v. the Individual's opinion (columns, commentary, editorials, letters to the editor), advertising, advocacy ads v. advocacy reporting

WATCH THIS MOVING VIDEO BY THE LA Times (Moving = emotionally effective = Ms. Park's OPINION fyi) --- Does it count as advocacy ads or advocacy reporting?

What was the purpose of the video?

GRAY LINES!

Can a newspaper be truly unbiased, objective, and fact-based in 100% of the content they publish (*except for the editorial section, of course*)?

FACT-CHECKING:

What is it?

Which statement can be fact-checked?

A- Clinton said she will create two million new jobs in her first term as president.

B- Obama said there is less crime in his former Chicago neighborhood than in other areas of the city.

HOW WOULD YOU FACT-CHECK THE STATEMENT YOU CHOSE ABOVE?

Which parts of the following statements can be fact-checked?

The Chemistry students are in Lab 401A.

FACT-CHECKING:

Why is it important?

FACT-CHECKING:

How do you fact-check?

STEPS 1-4 (As a journalist, you should...)

STEP 1 – Check names and spellings

Go through your document and highlight or underline all names of people, places and other proper nouns. Check the spelling against original documents and online directories. If needed, call any person you talked to back, and check that his or her name is spelled correctly. If you double-checked during your interviews, that is sufficient. Get into the habit of checking the spelling of names as you are reporting.

STEP 2 – Check numbers and statistics

Underline all numbers, percentages, dates and statistics mentioned in your article. Now go through them one at a time and check them against documents, websites and personal interviews. If you cannot find the same number (or date or time or percentage) given by MORE THAN ONE source then you cannot use it in your article. If an individual gave you a number (date etc.) during an interview, call him or her back and ask if there is a document that contains that information or if there is another person who can verify.

Steps 1-4 continued...

STEP 3 – Check quotes

Circle all the quotes you used in your article. Contact the person who gave you the quote (using email at this point is perfectly acceptable) and let them know you are simply double-checking your facts for your article. Read (or email) them the exact quotes you are using and ask if they were recorded correctly. Let the person know what your deadline is so that they know when they need to get back to you by. If they don't confirm, you cannot use the quote, unless you have it on a tape recording or there was a second person at the interview who wrote down the same quote.

STEP 4 – Check for bias

Read through your article and check to see if there are any words you've used that may show bias or a slanted position (this does not include reviews or opinions). Have you presented all facts and information in as fair and balanced a way as possible? If you wrote a review, which contains your opinion, did you provide adequate facts to support your position?

Getting the facts right is a matter of journalistic ethics and integrity. NEVER submit work that contains facts you cannot or have not verified. By signing below you certify that you have completed all parts of this fact checking assignment thoroughly and completely.

FACT CHECKING SITES:

<http://www.politifact.com/>

<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/us/elections/fact-check.html>

[com/interactive/2016/us/elections/fact-check.html](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/us/elections/fact-check.html)

<http://www.factcheck.org/>

BLOG POST #5 - ANSWER **AT LEAST 1 QUESTION:**

Information requires verification to be effective.

What does the quote above mean? Do you agree or disagree with the statement?

Do you think average people today verify the information they hear/watch/read? Why or why not?

Do you think it is important to know how to fact-check as a reader and consumer of news and media?