Senior English

Spring Board Unit 5

Vocabulary and Discussion Questions

Vocabulary

1. Bias by headline
2. Bias by photos, captions, and camera angles
3. Bias through selection and omission
4. Bias by Source Control
5. Bias through placement
6. Bias by statistics and crowd counts
7. Bias through labels, titles, loaded language
8. Stereotype
9. Vice Versa
10. Rhetorical slanders
11. Rhetorical analogy
12. Rhetorical definition
13. Rhetorical explanation
14. Innuendo
15. Downplayers
16. Hyperbole
17. Truth surrogates
18. Ridicule/sarcasm
19. Rhetorical context

Discussion Questions

Activity 5.3 Constructing Public Opinion

1. Review vocabulary words 1-7 and write out a definition for each term.

2. To what extent do you think the media coverage shapes our perspective on issues and events?

3. Read “How the Media Twist the News.” What is the thesis of the essay?

4. List two key reasons and/or pieces of evidence the author uses to support her thesis.

5. Liaugminas relies heavily on expert testimony as a form of evidence. To what extent do you find this type of evidence persuasive?
6. Read “Media Bias Comes from Viewers Like You.” Cohen relies heavily on analysis of examples and anecdotal evidence as opposed to expert testimony. Why do you think he does this? To what extent do you find his evidence persuasive?

7. Which essay do you find more persuasive? Use textual evidence to support your opinion.

8. How much did your opinion before reading the two essays influence your perspective on which author was more persuasive regarding media bias?

9. How much did your opinion before reading the two essays influence your perspective on which author was more correct regarding media bias?

10. What’s the difference between being persuasive and being correct?

11. Based on the two articles and on your previous experience analyzing media, what are some specific things you can look for that reveal bias in a text you are reading, watching, or listening to?

Activity 5.4 Reporting Live

1. Review the types of rhetorical slanters on Spring Board p. 278. Watch the following video clip of NBC’s coverage of the Trayvon Martin shooting in Feb. 2012:


2. Watch the following clip from the Sean Hannity Show:

does he point out in NBC’s reporting of the Trayvon Martin shooting? How serious is this flaw in their report?

3. Do you think that NBC intentionally manipulated the 911 audio in order to make Zimmerman appear racist? If not, explain how this could have been a simple error in reporting. If so, why might a television network, news program, or editor want to make Zimmerman appear racist?

4. What appears to be NBC’s view of the incident? What does Fox News’ (or Sean Hannity’s) view of the incident seem to be? Why might two networks report the same story in such a different way?

5. Which network seems more reliable, and why?

6. Briefly summarize the facts of the case as we know them so far, and try not to include bias.

Activity 5.5 Framing the Investigation

1. ABC reporting no injury to Zimmerman’s head [http://abcnews.go.com/WNT/trayvon-martin-case-exclusive-surveillance-video-george-zimmerman/story?id=16022897#.UeR7KOnD-Uk](http://abcnews.go.com/WNT/trayvon-martin-case-exclusive-surveillance-video-george-zimmerman/story?id=16022897#.UeR7KOnD-Uk). What is being reported (the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the event?)

2. How is it being reported? How subjective/objective is the coverage? Identify and list any specific textual details (titles, labeling, omission, etc.) that reveal bias in the report.

3. Who is the target audience for this report? How does the report’s rhetorical context affect what it talks about and how (its language and tone)? What inferences can you draw about the reporter’s expectations regarding the audience’s perspective on the subject covered?
4. If you only watched this report, what would you think is the key issue? In other words, how does the article frame the truth and/or significance of the news event?

5. What critical lens or lenses are evident in how the report approaches the issue? Which dominate or are absent? What specific language reveals the lens(es) at work?

6. How do historical and cultural factors contribute to the controversy of this case? How are Zimmerman and Martin portrayed?

Activity 5.6 Considering the Medium


2. How is objective or subjective is the interview? Identify and list specific details that support your answer.

3. Who is the target audience for this interview? How does the interview’s rhetorical context affect what is discussed and how it is discussed? What inferences can you draw about the writer’s expectations regarding the audience’s perspective on the subject covered?

4. If you only watched this interview, what would you think is the key issue? In other words, how does the interview frame the truth and/or significance of the news event?

5. What critical lens or lenses are evident in how the interviewer approaches the issue? Which dominates or is absent? What specific language reveals the lens at work? How does this affect your reaction to the content covered?

Activity 5.7 Looking for Trouble
1. Why was the Trayvon Martin case so controversial, and why was it such a rich topic for exploring media bias?

2. Give an example of another news event in your lifetime that was highly controversial. What was the nature of the controversy?

3. Read “Who is Racist?” Who is the author? How can you determine the credibility of this author? Consider the author’s occupation, reputation, and credentials.

4. To what extent and in what ways does the author establish credibility in the text? Is the writing objective? Is there a clear presence of logic? Is there personal testimony? Are other examples or experts cited to support the author’s position?


6. How does the text link to one of the critical perspectives? How might you use a critical perspective to support your analysis? What quotes might you cite as support for your claims?

7. What does the context of the text reveal about its agenda? How might you use its context to reinforce your claims about the text or about the subject itself?

Embedded Assessment 5.1 Argumentative Essay (Five Paragraphs)

*Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope*

1. As you watch the opening scene, make a list of the visual images you see.

2. Based on these images, what do you think the tone of this scene is? Brainstorm some possible tone words. Choose the one that seems to fit best, then describe what kind of music you would expect to hear that would support this tone.
3. As you watch the clip a second time, make a descriptive list of all sound elements in the scene (music, dialogue, background sounds, etc.).

4. How has the addition of sound elements affected the tone of the scene? How is the resulting tone similar to or different from what you expected?

5. After closely analyzing the musical and visual elements of the scene, write a paragraph on your own paper beginning with the following stem: In the opening scene of *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope*, the director establishes a __________ tone in order to suggest __________. Develop the paragraph with specific examples from both the sounds and images in the scene.

6. Watch the rest of the film. What critical perspective would you use to evaluate this film? Explain your reasoning.

Timed Writing on *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope*