



How to Rate “Other” Factors and Overall Bias

Now that you have read the entire article and have rated the main factors of Language, Political Position, and Comparison, you may or may not have noticed other indicators of bias that you want to consider in your overall rating.

Other Factors

A first “other” factor for bias is “Topic Selection.” We covered this briefly under the “Political Position” factor, but I want to revisit it here. Sometimes, the very selection of a topic can be an indication of bias. Certain topics, even if they are covered fairly, tend to be of more interest to one political side or another. For example, the topic of climate change tends to be of more interest to left-leaning audiences, and the topic of the stock market tends to be of more interest to right-leaning audiences. As another example, the selection of a story that makes a politician look bad (even if it is completely true) tends to be of interest to audiences from the opposite political party. You can use topic selection to nudge the overall bias rating to one side or another, but the actual treatment of the topic should be more influential on the rating.

A second “other” factor of bias is a general catch-all for bias that you identify on a case-by-case basis. It is impossible to identify, ahead of time, all the types of biases you may encounter in articles. If you notice that you can easily come up with facts or counter-arguments that are not in the article, but would be present in a less-biased article, you can use that to adjust your overall bias rating.

The more experienced you become with rating articles and the more political knowledge you gain, the more nuanced bias you will be able to detect. As with Reliability, classroom discussions about articles you rate can also help you recognize the presence of bias you may have missed.

Overall Bias Ratings

In general, unless there are other factors, your “overall bias” score should be an approximate average of your three scores for Language, Political Position, and Comparison. You should place your slider accordingly. Your previous placement of the slider button for each of the individual factors should allow you to place your “overall bias” slider fairly quickly.

Once you have made your overall bias rating, you can hit “submit” and then verify the numerical scores of your ratings. If you read anything in any of the other articles that makes you think you should re-evaluate the “Comparison” factor or your overall bias score, you can come back and change them.