

Triangulate the Truth Activity Sheet

1. Click on this link: www.worldpress.org/gateway.htm to go to the Wordpress.org international news listing site. Explore the data base by selecting countries from different parts of the world and by selecting different news sources within each country and checking out the Wordpress description of their bias.

2. Pick a singular news event on anything major happening right now....an announcement made by the US President on an active war, or a meeting of the UN Security Council on the Iranian nuclear industry, or a major terrorist attack, or anything on the Arab-Israeli dispute, or really anything you like. Make it a big enough story that it would likely be covered by all major international papers...in other words, no local stories or stories dealing with minor domestic policies within one country.

3. Now, choose three different countries, from three different continents (that is, one country from Africa, one from Europe, one from Asia, or whatever you want) from the Wordpress.org website. Most important: make sure you choose three papers that have three different biases...that is, one from hard left, from hard right, from center-right, from center-left, or full-on centrist.

If you want an easy example, choose radically different news sources from two opposing sides of a singular issue. Like any Israeli news source vs. any Palestinian news source on any Arab-Israeli news event. Or any Iranian source vs. any US source on any Iranian nuclear industry story. You get the picture.

4. Now read the story from each of your news sources on the exact same international headline that you have chosen.

5. Did you detect any difference in the reporting of the events? Did the different news sources choose to highlight different facts? Did they assign blame/credit to different parties, or at least seem to be written in such a way as to suggest their bias to one party or another? Did they use different descriptors or words to tip their hat as to their bias?

6. Make a brief list of the facts/opinions that all stories agreed upon. Then make a list of important points of disagreement between the news sources. Where there significant facts/points absent in one story that were included in another story? Did you detect a difference in tone in the stories as reported by different news sites? Of blame/credit/disgust/pride?

7. Think about this little exercise every time you read about international events. Remember the bias of the reporting source is just as important as the news story itself.