

Monitoring the News Media Checklist

What to Look At

- Headlines
- Images (Photographs or Video Clips)
- Content

What to Look For

Accuracy

- Are the facts presented in the story **correct**?

___ Are charges or reports presented to the reader as if they were undisputed facts?

EXAMPLE:

___ Are quotes presented accurately and fully or are they reworded in ways that change their original meaning?

EXAMPLE:

___ Is the relevant historical record presented accurately?

EXAMPLE:

___ Are the photographs (and cutlines) that accompany the story really part of the story?
(Captions are above pictures and are rarely used; cutlines are underneath and more common.)

EXAMPLE:

Omissions

- Is crucial information or context missing?

___ Is important information about the story's events missing?

EXAMPLE:

___ Is background information about, or the reasons behind, the story's events missing?

EXAMPLE:

___ Are all the relevant facts presented?

EXAMPLE:

___ Are related stories from the area covered in this report or in other reports in your news source?

EXAMPLE:

Balance

- Is there balance in the reporting? (“Balance” need not be an exact 50-50 ratio of pro-and-con, but implies sufficient space or time for each side to present its basic claims/positions).

___ Does the report provide room (or time) for one side to answer charges leveled by another side?

EXAMPLE:

___ Is the response to an accusation or allegation placed close to the actual accusation?

EXAMPLE:

___ Is the cause of an action placed close to the description of the actual action? That is, are cause-and-effect clearly reported?

EXAMPLE:

___ Does the report give sufficient time or space to both or all sides of a story so that the news is presented with enough detail to be understood properly?

EXAMPLE:

___ Does the report treat spokespersons from all sides equally?

EXAMPLE:

___ Does the report give at least equal weight to mainstream or official positions on a topic as it does to opposition or fringe positions?

EXAMPLE:

___ Does the report hold one side of a conflict to a different standard of behavior or performance than other sides?

EXAMPLE:

___ Do the words (and images) of the report focus on the distress suffered by one side of the conflict but not the others?

EXAMPLE:

___ Are the images accompanying a report balanced in terms of their emotional impact or representative of the facts of the news being reported?

EXAMPLE:

___ Is the amount of space or time devoted to the Arab-Israeli conflict proportional to other international conflicts reported on that day?

EXAMPLE:

Language

- Does the language chosen seem to be slanted in favor or against one side?

___ Is emotional or negative language used for one side in the conflict but neutral or less emotional language used for others?

EXAMPLE:

___ Are words that are slanted to one side in the conflict used?

EXAMPLE:

___ Are passive verbs used for one side in the conflict and active verbs for the other?

EXAMPLE:

___ Are aggressors in the conflict clearly labeled as such?

EXAMPLE:

___ Are the same words used to describe similar actions no matter where they take place or who is responsible for them?

EXAMPLE:

Advocacy

- Does the report seem to be promoting one side in the conflict?

___ Does an opinion appear in a news story as if it were a fact?

EXAMPLE: _____

___ Does a report quote “experts” as neutrals when they have strong opinions about the conflict?

EXAMPLE: _____

___ Do images that accompany a report make one side look better than another? If so, are they images that represent the substance of the news being reported?

EXAMPLE: _____

