

Media Literacy Mini-Lesson #9

BIAS

Is bias a bad thing? Not necessarily. In fact, as humans, we all have points of view and biases that influence how we communicate and learn new things.

First-hand accounts of historical events and individuals almost always contain bias. For example, photos, books, and films all include points-of-view, or **bias**.



Journalists, historians, and news consumers must understand their own biases...

as well as the perspectives of those whose work they're reading. The problem with bias arises when journalists or entire news organizations include only one-sided portrayals of events using particular language or interviews certain individuals and not others.

For example:

A war correspondent who interviews generals about military conquests of cities but fails to interview residents of the city to find out how they feel about the war might be said to have written an unfairly biased piece.



We can all learn to recognize bias in primary and secondary sources we encounter. On the next page, look at the photograph by Therese Bonney, an American photojournalist who chronicled rural families' experiences in Europe during World War II. As you read, consider the questions at the bottom of the page.



Therese Bonney, [Took Refuge in Barns], c. 1940, Prints and Photographs Division Reproduced courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Library of Congress

Describe what is happening in the image. What did you notice or wonder about?

What bias do you think Therese Bonney has towards World War II?

What specific details in the images support your conclusions?