



Dig Deeper

Nov. 7, 2022

EDUCATOR GUIDE KEY AND STUDENT PAGES FOR News Goggles

How do standards and ethics guide a newsroom's coverage of elections and politics?

In this document you'll find:

- **Teacher directions for this lesson.**
- **Editable student pages.**
- **An answer key for the student pages.**

Teacher directions:

1. **Make sure each student has a copy of the [featured story](#).** Students will need it as they work through the viewing guide.
Note: Your students should read or skim the entire article first to get a general sense of what it's about before digging deeper into questions in the viewing guide.
2. **Distribute student copies of the viewing guide in this document (pages 2-5).**
3. **Conclusion:** Have students use their notes from this viewing guide to brainstorm a response to the essential lesson question. Then, discuss as a class. To extend this question further, have students develop their thoughts in several paragraphs or an essay.



NAME: _____

DATE: _____



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News Goggles

How do standards and ethics guide a newsroom's coverage of elections and politics?

Featured Video: "News Goggles: Emilie Munson, Times Union."

Featured Text: "[How the Times Union covers elections and politics](#)" (Times Union).

Directions:

1. Read the featured text.
2. Watch the featured video, using this viewing guide to take notes about the Times Union's elections and politics reporting.
3. Explain how standards and ethics guide a newsroom's coverage of elections and politics.



Resource Connection Tip: Complete [Practicing Quality Journalism](#) in Checkology® to learn the standards of quality journalism by playing the role of reporter in a game-like simulation of a breaking news event.

PART A: Background information

What is the Times Union?
Why did the paper decide to publish the Times Union's standards on how they cover elections?

* **partisan**: pushing the cause of a political party.

* **bias**: prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.

PART B: The reporting process

How does the Times Union decide which candidates and stories to cover?

The piece includes this line: "We strive to cover all parties and interest groups in a nonpartisan and unbiased fashion." Why is this important?

How can journalists work to minimize bias in their reporting?

Why is it important for sources named in a story to have an opportunity to comment?

When does the Times Union use anonymous sources?

What happens if a journalist fails to live up to their newsroom's standards?

What does Munson wish people knew about how newsrooms approach elections and politics?

PART C: Standards of quality journalism
Complete this part *after* viewing the video.

How does the Times Union use standards in its reporting?

How do standards separate quality journalism from other types of information online?

SEVEN STANDARDS OF

Quality Journalism

Multiple Credible Sources

- ▶ People in a position to know relevant facts and details, including eyewitnesses, officials and experts.

Avoidance of Bias

- ▶ Presenting the facts and necessary context in a dispassionate manner.

Documentation

- ▶ Reports, studies, data, videos, photos and audio recordings.

Fairness

- ▶ Treating sources and subjects with appropriate respect, and giving subjects a chance to share their points of view or respond to any assertions or allegations about them.

Verification

- ▶ The process of checking and confirming all facts and details in a report.

Balance

- ▶ Representing multiple sides of the issue, event or controversy — but without giving undue weight or legitimacy to one side or point of view.

Context

- ▶ Presenting the facts in a way that makes their meaning clear, fair and accurate.



Conclusion: How do standards and ethics guide a newsroom's coverage of elections and politics? Use evidence from all parts of this viewing guide to support your answer.

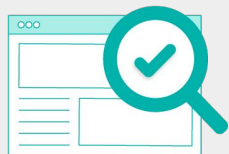


Challenge: Find five different pieces of information on an election. These can be articles, videos, social media posts, etc. Compare and contrast the pieces to determine which standards are being used. Rank the examples in terms of credibility.



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Resource Connection Tip: Complete [Practicing Quality Journalism](#) in Checkology® to learn the standards of quality journalism by playing the role of reporter in a game-like simulation of a breaking news event.

PART A: Background information

What is the Times Union?

The Times Union is a local newspaper based in Albany, New York. The news organization makes a point to emphasize state government coverage, while also covering the Hudson Valley and other parts of New York.

Why did the paper decide to publish the Times Union's standards on how they cover elections?

Publishing the standards is one way the paper is engaging with its community and audience around the election. The paper wants people to know it adheres to strict, ethical standards and takes a lot of steps in producing journalism. The goal is to help build trust with local readers by being more transparent.

* **partisan**: pushing the cause of a political party.

* **bias**: prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.

PART B: The reporting process

How does the Times Union decide which candidates and stories to cover?

The Times Union applies news judgment for political coverage similar to how they apply it to other issues in the community: (1) They're looking for what is relevant to their readers, and (2) they consider how recent the information is. The general goals are to provide readers with accurate, reliable information, empower readers to make their own informed choices, use reporting to uncover the facts and include a diversity of viewpoints and voices.

Due to limited time and resources, the Times Union cannot cover every candidate, so they acknowledge that limitation in their guide and explain why they might produce more coverage on some races than others.

The piece includes this line: "We strive to cover all parties and interest groups in a nonpartisan and unbiased fashion." Why is this important?

Munson thinks many readers are concerned about the impact of bias or a political agenda on their news, so the Times Union is trying to be clear about the standards they follow.

How can journalists work to minimize bias in their reporting?

We all have biases, including journalists. Reputable newsrooms follow standards to minimize the influence of bias in straight news coverage. That's why journalists work to include diverse voices in coverage and rely on editors to identify shortcomings to make sure reporting is as complete, accurate and fair as possible.

Why is it important for sources named in a story to have an opportunity to comment?

It's a key tenet of fairness at reputable news organizations across the industry that if a story is in some way about someone, they should have an opportunity to give their input.

When does the Times Union use anonymous sources?

The Times Union uses anonymous sources:

1. Only when necessary (e.g., a source's livelihood or safety is at risk).
2. Only when information provided has been verified as credible and reliable.
3. Only when information provided can't be obtained from other named sources.

What happens if a journalist fails to live up to their newsroom's standards?

The trust a journalist has with readers and sources is jeopardized and, without that trust, journalists can't do their jobs. That's why reputable newsrooms adhere strictly to standards and why they're transparent about them.

What does Munson wish people knew about how newsrooms approach elections and politics?

Munson would like for people to understand the distinction between the editorial board and the newsroom and the difference between opinion and news coverage. This is important during elections when editorial boards make endorsements.

News reporters and editors are not involved in determining the board's positions.

PART C: Standards of quality journalism

Complete this part *after* viewing the video.

How does the Times Union use standards in its reporting?

Answers will vary. Accept all reasonable responses, but expect students to incorporate details about avoidance of bias and fairness.

How do standards separate quality journalism from other types of information online?

Answers will vary. One possible response: Reputable news organizations aspire to ethical guidelines and standards, including fairness, accuracy and independence. Journalists are trying to demonstrate credibility and build trust with audiences by being transparent about how they complete their work. Following ethical guidelines and standards is a strong sign of credibility. A lot of other sources online make no attempt to hold themselves to these same standards.

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- ▶ Presenting the facts in a way that makes their meaning clear, fair and accurate.



Conclusion: How do standards and ethics guide a newsroom's coverage of elections and politics? Use evidence from all parts of this viewing guide to support your answer.

Answers will vary. Be sure students incorporate key ideas from various points in this viewing guide.



Challenge: Find five different pieces of information on an election. These can be articles, videos, social media posts, etc. Compare and contrast the pieces to determine which standards are being used. Rank the examples in terms of credibility.

