

Abstract – BIAS

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A bias is a tendency, inclination, or prejudice toward or against something or someone. Some biases are positive and helpful—like choosing to only eat foods that are considered healthy or staying away from someone who has knowingly caused harm. But biases are often based on stereotypes, rather than actual knowledge of an individual or circumstance. Whether positive or negative, such cognitive shortcuts can result in prejudgments that lead to rash decisions or discriminatory practices.¹ Bias is often characterized as stereotypes about people based on the group to which they belong and/or based on an immutable physical characteristic they possess, such as their gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. This type of bias can have harmful real-world outcomes. People may or may not be aware that they hold these biases.

The phenomenon of implicit bias refers to societal input that escapes conscious detection. Paying attention to helpful biases—while keeping negative, prejudicial, or accidental biases in check—requires a delicate balance between self-protection and empathy for others.

The goals of the lesson are as follows:

- examine the problems in communication caused by bias.
- identify the use of bias in nonfiction texts.
- recognize the difference between an objective and a biased account of an event.
- recognize that bias appears in almost all writing.
- distinguish between reasonable opinions and irrational prejudice.
- recognize the ways in which point of view affects what an individual says, writes, and reads.
- compose a biased account of an event from a particular individual's point of view.
- examine articles to identify author's purpose and to identify evidence of biased thinking.
- recognize the role of word choice in revealing bias.

¹ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/bias>