

# What is Bias?

Bias is putting across an unfair or one sided opinion.

If you had to write a fair and true story of a football match between Manchester United and Newcastle you would have to describe exactly what happened.

"Newcastle were so lucky at the match. The superb and skilful Man United players were beaten by the lucky, cheating Newcastle players. The referee was totally biased, he allowed five goals that were all offside. I have never seen so much luck and cheating."

**This story of a football match was written by a Manchester United fan her team had lost 5-0!**

The writer is **showing bias**, because he is putting across an unfair or one-sided opinion. Newcastle are always described a lucky or cheating, but Man United are always described as superb.

Historians have to be very careful because if someone is biased they are not telling us the full story or giving us a fair account of what happened. It is important to know who wrote or created a source and, why they wrote what they did. Were they being fair or unfair? Did they have a reason for writing what they did? Were they showing bias?

Bias can be very useful though as it helps us to learn about people's opinions and beliefs. **Recognising bias is a skill that all historians need to develop.**

**1. Copy out this paragraph and fill in the missing words, using the words in the table to help you.**

Bias is when someone has a \_\_\_\_\_ opinion about something. We can recognise bias by finding \_\_\_\_\_ opinions. Bias is useful because it helps us find out a person's \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_. If someone \_\_\_\_\_ a particular football team, they might show \_\_\_\_\_ when describing a match. Everything their team does would be described as \_\_\_\_\_, but everything the opposing team does would be described as \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_.

fantastic	beliefs	opinions	unfair	bias
one sided	lucky	awful	supports	

- 2. Glue your copy of the biased report of the football match into your book. Use a pen or pencil to underline where the report is biased.**
- 3. Now write the football report as if you support Newcastle - How would it change?**
- 4. How is bias useful to historians?**
- 5. If you had to find out about something but had six sources that you know are all biased would this be a problem? [Explain in a paragraph - think carefully about your earlier work.]**

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