



READING 12A Evaluate how messages presented in media reflect social and cultural views in ways different from traditional texts.

12B Evaluate the interactions of different techniques used in multi-layered media. **12C** Evaluate how one issue or event is represented across various media to understand the notions of bias, audience and purpose. **12D** Evaluate changes in formality and tone across various media for different audiences and purposes.

Perceptions Shaped by the News

TV Newscast Clip / Newspaper Article on **MediaSmart** DVD-ROM

How does the news **COVER** *history?*

Recall the last news report you saw or read about a major event that occurred someplace other than in the United States. Perhaps it was news about a natural disaster or a high-stakes election. How did the report portray the country or culture? In this lesson, you'll examine two examples of international **news coverage**. You'll consider how the images and words in the news can influence the public's perceptions.

Background

Unmade in Hong Kong On July 1 of 1997, Great Britain transferred the sovereignty of Hong Kong, the last major possession of the British Crown, to China.

Dignitaries from across the globe gathered in Hong Kong for formal ceremonies the night before the transfer. In his congratulatory speech, Prince Charles promised, "We shall not forget you, and we shall watch with the closest interest as you embark on this new era of your remarkable history."

Many Western nations—chief among them, the United States—regarded this transition with skepticism and uncertainty. The world wondered how Hong Kong, which for over a century had operated in a capitalist setting, would function under authoritarian Communist rule. It could mean that capitalist nations would lose a major force in the global economic landscape. The terms of the turnover included an agreement by China to observe a "one country, two systems" arrangement, under which Hong Kong would be allowed 50 years of relative autonomy. Tung Chee-hwa, the People's Republic of China's first chief executive of Hong Kong, had made assurances, stating, "Hong Kong's freedom of expression, movement, capital flow, information, is all guaranteed by the basic law, so Hong Kong will continue to be what it is today."

On any given day, complicated events like this one take the world stage through the media. American news sources covered Hong Kong's transition from countless angles or points of view. In this lesson, you'll watch a news clip from the nightly program "ABC World News Tonight" and read an article from the international section of the *New York Times*.

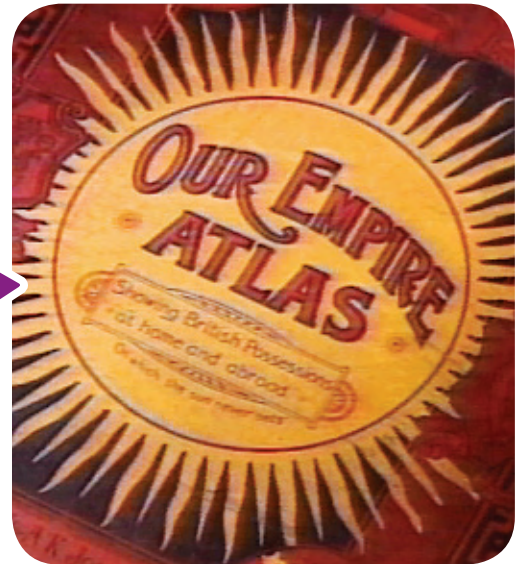
Media Literacy: International News

Our exposure to international news comes primarily through American news sources. The public's expectation is that the news is objective. Yet any coverage may reflect some bias or represent someone's interpretation of events. The **angle** of a report is the point of view from which it's written. Although an angle gives a story its focus, it might also impart certain values and influence perceptions. It therefore may have the effect of shaping public opinion.

ELEMENTS THAT INFLUENCE NEWS COVERAGE

TV News Report

- **Footage** is recorded material, including film and video. Carefully selected visuals convey what facts and statistics cannot. Footage can also set a mood or help convey a reporter's interpretation of events.
- The **tone** of the news anchor's introduction, or **lead-in**, can also convey general perceptions about an event or the people involved.
- A TV newscast depends on **sound bites**—brief quotations excerpted from taped interviews. Through careful editing, reporters choose sound bites that fit the story or impression they're trying to communicate.
- A TV newscast uses **voice-over narration**, the voice of an unseen speaker who is heard as the footage plays. As with sound bites, the voice-over can reflect the reporter's views.



Newspaper Article

- The **language** of an article, much like the language of an essay, can convey a certain **tone**, even though no opinions are explicitly stated.
- Major news organizations have foreign bureaus staffed with **correspondents** assigned to report from distant locations. In general, correspondents tend to interject their own opinions into reports.
- **Quotations** from an interview can offer revealing glimpses into an event or portray the reactions and emotions of those involved.



STRATEGIES FOR VIEWING

- Consider the intended audience for the report and from what nation the news outlet originates. The perspective of the report may reflect the policies of that nation.
- Draw conclusions about who appears in the news story. Ask yourself: Who is interviewed? Why were they chosen? What association do they have with a particular party involved in the story?
- Compare the perspectives of more than one news source. Just because a source has stature doesn't mean it's above scrutiny.

Media Smart DVD-ROM

- **News Format 1:** “End of British Rule in Hong Kong”
- **Genre:** Newscast clip
- **Anchor:** Peter Jennings
- **Correspondent:** Jim Wooten
- **Running time:** 2.5 minutes
- **News Format 2:** “With Pride Rising, Chinese Count the Days to Hong Kong’s Return”
- **Genre:** Newspaper article
- **Writer:** Seth Faison



Viewing Guide for International News

You'll view an “ABC World News Tonight” network newscast that appeared three days before Hong Kong's transition to China. Then you'll read a *New York Times* newspaper article published about three weeks before the event by a journalist who worked and lived in China for over a decade. Consider the overall tone of these news stories and the predominant angles they present. Keep in mind the origins of these reports and their intended audiences. To help you analyze the news formats, refer to these questions.

NOW VIEW

FIRST VIEWING: Comprehension

1. **Recall** What nations other than Hong Kong and Great Britain are mentioned in the TV newscast?
2. **Clarify** According to the newspaper article, how does the mood of the Chinese at the time of the transition seem to differ from the mood of the residents of Hong Kong?

CLOSE VIEWING: Media Literacy

3. **Analyze Techniques** The TV newscast follows each **sound bite** with news **footage** related to the statements each individual makes. Why do you think the reporter included this footage?
4. **Analyze Target Audience** To what audience might the TV newscast be directing its message? Cite evidence from the report to support your answer.
5. **Compare Angles** The *New York Times* article runs for several paragraphs before even mentioning Britain. Describe the reporter's angle and how it differs from the angle of the TV newscast.
6. **Evaluate Language** Of the two news stories, which one seems to question the truthfulness of its statements? Consider:
 - the use of language in the TV news anchor's opening statements and in the correspondent's voice-over
 - words or phrases the newspaper correspondent uses to comment on the actions of officials
7. **Make Judgments** Despite the fact that these pieces primarily deal with Hong Kong, Britain, and China, the reporters themselves are American. In your opinion, are American values to any degree in evidence in these pieces? Explain your opinion.

Write or Discuss

Analyze Perceptions The American public relies on its major news organizations to be society’s “window on the world,” providing context for and insight into unfolding historical events while maintaining a level of objectivity. Choose one of the news reports in this lesson. Based only on this report, describe your perceptions of the parties involved, including the nations it focuses on, the reporter, and the news sources. Express your views in a brief written analysis. Think about

- the angle of each news story and its tone
- what, if any, viewpoints may have been missing that might have provided you a clearer understanding of the issues
- the impressions or effects the news reporter may have deliberately intended to create

Produce Your Own Media

Create a News Analysis With a partner, choose a recent event in the United States that had sufficient impact to warrant international coverage. Find news accounts from major news outlets that originate in the United States and in at least three other nations. Examine these articles to create your own news analysis of worldwide news coverage.

HERE’S HOW Use these suggestions for your analysis:

- Research various news sources, including print and electronic reports.
- Be sure that your news sources are credible. Research will lead you to directories that list outlets by state, country, and continent. It’s likely that these outlets will provide English translations for some of their stories.
- With a partner, determine the angles of these news stories and analyze their tone, use of sound bites or quotations, and political viewpoints. Compare the degrees to which these elements vary.
- Use a source card to summarize each news report.

Further Exploration

Update Hong Kong’s Transition How is Hong Kong faring several years after its return to China? Form small groups to research and write updated news stories from different angles, including a current look at Hong Kong’s administration, economy, and culture, and at any lingering signs of Britain’s colonial influence.



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Media Tools

THINK
central

Go to thinkcentral.com.

KEYWORD: HML12-1379

Tech Tip

If available, use a graphics program to create a comparison chart of the news reports.