

## Episode 1: Fair and Balanced? Media Bias & Data Analysis

### "WHEN THEY SEE US" - Field Study

***"We have to uphold free press and freedom of speech - because, in the end, lies and misinformation are no match for the truth."  
- President Barack Obama***

#### **Student Instructions - Introduction:**

Data analysis can be a powerful tool for leading as well as misleading people. Understanding how media is used to persuade others, from the perspective of a media creator, will help you identify media bias in news you consume. After this lesson, you will have created your own media pieces and will know how to use data analysis to back up your stories.

#### **Kick-off video Link:**

#### **The Project:**

- Imagine that the infamous Central Park jogger case just happened.
- Your job is to produce a 60-second media piece introducing the case.
- But there is a twist, you must produce two versions with opposing points of view on the case (one which is in support of the young men, the other which isn't). AND you must use real statistics & visualizations to sell your stories.
- You are going to form a team and each take on the roles of a media organization.
- And just like the real world, you are going to be on a very tight deadline.

## Step by Step Instructions

1. Watch *When They See Us*, Episode 1.
2. Form a team (in person or online) and assign each member of the team one or more of the following roles: Director, Producer, Anchor, Data Analyst and Writer. Refer to the [Career Descriptions](#) to better understand these roles.
3. Have a kick-off meeting led by your producer to plan your day & set a schedule.
4. Have your entire team work through the [Introduction to Data Analysis](#) together.
5. Led by your Data Analyst, explore the [NYC Arrest Database](#), looking for evidence to better understand the case. Consider different factors present in the case, factors such as age, race, offense, and location of the arrests. What story does the data tell you?
6. Led by the writer, use your findings from step four to develop a script for a news segment. The segment must incorporate data visualization elements (charts, graphs, graphic art, etc.) that support the argument.
7. Now create a script for a second segment to make the opposing argument. Data visualization must be used in this segment as well.

## Step by Step Instructions

8. Present news segments. During your presentation, your team can either perform the segments live, or you can record and edit a video. Video and audio recording can be done using a smart phone or video camera. Editing can be done in freely available software such as iMovie.
9. In preparing for discussion, watch the following videos on [giving feedback](#) and [digesting feedback](#).
10. Each team should provide feedback on the news segments created by other teams, addressing questions like:
  - What do you like most about the segment?
  - How effective was the data visualization in supporting the story?
  - What suggestions for improvements do you have?
11. End with reflection questions.
12. Facilitators/Educators will determine the length of the project. We recommend 3 - 5 hours.

## Reflection Questions

1.) Everyone has biases. What did you learn about your own biases during this project?

2.) Propaganda is defined by Webster's dictionary as the spreading of ideas, information, or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause, or a person. Describe a media segment that you've seen recently in the news that you would consider propaganda. Why do you consider it propaganda?

3.) Is it possible for a media outlet to have a point of view and not be propaganda? Explain and discuss.

## Vocabulary

### **Propaganda:**

The spreading of ideas, information, or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause, or a person.

### **Media:**

A channel or system of communication, information, or entertainment.

### **Bias:**

An inclination of temperament or outlook.

### **Data:**

Factual information (such as measurements or statistics) used as a basis for reasoning, discussion, or calculation.

### **Analysis:**

A detailed examination of anything complex in order to understand its nature or to determine its essential features : a thorough study.