

Objectivity in News Reporting and Ethics

Subject: Gender and Media/Media, Politics, and Public
Policy

MA GS III & BS PA VIII

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Objectivity in News Reporting

- Objectivity means that when covering hard news, reporters don't convey their own feelings, biases or prejudices in their stories.
- They do this by writing stories using neutral language and by avoiding characterizing people or institutions either positively or negatively.
- Avoiding the frequent use of adjectives which can easily convey one's feelings about a subject.

Example: *The intrepid protesters demonstrated against the unjust government policies.*

Fairness

- Fairness means that reporters covering a story must remember there are usually two sides—and often more—to most issues and that those differing viewpoints should be given roughly equal space in any news story.

A Reporter's Conduct

- A reporter must not only be objective and fair but also convey an image of being objective and fair.
- Reporters must not express their own preferences for a policy choice, rather he/she should reflect views of the parties to the issue.

Some Important Considerations Related to Objective Reporting

- Rules of such objectivity and fairness apply to reporters covering hard news, not to the columnist writing for the op-ed page or the movie critic working for the arts section.
- Ultimately, reporters are in search of the truth and objectivity and fairness must not be a hurdle in finding the truth.

Some Important Considerations Related to Objective Reporting

- Let's say you're a reporter covering the final days of World War II and are following the Allied forces as they liberate the concentration camps. You enter one such camp and witness hundreds of gaunt, emaciated people and piles of dead bodies.
- Do you, in an effort to be objective, interview an American soldier to talk about how horrific this is, then interview a Nazi official to get the other side of the story? Of course not. Clearly, this is a place where evil acts have been committed, and it's your job as a reporter to convey that truth.

Sources

Rogers, Tony. "Objectivity and Fairness in Journalism."

ThoughtCo, Feb. 11, 2020, [thoughtco.com/objectivity-and-fairness-2073726](https://www.thoughtco.com/objectivity-and-fairness-2073726).