

NEWS CRITIQUE

Mondays & Wednesdays | 12:30pm-1:45pm EDT | Georgetown University

FAQs

I am having a hard time finding good news articles for this, what do I do?

You can use any of the articles from a list I curated. Go to this [LINK](#) to get access to that list.

How long should my critique be?

Around 2 pages would be enough (you can choose between single or double space)

How recent does the article have to be?

From the past decade should be fine.

I found a news article but not sure you will like it. What do I do?

Just send it my way and I will let you know if it meets the criteria for the assignment.

I am having a hard time finding the scientific article for my news article. What do I do?

You can send it to me and I can try to help you out. You can also choose one from the list I created ([LINK](#)).



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Newspapers, magazines, television, blogs have tried for many years to disentangle whether growing up bilingual helps or hurts the individual. Policies have changed across the years and we have more evidence that being bilingual does not hurt your first language development, but myths and belief are still out there. Thanks to the internet there are more ways to share the science, but do they get it right? All too often, the headline or take-home message misrepresents the research in some fashion. It takes real skill to understand the research well enough to explain it to a general audience accurately and accessibly.

The goal for this assignment is for you to critically evaluate the media coverage of a scientific study in the field of bilingualism and cognition. I want you to be able to think critically about the representation of psychological science in the media, as well as to learn how to (and how not to) explain psychological science to a non-scientific audience.

Guidelines

•**Step 1:** Find a current popular media account of a scientific study about bilingualism. This could be an article in a newspaper or magazine or online articles (e.g., BuzzFeed). For this project, don't choose a popular science outlet (e.g., Psychology Today or a scientific blog). Focus on the mass media, instead. Read this article (or watch the video) fully and note your understanding of the research.

• [HERE](#) is a list of possible articles you could use of this assignment.

•**Step 2:** Find the original, scientific article that is discussed in the popular press account. You will need the full text of the article, not just the abstract. Be sure you have found the correct article – popular media sources may not include full citations, so it can be a little tricky to track down the exact article being referenced.) Read this article fully and note your understanding of the research. Is it different from what you gleaned from the popular press piece?

•**Step 3:** Having read both of the articles (the popular press article and the scientific article), in your critique:

- compare the description of the methods, results, and conclusions in each.
- identify the strengths and weaknesses of how the popular press piece represents the scientific research.

You could think about the following questions:

- Does the popular press piece represent the methods and results accurately and sufficiently for the reader to understand what the researchers did?
- Are the conclusions reached by the popular press piece warranted, given the results of the research?
- Are there aspects of the research that are missing or misrepresented or confusing?
- Are the nuances and complexities of the issue included, or are these oversimplified?
- What are the best aspects of how the popular press piece described the research?
- What components are weaker?