**Bias What is it? Why do we need to recognise it?**

If you were asked to write a fair and balanced account of a football match between England and South Korea you would have to describe exactly what happened truthfully.

If you supported England then you might describe the South Korean goal as ‘lucky’ but an England goal as ‘fantastic’ or ‘skillful’. Doing this would be **biased**. You would be writing an unfair or unbalanced opinion.

Bias is putting across unfair or unbalanced opinion

Taiping were so lucky at the match! The superb and skilful Wutaishan were beaten by the lucky cheating Taiping players. The referee was totally one-sided, he allowed four goals that were all off-side. I have never seen so much luck and cheating!

Wutaishan

R.Clarke 2012

As Historians we have to be very careful of bias. If we are using a source from a long time ago then it is important to know who wrote the source, when and most importantly why. Did they have a reason for writing what they did? Were they being fair and balanced or were they showing bias?

Bias can be useful though. It can show us what people thought of something at the time, learn people’s opinions and beliefs. The Historian can find biased sources very useful in investigating the past but recognising bias is a skill that Historians need to develop.

This is an account of a football match by a Wutaishan fan where Wutaishan lost 4-0:

Here the writer is showing bias. Taiping are described as ‘lucky’ and ‘cheating’ whereas Wutaishan are described as ‘skilful’. The referee is insulted and no credit is given to the Taiping players.

Questions

1. Copy and compete the box below adding the words from the list underneath.

**unbalanced fantastic opinions show terrible opinion beliefs unfair lucky supports**

2. Write a 100 word biased report of your own. It must be about a sporting event. Make it clear who is taking part and used biased language to show your opinion.

Bias is where someone has an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_opinion about

something. We can recognise bias by finding \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Bias is useful to us, as it helps us find out a person’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. If someone \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a particular football team, they

are likely to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ bias when describing a match. Everything their team does would be described as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and everything the opposing team does would be described as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

1. When a Historian has a biased account of something, such as the one that you have just written, what must they do to try to discover the truth?
2. Why do Historians have to be careful of bias?
3. How can bias be helpful to an Historian?

6. Apart from bias, can you think of another problem an Historian might have when trying to find out about the past?