

Media Critical Analysis

Media critical questions

The following questions put emphasis on how the media shapes information. Read the Swedish text "[World War I – an inevitable disaster?](#)" and the English article "[The shot that sparked the First World war](#)" to be able to analyze the following questions. Also make sure to take a look at the images in "[The murder that started a world war](#)" by Søren Aagaard. This article is to be examined more briefly, mainly its images. It therefore needs not be read in detail.

Tasks (students' view):

Use of sources

1 a. What sources are used in the Swedish text by Peter Englund and the English text by Christopher Clark?

b. Discuss with a classmate if great historians need not to disclose their sources?

Could the text have been written differently?

2 a. Compare the content of the two articles, how do they differ?

b. Compare with your textbook and Wikipedia – how do they describe the actors and the events?

3 **How trustworthy do you consider the text?**

4 **What theoretical position (bias) do you think the author has? What theoretical perspective(s) can you find in the text?**

Contra-factual is okay?

5 a. Do you consider it historically acceptable to speculate in contra-factual ways, as the Swedish author does in his text? Please reflect and justify your answer.

b. Compare your answer with a classmate and try to find different arguments pro and con contra factual history.

Your own story

6 Construct your own contra-factual story of, for example: the French Revolution or the causes of World War II. Write a short text of what would have happened if things were a bit different.

Popular historical writing

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- a. How can one see that the texts "World War I – an inevitable disaster?" and "The shot that sparked the First World war" are written for popular historical magazines?
 - b. Compare headers and highlighted quotations in the two texts.
 - c. What do you think is typical of headlines and layout in popular history?

Look at the pictures in the three magazines

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- In what ways might the text and images reinforce a male dominated historical perspective?