

Oshkosh, provides the following example in an article titled “The Love/Hate Relationship with the U.S.: Media Framing”:

- Story 1: An infant left sleeping in his crib was bitten repeatedly by rats while his 16-year-old mother went to cash her welfare check. A neighbor responded to the cries of the infant and brought the child to St. Joseph’s Hospital where he was treated and released into his mother’s custody.
- Story 2: An eight-month-old Milwaukee boy was treated and released from St. Joseph’s Hospital yesterday after being bitten by rats while he was sleeping in his crib. Tenants said that repeated requests for exterminations had been ignored by the landlord, Henry Brown.
- Story 3: Rats bit eight-month-old Michael Burns five times yesterday as he napped in his crib. Burns is the latest victim of a rat epidemic plaguing inner-city neighborhoods labeled the “Zone of Death.” Health officials say infant mortality rates in these neighborhoods approach those in many third-world countries.

Each of the three stories is based on the same set of events. In the first instance, however, the journalist has framed the story in such a way as to highlight the problem of teen pregnancy. In the second story, the journalistic frame focuses on the irresponsibility of landlords. The third story frames the story in such a way as to emphasize the extent of poverty in the United States.

Some students are shocked when they first discover how media framing changes the news. The more important lesson is that framing is both inevitable and unavoidable. Contemporary events must be framed in some way. Skillful debaters learn to use framing to their own advantage.

FURTHER READING

Gibson, Barbara. “SpokesBlog: A Resource for Corporate Media Spokespeople and the PR People Who Support Them.” 2007. spokesblog.wordpress.com/tag/spokesperson-coaching-tips/.

Kline, Jason. *Public Forum Debate*. NY: Rosen Central, 2007.

Lundstrom, Meg. “Media-Savvy Kids.” *Instructor*. November/ December 2004. content.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3776.