Unfortunately, news doesn't come with labels of “FAIR” or “BIASED.” But you can develop your own “fairness meter” by using three key factors to measure how straight or slanted a story is.

**Word Choice**

Does the story simply present the facts or lead you to make judgments about them?

**Example of Leading Language:**
The superintendent’s pet project failed spectacularly less than three months after she shoved it through the approval process.

**Look For:**
- Loaded adjectives or verbs
- Patterns of very positive or negative descriptions

**Context**

Does the story provide the big picture or just a slice of what’s going on?

**Example of Added Context:**
Prior to accepting the role as city transportation manager, Smith received a PhD in urban planning and ran a private limo company.

**Look For:**
- Historical comparisons
- Explanations about sources
- Related facts or data

**Counterpoints**

Does the story help you understand multiple perspectives, or only one?

**Example of a Counterpoint:**
While supporters say the new tax bill will increase education funding, critics point out that middle-class families will bear most of the burden.

**Look For:**
- Counterarguments to key claims or conclusions
- Responses to accusations

**Very Biased**

**Mostly Biased**

**Mixed Bag**

**Mostly Fair**

**Very Fair**