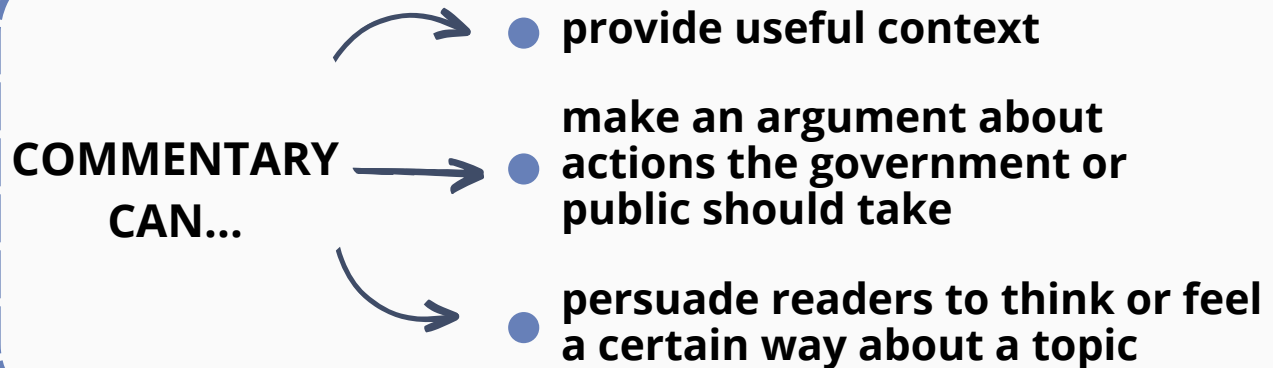


## Media Literacy Mini-Lesson #8

# COMMENTARY

Sometimes, news organizations share opinions about the news via opinion pieces or editorial **commentary**



**A commentary's main purpose is to interpret facts, rather than present them:**

A commentary may offer support or criticism of proposed laws or endorse political candidates, although that practice that is becoming less common at traditional newspapers.

## Commentaries can take many forms...

such as editorials (opinions written by the editors ahead of a given news story), op-eds (from "opposite-editorial," referring to the page opposite the editorial page, often written by someone not on the news staff), or editorial cartoons.



### PRO TIP

**Check the sources!** Good arguments are always grounded in good sources. When you read an opinion piece, take a discerning look at the writer's sources of information.

**The following words** urging the U.S. to pull out of the Vietnam War were delivered by legendary news reporter Walter Cronkite in 1968. Famed for his objective reporting, it was notably out of character for Cronkite to express his personal opinion during a newscast.

It's about time we started thinking about Vietnam in terms of the Vietnamese and our responsibilities towards them. ...

The best that we can do is try to find some way out of a meaningless and destructive war and bring about peace in the country. For my own part, I see no alternative to abandoning the policies which have been disastrous up 'til now and to begin a policy based on political understanding and negotiations.

Source: Parting words from Walter Cronkite: His famous Vietnam commentary, originally aired on a special CBS News broadcast Feb. 27, 1968, via NPR.

**Describe what is happening in the excerpt. What did you notice or wonder about?**

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**What makes this an opinion piece? What information do you think informs Cronkite's opinion of the war?**

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