Since history is dependent on primary sources or secondary sources, it is rife with **bias.** Even when researching a historical event such as the Invasion of England, you are dependent on the primary sources because most of the secondary ones cited witness accounts, government documents, personal journals, etc. Listed below are common types of bias in history.

**Social Bias**: Many types of primary sources are dependent on the testimonies and records of people who align themselves with social groups interested in pushing a specific point-of-view.

Ex: Most information we have about Ancient Greece came from a small segment of society: one that was wealthy, learned, and literate. We have little knowledge of the daily life of slaves or peasants.

**Deliberate Manipulation** or **Historical Revisionism** occurs when we have a purposeful rewrite of history to push their social interest.

Ex: North Korea still maintains that the Korean War was started by South Korea and the United States. It was actually started by the north.

**Hindsight Bias:** This type of bias occurs when we are able to look at the genesis of an event and criticize its unfolding as if we all should have known better.

Ex: George Bush should have known that terrorists were going to bomb the Twin Towers.

**Choice-Supportive Bias**: A historian’s choice of topic is influenced by a specific preoccupation with an event that clouds judgement and ignores some of the facets of the events.

Ex: The American tendency to revere the pilgrims without acknowledging their cruelty to Native Americans and each other.

**Confirmation Bias:** Only framing questions or seek evidence to appeal to your opinion coupled with a willful ignoring of counter-evidence.

Ex: Many conspiracy theories rely on this type of bias. 9/11 was an inside job or JFK was assassinated by the CIA.

**National Bias:** when patriotism or nationalism interferes with one’s interpretation of a historical event.

Ex: To what extent were Germans aware of what was going on during the Holocaust? Might be a difficult question.

Remember that even secondary sources contain bias. Howard Zinn, though an enlightening author, is dependent on bias.