Identifying Bias

Read the information below. Then complete the activity that follows.

When considering ideas and viewpoints on an issue, it is important to know whether the information you read is based on fact or based on the writer's bias. Bias is a personal preference for or against something. Bias does not reflect an impartial judgment of all the facts. Though what is written may be true, facts that do not support the writer's intent may be missing, and facts that support the writer's view may be overstated. As a result, the reader's perception is slanted in the writer's favor. Biased information is usually a one-sided view supported by feelings, beliefs, opinions, and only those facts that are in keeping with the writer's viewpoint.

To identify bias, look for these clues.
- words or terms that show emotion
- questions for which there is only one answer or for which no answer is expected
- statements of opinion that are worded as if they were facts
- expressions that use exaggerations

Below are some statements that Louisianians might have made while under Spanish rule. Read each statement. Circle B if the statement is biased and N if it is not. If you marked a statement as biased, use the lines to write an explanation supporting your answer.

1. Ulloa does not care about merchants. He wants to ruin us so his friends can benefit.

2. Lafreniere told me that Ulloa was planning to withhold the money Spain owes us for grain, so I joined the rebellion.

3. Every Louisianian knows that the revolt in 1768 was directed solely against Ulloa, not against the king of Spain or his authority over Louisiana.

4. With silent strength, relentless determination, and merciless judgement, O'Reilly established Spanish control over us.

5. We Louisianians really tried for independence, something no other colony has dared to do!