

Learning activity

Spotting fake news



Learning outcomes

Must:

All students will understand what fake news is and what checks to make to decide whether a news report is real or fake.

Should:

Most students should understand why fake news is harmful and can infer how a fake news story might affect someone's emotions and behaviour.

Resource checklist

- ✓ Fake or real slides
- ✓ Fake or real voting sheets
- ✓ News stories 1 and 2 printable
- ✓ Fake news checklist printable
- ✓ Fake news stories slides

Useful knowledge for supporting teacher/adult

- News produced by professional news publications is regulated. Many young people and adults also hear/see news stories through social media.
- Sometimes people deliberately make up news where they don't tell the truth, or only tell half of the truth - this is called fake news or disinformation.
- Fake news is created and shared for many reasons: as a joke/an April fool; to generate money through advertising; to influence people's beliefs about a person/place/product.
- Fake news can have negative consequences because it can make people believe something that isn't true and influence how people feel or act. For example, during an election, someone may publish fake news to make people feel angry about a candidate and change the way they vote.

Outline

These activities are intended as a framework you can adapt to suit individual students' needs. They can be used as standalone activities or as part of a sequence of work on news literacy.

- **20 min main activity** - Activity 1
- **30 min extend activity** - Activity 1 and 2

Activity 1

Use **Fake or real** slides, **Fake or real** voting sheets, **News Stories 1 and 2** printable, and **Fake news checklist** printable

Slides 2-7: Ask students to vote on whether each headline is real or fake making a 'gut reaction' decision (don't reveal the answers yet!). *What do you think about this story headline? Is it easy to tell if a story is real or fake (especially if we only read it quickly)? Did you have enough information to make an informed decision? How might people react to each of these headlines?*

Slides 8-9: Investigate two of these news stories using **News stories 1 and 2** printable and the **Fake news checklist** printable. Introduce the two questions on the checklist to help students identify fake news - *Who is sharing the story? Who else is reporting on it? Are there any fake news clue words?*

If a news story is true, it's likely to come from a trusted and respectable news source (see some examples on the Fake news checklist) and have also been reported on by at least two other trusted news companies. Students decide for each story whether it's real or fake. Can they explain why they made that decision based on the checklist?

Slide 10: *What have you learnt about how to spot fake news? Can you believe everything you read online/ on social media?*

Slides 11-16: Return to the fake or real slides and reveal the answers.

Activity 2

Use **Fake news stories** slides

Extend the learning:

Slide 17: Students read two examples of fake news stories (these are not real examples). *How might someone feel reading this story? What would happen if someone believed this? Could it change what they think or what they do? Why might fake news be dangerous? Why is fake news created? (As a joke, to make money, to change what people think about a person or place or product.)*

Plenary

Slide 18: *What have you learnt? What is fake news? How do you spot it? Is everything online and on social media real/ true? Why can fake news be dangerous?*

Optional activity on manipulated images

Don't trust pictures on the internet!

These activities are a fun, practical and engaging way for students to see how pictures can have a false perspective. Students will learn about how the use of forced perspective, miscaptioned and manipulated images mean we need to be critical of pictures we view online.

These can be found on our family learning page (scroll down to the very bottom): theguardianfoundation.org/programmes/newswise/families/looking-out-for-fake-news

