Fake News: Recommendations

If you read any news story about “fake news” in the past four years, you no doubt came across the phrase “media literacy.” From the various news stories and blog posts, I have compiled the following recommendations and advice. (NOTE: **lesson plans, handouts** and **related videos** are posted near the bottom of this list) Newest materials are posted last. Do you have suggestions for content that could be added here? Please consider sending it to me: fbaker1346@gmail.com

NEW: **How to Outsmart Fake News In Your Facebook Feed**
Sample Fake News Sites for Educators to Use in Instruction
Text recommendations
Fake News Curriculum Resources
Fake News & Media Literacy-List of Resources
How to Spot Lies, Fake News & Chaos Online (December 2019)
Real Media Literacy: Spotting A Fake Story (August 2019)
VIDEO: Confirmation Bias: Why Do Our Brains Like Fake News?

Click image for larger version.

In the article **“Five Things To Do To Avoid Posting Fake News on Social Media,”** the author offers this timely advice, which includes some important “media literacy” type questions:
– does this (posting) seem believable on a basic level?
– is the website (which has posted it) reputable?
– is this news reported elsewhere?

And the advice offered is:
1. Click (the link) and read beyond the headline.
2. Look at the date.
3. Google it.
4. Look it up on Snopes (a website that debunks fake news)
5. Know your satirical websites (Source)

From: Fake News Is A Real Problem & Here’s How Students Can Solve it
(See also, video)
The 5 C’s of Critical Consuming

#1: Context – Look at the context of the article. When was it written? Where does it come from? Have the events changed since then? Is there any new information that could change your perspective?

#2: Credibility – Check the credibility of the source. Does the site have a reputation for journalistic integrity? Does the author cite credible sources? Or is it satirical? Is it on a list of fake news sites? Is it actually an advertisement posing as a real news story?

#3: Construction. Analyze the construction of the article. What is the bias? Are there any loaded words? Any propaganda techniques? Any omissions that you should look out for? Can you distinguish between the facts and opinions? Or is it simply all speculation?

#4: Corroboration: Corroborate the information with other

credible news sources. Make sure it's not the only source making the claim. If it is, there's a good chance it's actually not true.

#5: Compare: Compare it to other news sources to get different perspectives. Find other credible sources from other areas of the ideological or political spectrum to provide nuance and get a bigger picture of what's actually happening.

From: **Why We Need News Literacy Now**
Know your neighborhood
Analyze Evidence and Sources
You Can't Handle The Truth if You Don't Know Your Biases
Balance is not always Fairness & Bias Is In The Eye of the Beholder
What is News & Who Decides?

From **Fake Or Real? How To Self Check The News** (NPR)
Pay attention to the domain name and URL
Read the "about us " section
Look at the quotes in a story
Look at who said them
Check the comments
Reverse image search

From: **How to Spot and Debunk Fake News**
Watch for fake or satire sites that completely make things up
Use fact checkers to verify poorly reported sites on legitimate news sites
Look for evidence to back up stories that only report accusations

From: **How to Detect Fake News**
Does the story or graph cite any sources?
Do the sources actually say what the article claims they say?
Are the sources authoritative?
Do the sources, if any, substantiate the account?
Are there multiple, independent accounts of the same story?

If the story references quantitative data, does it do so in a way that is mathematically sound?

From: **How to Spot Fake News & Teach Kids to be Media Savvy**

Here are a few basic questions to consider whenever you and your kids encounter a piece of media:
– Who made this?
– Who is the target audience?
– Who paid for this? Or, who gets paid if you click on this?
– Who might benefit or be harmed by this message?
– What is left out of this message that might be important?
– Is this credible (and what makes you think that)? *(Source: Project Look Sharp)*

Older kids especially might enjoy learning tricks to spot fake news. Here are a few things to watch for:
– Look for unusual URLs, including those that end with "lo" or ". com.co" – these are often trying to appear like legitimate news sites, but they aren't.
– Look for signs of low quality, such as words in all caps, headlines with glaring grammatical errors, bold claims with no sources, and sensationalist images (women in bikinis are popular clickbait on fake news sites). These are clues that you should be sceptical of the source.
– Check a site's "About Us" section. Find out who supports the site or who is associated with it. If this information doesn't exist – and if the site requires that you register before you can learn anything about its backers – you have to wonder why they aren't being transparent.
– Check Snopes, Wikipedia, and Google before trusting or sharing news that seems too good (or bad) to be true.
– Consider whether other credible, mainstream news outlets are reporting the same news. If they're not, it doesn't mean it's not true, but it does mean you should dig deeper.
– Check your emotions. Clickbait and fake news strive for extreme reactions. If the news you're reading makes you really angry or super smug, it could be a sign that you're being

played. Check multiple sources before trusting.
—Common Sense Media/Tribune News Service

From: **Teaching Children How to Spot Fake News from Real News**

"Your first stop when you visit an unfamiliar website should be the 'about' page. Is the information there neutral? Why does this website exist? Who funds the site? Who owns it? Who runs it? What are that person or people's goals? Are contributors paid? What is the submission process for content? All of these can be clues about both accuracy and biases.

"Scroll to the very bottom of the page and look at who owns the copyright. Is it an individual? A business? A smaller division of a large business? What makes this site qualified to provide accurate information on the topic the site covers?

"Does the website cite its sources? Are the sources reliable? Does it link to reliable sites?"

From: **Truth, Truthiness, Triangulation: A News Literacy Toolkit for a Post Truth World**

Check About and About me pages: Clicking on or investigate authors names to consider their credentials in context should be a regular part of the research journey. (See other tricks below.)

Interrogate urls: We see quite a bit of domain manipulation these days. For instance, what looks like an .edu domain, followed by .co or "lo" is likely a fake or deceptive site. If you are you seeing a slightly variant version of a well-known URL, do a little investigating.

Suspect the sensational: When we see something posted that looks sensational, it is even more important to be skeptical. Exaggerated and provocative headlines with excessive use of capital letters or emotional language are serious red flags.

Go back to the source: When an article mentions a study, if

you can, go directly to the sourceand check its *bona fides* as well.

Go back to the story again (and again): Breaking news will continue to break. Early reports are built from limited information so you'll want to watch a story grow into a fuller picture.

Think outside the reliability box: The old checklist-type tools we used to evaluate websites do not necessarily work. ACRL's Framework reminds us that the notion of reliability can be fluid. *Experts know how to seek authoritative voices but also recognize that* ***unlikely voices*** *can be authoritative, depending on need*. On Twitter's 10th birthday this year, Poynter, the respected journalism portal, listed 10 Twitter How Tos—guides for using Twitter for journalism from its own archive. Students can benefit from these tips too.

Triangulate: Try to verify the information in multiple sources, including traditional media and library databases. You can begin to rule out the hoaxes and by checking out sites like the nonprofit, nonpartisan FactCheck.org, or popular sites like Snopes or Hoax-Slayer.

What exactly are you reading?: Even when you find yourself in a traditional news site, identify what type of writing you are reading. Is it news reporting, or a feature story, or an editorial, or work by a guest blogger, or a review, or an op-ed or a disguised ad, or a comment?

Check your own search attitude and biases: Is your search language biased in any way? Are you paying more attention to the information that confirms your own beliefs and ignoring evidence that does not?

Use a little energy: Have you simply *satisficed* or have you done your due diligence in seeking and validating the best possible sources across media sources?

Stop before you forward (or use): When you see a widely shared or forwarded link, be suspicious of a hoax or a fake story. Can you verify the information outside of the social media platform on which you discovered it?

Be suspicious of pictures!: Not all photographs tell truth or unfiltered truth. Images are normally edited or process, but sometimes they are digitally manipulated. Some are *born digital*. A Google reverse image search can help discover the source of an image and its possible variations.

From: **Media Literacy is the Key to Understanding Today's World**
Be aware of your 'media diet' and control it
Understand who produces media and why
Become a 'critical consumer' by reading, viewing, listening to, and interacting with media actively and skeptically

From: **7 Ways To Spot & Debunk Fake News**

1. Stop! How do you know it is true? What's the evidence? Remember, the more outrageous the story, the higher the bar should be before you trust or share anything on social media.

2. Check whether the story actually supports the headline, and beware of headlines all in capital letters.

3. Always ask, "Says who?" We tell children not to take candy from strangers. Well, don't take information from strangers. Who is responsible for the story? Is it a known journalist or news outlet? If not, how many friends, followers does the source have? What have they posted in the past?

4. If you follow a link to a website, do all the links seen there work? What does the "About Us" page say? When was the information updated?

5. Check whether fact-checking websites such as Snopes.com or FactCheck.org have investigated the information, or just type the claim into a Google search and add the word "hoax."

6. Cut and paste images into reverse search engines like TinEye.com. Startling images often are not fake, but rather have appeared before in a different context.

7. Beware of stories that come from people you trust – even from your friends and relatives. Don't confuse the sender with the source of the information.

From: **Media Literacy is Critical**
One way is to teach students to use the 5W's for Critical Analysis, recommended by Donald Leu, Deborah Leu, and Julie Coiro in their 2004 book, *Teaching With the Internet K–12*. They suggest it is helpful for students to ask the following questions while consuming information:
Who is saying/writing/creating this?
What was their purpose of the particular media that was used?
When did they say/write/create?
Why did they say/write/create it?
Where can we go to check for accuracy?

From: **Fake News is Why You Exist & 12 Tools That Can Help**

three simple steps that professional fact checkers practice and that the rest of us need to perfect:

- **Landing on an unfamiliar site, the first thing checkers did was to leave it**
  If undergraduates read *vertically*, evaluating online articles as if they were printed news stories, fact-checkers read *laterally*, jumping off the original page, opening up a new tab, Googling the name of the organization or its president. Dropped in the middle of a forest, hikers know they can't divine their way out by looking at the ground. They use a compass. Similarly, fact-checkers use the vast resources of the Internet to determine where information is coming from before they read it.
- **Second, fact-checkers know it's not about "About"**

They don’t evaluate a site based solely on the description it provides about itself. If a site can masquerade as a nonpartisan think tank when funded by corporate interests and created by a Washington public relations firm, it can surely pull the wool over our eyes with a concocted “About” page.

- **Third, fact-checkers look past the order of search results**

  Instead of trusting Google to sort pages by reliability (which reveals a fundamental misunderstanding of how Google works), the checkers mined URLs and abstracts for clues. They regularly scrolled down to the bottom of the search results page in their quest to make an informed decision about where to click first.

From: **Five Ways To Counter Fake News About Climate Change By Thinking Critically About Media**

Recognize participatory culture for its multiple viewpoints and interpretations

Create a call to action through critical consciousness to devalue fake news

Distance yourself from design and emotional appeal in media messages

Acknowledge media information as a capitalist venture that feeds fake news

Undo our fixed belief systems through cross-checking possible fake news

From: **A Finder’s Guide to Facts**

Take a moment

Is the story so outrageous you can’t believe it?

Is the story so outrageous you do believe it?

Does the headline match the article?

Does the headline match the news story it’s lifted from?

Are quotes in context?

Is the story set in the future?

Does the story attack a generic enemy?

Are you asked to reply on one killer factoid?
Who is the news source, anyway?
Does the news source appear to employ editors?
Are you told, trust me?
Did the writer engage with anyone who disagrees?
Broaden your palate.
Be open to the idea that some falsehoods are sincerely held.
If a news source consistently passes the tests in this guide, support it.

From: **In 2017, Think Before You Post**

So before you share, consider these steps:

- Take stock of the outlets you believe in.
- When a story seems suspicious from a trusted source, weight it against reporting elsewhere.
- Allow yourself to compare stories and voices before forming an opinion and sharing it with the world.
- Forget being the friend who shares all news first, and instead focus on sharing the truth.

From: Fake News Fools Millions

HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS

Despite the increasing amount of false information online, there are ways to get to the truth and stop the spread of fake news. Here are a few tips.

1. Be skeptical: Just because you see an article online, don't assume it's factual, even if a friend shared it with you.

2. Verify: Make sure that what you're reading—and thinking of sharing—was published by a reputable source.

3. Look for other clues: Scrutinizing the sources cited in articles and even the ads on the page can reveal a hidden agenda behind a website.

4. Get help: Independent verification can often confirm whether something widely shared is true. Nonpartisan fact-checking sites like Factcheck.org and PolitiFact.com point out untruths in the news. Teachers and family can also help.

From: Fake News, Part 2

Healthy skepticism and quick research make it fairly easy to distinguish professionally edited media from poseurs or suspicious newcomers posting hoaxes. These are among obvious clues:

- Is the source widely known and verified with a blue check alongside its social media name?
- Does it have varied content (business, arts, lifestyle and sports news) or just political controversies and attacks?
- Does an article quote and identify multiple sources representing independent, authoritative, diverse views?
- Is there a response from anyone accused or criticized?
- Is the language neutral and restrained or extreme and inflammatory?
- Is the article longer than a few paragraphs?
- Is the news posted elsewhere by a trustworthy source, such as a major publication or network?
- Does the About Us page show how many years ago it began?
- If the About Us description is melodramatic and seems overblown, be skeptical.

From: **What is Driving the Rise of Fake News?**

- *Gauge your emotional reaction:* "Is it strong? Are you angry? Are you intensely hoping that the information turns out to be true? False?" (NLP)
- *Consider the headline or main message:* "Does it use excessive punctuation(!!) or ALL CAPS for emphasis? Does it make a claim about containing a secret or telling you something that 'the media' doesn't want you to know?"

(NLP)

- *Check the author:* An ABC.com.co story, headlined "Obama Signs Executive Order Banning The Pledge of Allegiance In Schools Nationwide," bears the byline Jimmy Rustling. "Who is he? Well, his author page claims he is a 'doctor' who won 'fourteen Peabody awards and a handful of Pulitzer Prizes.' Pretty impressive, if true. But it's not." (Robertson and Kiely)
- *What's the support?:* "The banning-the-pledge story cites the number of an actual executive order – you can look it up. It doesn't have anything to do with the Pledge of Allegiance." (Robertson and Kiely)
- *Triangulate:* "Try to verify the information in multiple sources, including traditional media and library databases. You can begin to rule out the hoaxes and by checking out sites like the nonprofit, nonpartisan FactCheck.org, or popular sites like Snopes or Hoax-Slayer." (Valenza)
- *Be suspicious of pictures:* "Not all photographs tell truth or unfiltered truth. … [S]ometimes they are digitally manipulated. Some are *born digital*. A Google reverse image search can help discover the source of an image and its possible variations. Remember Time Magazine's darkening of the OJ mugshot?" (Valenza)
- *Check the source of the story itself:* "Beware of stories that come from people you trust – even from your friends and relatives. Don't confuse the sender with the source of the information." (Hornik)

From: **Fake News and Your Law Blog**

The following is a list if attributes that media literacy advocates say can indicate "fake news":

1. Suspicious Domain Names. The .co country code domain was commercialized several years ago, offering .co as a competitor to .com for business use. Unfortunately, the .co top-level

domain was used to spoof ABC News during the election. I won't link to the site, but you can read about it on Wikipedia at the abcnews.com.co entry.

The terms "blogger" and "wordpress" in a domain name can signify that a website is a personal blog, not a news organization. Some media literacy educators have flagged these terms as a sign of fake news or, at a minimum, non-professional news content.

I personally don't think that a domain name is a good indicator of the trusworthiness of information on a website, nor do I think that blogs are inherently less reliable than traditional news publishers. However, this message is being spread by news literacy educators. Law firms should be aware of it.

Bottom line for law firms: pick your domain carefully.

2. Missing About Us Page. The absence of an "About Us" page can be an indicator of fake news. Where an "About Us" page is present, it should be scrutinized for information regarding the publisher.

Bottom line for law firms: Have an "About Us" page and make sure it clearly lists the authors and publisher of the blog. You don't want to look like a content mill. Better yet, write a Wikipedia entry about the firm as well.

3. Missing Byline and Contact Information. Fake news content frequently lacks a byline or author content information.

Bottom line for law firms: Clearly display the name of blog post authors, along with a link to more information about the author. Don't use "admin" or "wpadmin" or similar inscrutable source designations.

4. Questionable Currency. Fake news stories are often undated.

Bottom line for law firms: Put a date on every post. Consider

putting “Last updated” information on every piece of law firm content on the website. If you are worried that information on your website will look stale, the only antidote is more regular updating.

5. Lack of Sources and Hyperlinking. Information that is highly opinionated, unsupported by research, or otherwise clearly the product of navel-gazing is often fake news.

Bottom line for law firms: Cite to reliable sources. Spell out their full title, authorship, and publication dates. Better yet, link to the source. These steps will go a long way toward conveying trustworthiness and reliability to the reader.

6. Lack of Uniform Style. Poorly edited, ungrammatical text is a red flag for fake news.

Bottom line for law firms: Consider adopting a style guide. Add multiple layers of editing/proofing prior to publication.

7. Design Aesthetics. Fake news sites are often ugly, poorly designed messes.

Bottom line for law firms: Work with your designer to ensure that your website appears professional and trustworthy.

8. Headline and Social Media Misdirection. Clickbait headlines and deceptive headlines frequently signal fake news ahead.

From: **Fake news, FAKE NEWS (Part 1)**
Teach a healthy level of skepticism
Teach checking sources
Teach about analyzing sources
Teach about using multiple sources
Use ‘fake news’ detectors

From: **How to Spot Fake News & Understand Real Reporting**

There are essentially three kinds of fake news sites, according to Randle and Fisher:

1. Completely fake sites with made-up or clickbait headlines.
2. Sites that mix fiction and fact to blur the truth.
3. Extreme liberal or conservative sites that aren't necessarily false, but can be misleading.

Many of these sites exhibit blatant red flags that Walsh said can be very easy to identify if one knows what to look for:

- Misleading URLS, such as cnn.com.co, foxnews.com.ixo or another URL that's frankly unrecognizable.
- There isn't an author or the author has unverified credentials.
- There are limited sources or inline links.
- The headline and the body copy don't match.
- It's too good or too outlandish to be true.

From: Awash In A Sea of Information and Fake News

Using her expertise in digital literacy, Julien recommends using the "CRAP" test to decide whether what you're reading or hearing passes the "smell test":

1. Ask how **Current** the information is. Is it recent? When was the website last updated?
2. Ask whether the information is **Reliable**. What is included and what has been left out? Is the information opinion or are there verifiable facts, data or references used to back it up? Is the information presented in a balanced way, including more than a single point of view?
3. Ask whether the information is **Authoritative**. Who created the information? What are the credentials of that creator? Who published or sponsored the information, and are they reputable? What interest or perspective is being represented by the creators or publishers of the information? Are there advertisements on the website that suggest who's paying to produce the

information?

4. Ask what **Purpose** or point of view is being promoted by the information. Is it fact or opinion? Is it biased? Is it trying to sell you something?

From: **How to Read: Media Literacy Lessons for the Age of Post Truth and Fake News**

1. Check the URL
2. Fact check with external fact-checking websites
3. Is the story one-sided?
4. Are claims backed up?
5. Does the story sound too good or too bad to be true?
6. Are other outlets reporting on the story?
7. Don't share unless you're sure

From **Fake News: Tips on How To Distinguish It From The Real Thing** (AP)

– URL look odd? That "com.co" ending on an otherwise authentic-looking website is a red flag. When in doubt, click on the "contact" and "about" links to see where they lead. A major news organization probably isn't headquartered in a house.

– Does it make you mad? False reports often target emotions with claims of outlandish spending or unpatriotic words or deeds. If common sense tells you it can't be true, it may not be.

– If it's real, other news sites are likely reporting it.

– How is the writing? Caps lock and multiple exclamation points don't have a place in most real newsrooms.

– Who are the writers and the people in the story? Google names for clues to see if they are legitimate, or not.

– What are fact-checking sites like Snopes.com and FactCheck.org finding?

– It might be satire. Sometimes foolish stories aren't really meant to fool.

– Think twice before sharing. Today, everyone is a publisher.

From: **Fighting Fake News** (Lancaster):

Librarians at Franklin & Marshall College shared these tips to critique sources.

- What is the web domain? Look for strange URLs, like ones that end in .com.co, which can be fake versions of real news sites.
- Who is responsible for the content? Check the "about us" page. Articles without authors can be suspicious.
- Does it look like a reputable news source? Watch for HEADLINES IN ALL CAPS, poor web design or typos showing a lack of editorial oversight.
- What do other sources say? Look for other reporting on the story. If no other sites are reporting on it, the source might be suspect.
- How did you find the source? Be wary of clickbait sources with headlines designed to shock and generate shares

From: **Information Literacy & Fake News** (ACRLog)

1. Avoid judgments based solely on the source. Immediately following the election, there were numerous attempts to quantify which sites were trustworthy, such as Melissa Zimdars' False, Misleading, Clickbait-y, and/or Satirical "News" Sources and infographics that attempted to showcase media outlets' biases. The methodology used to classify sources is often opaque, and it's impossible for anyone to keep up with all the Websites purporting to be news. Many sites may also have a range of credibility. Buzzfeed has published some strong political pieces, but it also pushes listicles and silly quizzes, making it hard to say it's always an

authoritative source.

2. Refer to the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics. While it is written for journalists, many of the principles are ones a reader can identify in a story, such as whether the author seemed to verify facts; took care not to oversimplify or sensationalize a story, even in its headline; and explained why anonymous sources needed to be unnamed.
3. Differentiate between perspective and bias. Having and writing from a point of view is not the same as cherry picking your facts and twisting a story unfairly. We should be able to read something that doesn't fit our own world view with an open mind, and not automatically reject it as "biased." We should also help learners understand the difference between editorials and commentaries, which are intended to be argumentative and express strong opinions, and news stories, which should not. Good news journalism will not mix the two.
4. Find the original source of the story. Many sites will harvest news stories and then repackage them without any additional research or reporting. Like a game of telephone, the farther away you get from the original report, the more mangled and corrupted the story becomes. Often the original story will be linked, so you can just click to access it. Encourage students to read this story, rather than relying on the secondary telling.
5. Check your passion. If a story incites you, it may be too good or too outrageous to be true. For example, the pope did not endorse Trump OR Bernie Sanders. These stories can be created by satirical sites and then picked up by other outlets, which treat them as straight news; or they can emerge from the darker Web, feeding conspiracy theories like Pizzagate. Fact checking is essential for readers of these stories, using all of the above best practices.

From: **Five Ways Teachers Are Fighting Fake News** (NPR)

He's got a seven-point checklist his students can follow:

1. Do you know who the source is, or was it created by a common or well-known source? Example National Geographic, Discovery, etc.
2. How does it compare to what you already know?
3. Does the information make sense? Do you understand the information?
4. Can you verify that the information agrees with three or more other sources that are also reliable?
5. Have experts in the field been connected to it or authored the information?
6. How current is the information?
7. Does it have a copyright?

From: **Five Ways President Trump Can Become Media Literate** (Wash Post)

So let's review some basics.

1. Compare and contrast information sources. A single source can easily get it wrong, so it's wise to see if a number of reputable news outlets are reporting the same thing. In this case, *no one* was reporting a terrorist attack in Sweden – certainly not the Fox segment.

A Google search would have helped. Or a quick check with someone in, say, the CIA.

2. Don't share without verifying. One useful rule is to check three times before spreading what you think is news. Granted, that's intended to apply to regular people who might be posting on Facebook or retweeting an article or photograph.

For a presidential speech before thousands that will be televised globally? Definitely check at least once.

3. If you put out misinformation, correct it quickly. This is

not Trump's strong suit, given his long years of spreading lies about Barack Obama's birthplace before eventually agreeing with the obvious: that the then-president was born in the United States.

No such correction yet for the Swedish gaffe. He backed off a little in a tweet, saying that his statement suggesting a specific attack was in reference to a TV report. And, two days later, Sweden did experience a riot in an immigrant-heavy suburb of Stockholm, though it certainly didn't bear comparison to terrorist attacks in Paris or Nice.

4. Be skeptical. The TV-obsessed president should consider that not everything on his favorite medium is true. Not even if Sean Hannity says it. Not everything the conspiracy-mongering Alex Jones – who long cast doubt on whether the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre really happened – might confide on the phone is true. Even "Fox & Friends" makes a mistake once in a while.

A journalistic axiom is worth a thought: "If your mother tells you she loves you, check it out." (Presidential version: "If Steve Bannon tells you you're the next Abraham Lincoln, check it out.)

5. Use critical thinking. Granted, this is tough for our president. Last October, Trump revved up his campaign rallies with the idea that Hillary Clinton was on performance-enhancing drugs.

"I don't know what's going on with her, but at the beginning of her last debate, she was all pumped up at the beginning, and at the end it was like take me down," he said at one. "She could barely reach her car."

Where did this come from? Once again, the circle is unbroken. Roger Stone, the Trump ally and political trickster, had recently been interviewed by Jones, who runs the website Infowars.

Here's what Stone had said to Jones: "Look, of course she was jacked up on something. I assume some kind of methamphetamine."

Critical thinking tells us that even if we *want* to believe something, the trustworthiness of the source must be considered.
From: **Teasing Out The Truth- Teaching Students To Closely Examine Information** (Big Deal Media)

You can guide students in processes and projects that examine the RADCAB of information, a long-established acronym created by Karen M. Christensson that students can use to evaluate information. Christensson reminds students to "test" information using each of the letters of her acronym.

R: Relevancy
Is the information applicable for the task required? What is it that one needs or wants to know?

A: Appropriateness
Is the information written for grade school students or doctoral students

D: Details
Details are examined when students stop to consider the depth of the information. Is the information more than a superficial "snack?" Has the website's organization or individual used a headline so salacious that it is meant to grab you with the hope you don't read further, but just pass the fake information on?

C: Currency
Currency means looking for the online publishing date and most recent updates. Students need to learn to carefully consider the rate that information changes. Information on the laws regulating drones could be "so last year" even if it was just written six months ago.

A: Authority and Accuracy
Authority and accuracy take students more time and a bit of research to discern the fake from the real. Often this is the

area that students object to the most and teachers will get the cliché, "If it's on the Internet, it must be true." Fact-checking and reviewing the URL suffix is a solid skill that, along with misspellings, using all capital letters, grammatical errors, and strange domain names, can tip off student investigators to check further.

Who is the author of the information? What are their credentials? Is the author using citations, references, and links? For accuracy, I make my students find at least two more reliable places online that essentially have the same information. I call it triangulation, and use my hands to form that shape to help them remember to do it.

B: Bias

Students must ask, is a source persuading, informing, or selling me something? When it comes to teasing out the truth, students need to be discriminating users of information. Like the story of the lad who cried wolf, the consequences of not discerning the truth from the fake will be an information landscape of distrust that fails from lack of credibility

How To Spot Fake News (Toronto Public Library)

Who

- **Who wrote it?** Check for the author's name. Is the name available or is it missing? Most authors who put time into a well-researched article will likely have their name attached to it.
- **What are their qualifications?** If the author's name is listed, find out who the person is and what their credentials are. Do a search on the author's name, find their occupation and other articles written by them. Is the author an expert in the field? Does the author work at a reputable organization? Are the articles well-researched?
- **Check the "About Us" section.** On the top or bottom of

the website there should be a section called “About Us.” This section outlines the purpose of the website. Does the organization have an authoritative team of journalists or writers? Or do they invite members of the general public to contribute? Reading about the host of the website will help you determine whether it is a trustworthy source.

What

- **Does the article inform you of all sides of the topic?** News articles should provide you with facts from various viewpoints. If the article showcases only one side of the argument, readers should keep in mind that they are not seeing the full story and the article may contain bias.**Tip:** Check for sources cited in the article that support the claims in the story. Search for the sources online. Are they reliable sources? Do they support the claims being made? Are direct quotes used and are they taken out of context?
- **Does the content match the headline of the article?** A headline should provide you with an idea of what the entire article is about, but it can also be used to persuade you to believe something before reading the article. Authors may use this to their advantage and falsify their headlines to get people to read the full article or believe the claim without reading the article.**Tip:** In addition to the headline, check for any spelling or grammatical errors in the text. Well-researched articles are typically read and re-read before posting.

When

- **When was this article published?** Older articles may not contain up-to-date facts and might have broken links. Individuals sharing an older article may discover that some information has been disproven or debunked.

- **Was the article repurposed or updated?** Repurposed or updated content tends to have a disclaimer at the beginning or end of the article. News organizations may repurpose an article if a current event is related.
- **How important is the date?** The date gives you an indication of when the article was published. Websites may show time/date stamps in the article, but it is possible that these could be modified.**Tip:** Run a search to see if there are similar articles written by other news organizations.

Where

- **Does this web address (URL) look correct?** Typing in the wrong web address will direct you to a webpage that you were not intending to visit. It may lead you to a page with computer viruses. Be cautious of website URLs that are made to look official or real. A splashy looking website can contain fake news. Similar to a phone number, a minor mistake can take you to a completely different website.With few exceptions URLs including their domains (.ca, .com, etc.), can be purchased by anyone. Many domains do not have any requirements to register. Some individuals trick users by using domain names to imitate an organization's official site.**Tip:** If you do not know the URL, use a search engine and review the results for the result you are looking for.

Seven Way to Spot & Debunk Fake News (Newsday)

1. Stop! How do you know it is true? What's the evidence? Remember, the more outrageous the story, the higher the bar should be before you trust or share anything on social media

2. Check whether the story actually supports the headline, and beware of headlines all in capital letters.

3. Always ask, "Says who?" We tell children not to take candy

from strangers. Well, don't take information from strangers. Who is responsible for the story? Is it a known journalist or news outlet? If not, how many friends, followers does the source have? What have they posted in the past?

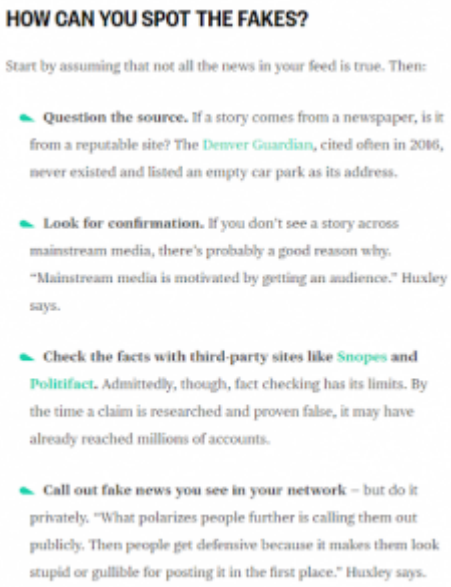
4. If you follow a link to a website, do all the links seen there work? What does the "About Us" page say? When was the information updated?

5. Check whether fact-checking websites such as Snopes.com or FactCheck.org have investigated the information, or just type the claim into a Google search and add the word "hoax."

6. Cut and paste images into reverse search engines like TinEye.com. Startling images often are not fake, but rather have appeared before in a different context.

7. Beware of stories that come from people you trust – even from your friends and relatives. Don't confuse the sender with the source of the information.

[How To Spot Fake News In Your Social Media Feed](#) (NBC, 3/15/18)



HOW CAN YOU SPOT THE FAKES?

Start by assuming that not all the news in your feed is true. Then:

- **Question the source.** If a story comes from a newspaper, is it from a reputable site? The Denver Guardian, cited often in 2016, never existed and listed an empty car park as its address.
- **Look for confirmation.** If you don't see a story across mainstream media, there's probably a good reason why. "Mainstream media is motivated by getting an audience," Huxley says.
- **Check the facts with third-party sites like Snopes and Politifact.** Admittedly, though, fact checking has its limits. By the time a claim is researched and proven false, it may have already reached millions of accounts.
- **Call out fake news you see in your network** – but do it privately. "What polarizes people further is calling them out publicly. Then people get defensive because it makes them look stupid or gullible for posting it in the first place," Huxley says.

From [Be A Science Fact-Checker](#) (Science World March 26,2018) Five Questions to Ask as You Evaluate a Science or Health Article

1) Where is the story published?

Some websites publish articles that are not checked for accuracy. Information published by reliable organizations, such as legitimate **news** agencies or government sites, like the National Institutes of Health, goes through rigorous fact-checking procedures. If you aren't sure about the reliability of a site, ask a librarian or teacher for advice.

2) Does the headline make a very surprising claim?

Headlines are sometimes exaggerated to catch readers' attention. Read the story carefully to see if the author presents scientific evidence to back up the headline. If the article suggests something very different from other studies, or doesn't provide supporting evidence on the topic, you should be more skeptical.

3) What is the original source?

When scientists conduct research, a detailed description of their study methods and results is usually first published in peer-reviewed scientific journals. Before an article can be published, researchers from the same field analyze the method the scientists used to make sure the scientific process was carried out carefully. If the research was not peer-reviewed, it may not be reliable.

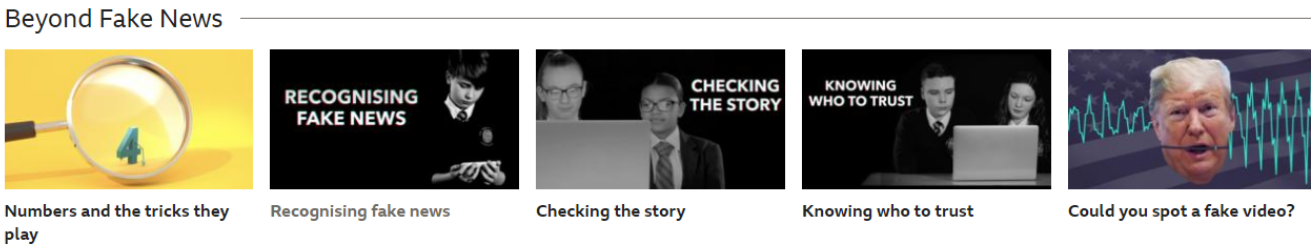
4) Who conducted the research?

Sometimes the people who conduct scientific studies may have a bias. For example, a company that makes a health product may carry out a study about how it affects humans. The fact that the company wants to sell the product may affect how data in the study is interpreted. Find out if the research was paid for by a company that would benefit from a particular outcome. If so, it may be unreliable.

5) Who, or what, did the scientists study?

Scientists often do research on animals to learn about health topics. Animal studies are critical in developing treatments for human disease. But finding something in mice doesn't always mean it is true in humans. Sample size is also important. The results of a medical study are more reliable if a large number of people are included in the study.

BBC Young Reporter (Lesson Plans)



What is Fake News and How Does It Impact Our Lives? (C-Span Lesson plan, resources, May 2019)

While fake news is not a new phenomenon, recent events have heightened awareness of the prevalence of questionable media sources, leaving consumers to evaluate the veracity of information that is presented. The deluge of information available in print, televised, and online media sources, including sites such as Twitter and Facebook, has also increased the level of critical analysis media consumers must use to evaluate those sources. This deliberation will analyze the effect of fake news on traditional media outlets, the reasons and incentives for purveyors of "fake news," and provide students with resources to strengthen their media literacy skills.

7 Tips for Teaching News Literacy to 8-12 Year Olds (School Library Journal, 6/1/17)

1. Don't confuse media literacy practices with using tech
2. Prepare your learning environment for current events
3. Start with background knowledge
4. Find out what students don't know
5. Think of sources as as a who, not what or where
6. Don't just get it from Google

7. Use media production activities so kids see themselves as media creators as well as consumers

13 Points for Disinformation Detection (Infographic)

7 Tips To Teach Kids How To Spot Fake News (graphic/handout)

5 Steps to Improve Your Media Literacy (TeenVogue)
Where did you get the article?
What was your response when you saw it?
Who benefits?
Have you checked your bias?
Have you checked with others?

From **The Real Problem With Fake News** (ASCD, Ed Leadership)
1. Teach a healthy level of skepticism
2. Show students how to look for sources
3. Show students how to analyze sources
4. Teach students to look for multiple sources
5. Show how to use fake new detectors

10 Tips for Recognizing Fake News (Atlanta Journal Constitution)
1. The source is known to be shady
2. Other stories from the source are questionable
3. Reputable news sites are not citing the story
4. The story predicts disaster
5. It reveals the cure for major illness
6. The website carries a disclaimer
7. There's a poll involved
8. The website has an odd domain name
9. It makes you angry
10. Check the experts

Here Are the Real Fake News Sites (Forbes)
How to avoid fake news sites
1. Think before you click
2. Consider bookmarking your favorite news sites
3. Watch out for domains that have -COM (text) in them.

4. Go directly to the news source website
5. Stay security savvy.
6. Use a reliable search tool

Fake News is Scary: Here's How to Spot Misinformation (NPR)

1. Exercise skepticism
2. Understand the information landscape
3. Pay extra attention when reading about emotionally charged & divisive topics
4. Investigate what you're reading or seeing
5, Yelling probably won't solve disinformation

Resources To Help You Avoid Fake News & Foster Critical Thinking

(Source: TeachingKidsNews.com)

How to Innoculate Yourself Against Disinformation

1. Seek out your own political views
2. Use basic math
3. Beware of nonpolitical biases
4. Think beyond the presidency

Media Literacy In The Digital Age

- Always check the source. If you're unfamiliar with the provider, read their About page or Google them.
- Does the author have a vested interest in you believing this information?
- Are they an authority on the topic?
- Do they fairly portray both sides of the issue?
- Verify the information against other media providers. Is it the same?
- If factual information is referenced or given, do the authors show you from where they found the information? Is it a credible source?

- Are there multiple spelling and grammar errors?
- A URL ending in .org doesn't automatically make it credible. "Org" stands for organization, and not every organization is unbiased.
- Does the information use words with strong connotations often?
- Does the "news" you're reading clearly take a stand on an issue?
- Trust your instincts. If something sounds too off-the-wall to be true, it probably is. Fact check it.

From **Turning Media Literacy Into Civic Engagement**
Renee Diresta, technical research manager at Stanford Internet Observatory, offers four strategies students can use to be informed media consumers:
1) Be patient! Don't rush to judgment. Think about the story: Does it really make sense? Revisit the story a few hours or a few days later to make sure you have the most complete picture of what happened.
2) Be responsible on social media: Think before you share! When you share content, even if you do not have tons of followers, know that the information you send travels far. Always pause first to consider whether the information is real before you put it out in the world.
3) Be skeptical of sensationalism. Those who run the media and news platforms want to grab your attention. Beware: The headline may not match what is in the article. If you send out the information without reading the article, you might share content that is inaccurate or misleading.
4) Always assess the source of information you receive. If you want to organize around facts and truth, you need to trust the source to avoid nonsense and propaganda. When you retweet, reshare, or repost, you perpetuate

what is not legitimate and create a lot confusion in those moments.

From **How Your Student Newsroom Can Fact Check to Combat Misinformation**
Questions to ask:

1. Who's behind the information? For example, information on how your school is testing for COVID-19 is likely accurate when it comes directly from your health center, but it could be questionable when it's from a random person online.
2. What's the evidence? Always look to see if the author has cited their sources. If you can't find a source to back up the claim, that's a sign of misinformation.
3. What do other sources say? If it's a claim specific to your school, look at what other campus and local publications are saying. (To learn more about these questions and how to evaluate claims, check out the Civic Online Reasoning Curriculum, developed by SHEG.)**A Personal Guide to Fact Checking Your Social Media Feeds**
    1. Read the article
    2. Don't judge a book by its headline
    3. Check your source
    4. Avoid Algorithms
    5. Check Your Stats
    6. Watch out for fake photos and videos
    7. Finally trust your gut

Source

[Fake News 101: Here's the different between misinformation and disinformation]

1. Look past your personal biases
2. Do you recognize the source of the news item?
3. Use search engines to see if anyone else is reporting this particular story
4. Check the link in your browser
5. Look at the other stories on the website
6. Read the 'contact us' and 'about us' links
7. Go to fact-checking sites
8. Be skeptical

Critical Questions for Spotting Fake News

Ask the following questions to check news stories for fake or misleading information. The more red flags you find in a story, the less you should trust the information.

Heading/Photo Check

1. Does the headline include ALL CAPS, excessive punctuation (!!), or sensational language? Yes | No
2. Does the lead image seem altered or out of place? Yes | No

URL/Domain Check

3. Is the URL recognizable, not ending in *.co* or some other strategic variation (i.e., *abcnews.com.co*)? Yes | No

Content Check

4. Do the details in the story confirm the headline's claim? Yes | No
5. Is anyone quoted in the story? Are the sources quoted qualified to speak on the topic? Yes | No
6. Is the language in the story inflammatory or completely one-sided? Yes | No
7. Do other news sources verify the information reported in the story? Yes | No

Source Check

8. Is the source of the story well known? Yes | No
9. Does the story include a byline? Yes | No
10. Does the source's Web site contain an "About Us" page? Does the "About Us" page share newsgathering credentials? Yes | No
11. If you discovered the story on a social site, are commenters saying it's false? Yes | No

Gut Check

12. Does something about the site seem suspicious (clickbait-y headlines, poor design, multiple stories attacking one person, etc.)? Yes | No
13. Does your gut say the story is false? Yes | No

Thoughtful Learning
k12.thoughtfullearning.com

From the minilesson Detecting Fake News

Three tips when sharing historical images:

1) Think about the source. If the article or picture doesn't show a (historical) source, or the person sharing the story

can't provide one, doubt it! Without a source all you're doing is someone sharing something someone said.

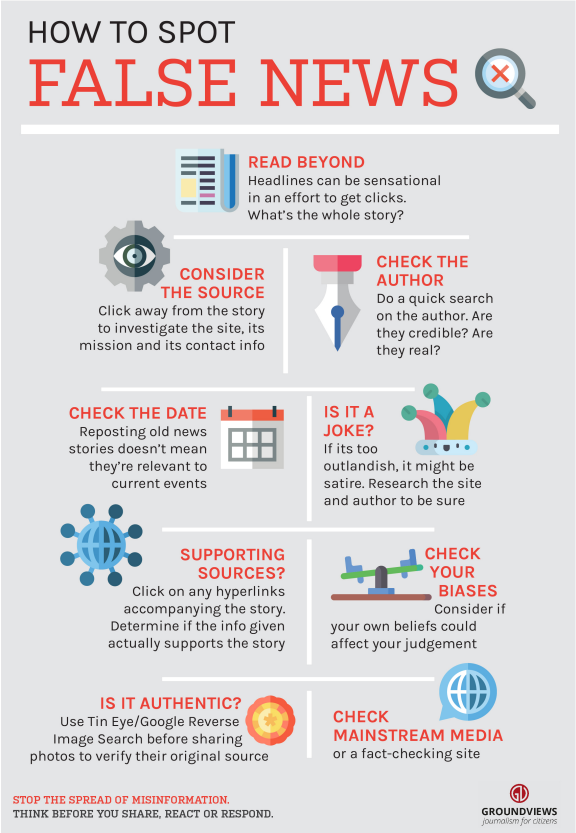
2) Before sharing something, do a quick online search. It only takes a few seconds and can save you from looking foolish.

3) If you're suspicious of a picture, do a reverse image search. Simply drag the image into a site such as Google Images, Tineye or Yandex, and see what pops up (Source)

The Debunking Handbook 2020 cites the importance of building media literacy by encouraging the public to:

- Slow down and think about information provided on social media;
- Evaluate its plausibility in light of alternatives;
- Always consider information sources, including their track record, their expertise, and their motives; and
- Verify claims by checking other reliable sources before sharing them.
  (Source)

Above, from FirstDraftNews.org Twitter feed

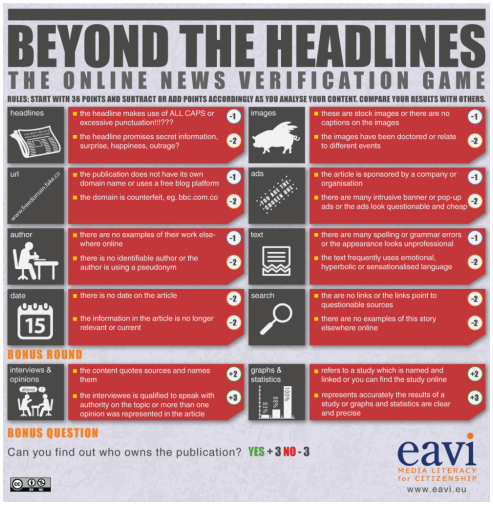


[How to Spot False News](#) (Infographic)

[Learn To Discern](#) curriculum

[ESCAPE Junk News](#) (lesson plan, infographic) Newseum

[Is This Story Share-Worthy?](#) (lesson plan, infographic) Newseum



download full graphic [here](#)

[The Baloney Detection Kid Sandwich](#) (Infographic)

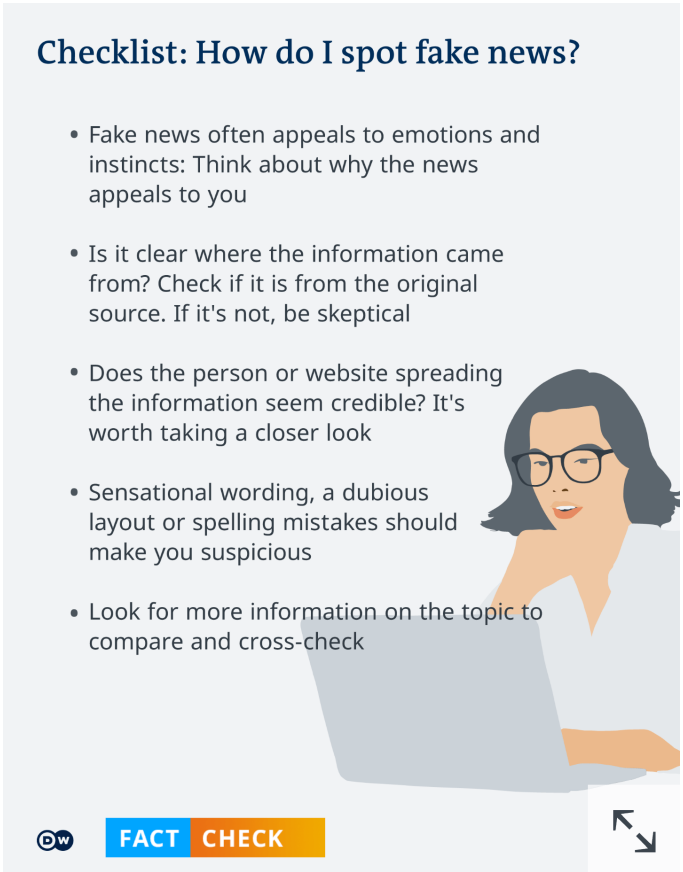
[Beyond Fake News: 10 Types of Misleading News](#) (infographic)

[Tips for Determining Fake News & Real News](#) (Opinion)

[Guidelines for Recognizing Fake News Online](#) (infographic, Gale Opposing Viewpoints in Context)

[Fake News, Misinformation & Propaganda](#) (infographic, resources, Harvard University)

[Fake News Infographic](#)



Source for above

[Four Great Fact Checking Sites for Tweens/Teens](#) (video, Common

Sense Media)

Don’t Be Fooled By These Fake News Web Sites (CBS News)

False, Misleading, Clickbait-y, and/or Satirical “News Sources (Melissa Zimdars, Merrimack College)

Fake News Triangle (of critical thinking questions) (AML)

Spotting & Combatting Fake News (Verizon)

Curriculum: **Reading Like A Historian**

Slides/Lesson Plan Google Believe it Or Not Search Techniques and Strategies

Handout: **How to Spot Fake News** (IFLA)

Handout: **10 Questions for Fake News Detection** (News Literacy Project)

Handout: **CRAAP Test Worksheet**

Lesson Plan: Fact Checking Day (Poynter)

Lesson Idea: **Media Literacy & Fake News** (CSPAN Classroom)
View the videos in this lesson with your students to cultivate an understanding of media literacy and engage in a discussion about its impact and significance for the future.

Lesson Plan: How to Teach Your Students About Fake News (PBS)
This lesson gives students media literacy skills they need to navigate the media, including how to spot fake news.

Lesson Plan: Fake News vs Real News (New York Times)
a roundup of tools, questions, activities and case studies we hope can help reduce this digital naïveté.

Lesson Plan: Fighting Fake News (KQED)

Lesson Plan: Fake News & What We Can Do About It (ADL)

Center for News Literacy Lesson Plans (revised Fall 2016)

How To Spot Fake News (Washington Post, video)

Photo Fact Checking in A Digital Age (Video)
Mary Owen, the News Literacy Project's Chicago program manager, explains why digital photos posted on social media and elsewhere online need to be checked, and shares some easy-to-use tips and tools for verifying them.

Reverse Image Search (Video)
This video from Alan Mackenzie is a basic introduction to 'reverse image search' which can be used as a tool to allow children to think critically about what they see online.

Four Ways to Spot A Fake News Story (Video)
It has become more difficult to spot a fake news story in today's digital age. But don't worry, Josh has a few tips for you!

Combating Fake News Online (Video)
BuzzFeed Canada Editor Craig Silverman has been studying the fake news phenomenon for over decade. He sits down with Soledad O'Brien to explain the business models that promote misinformation and the difficulties of combating fake news.

Triple Check (Video)
During the October 30th broadcast of CNN's Reliable Sources, host Brian Stelter delivered an essay urging viewers not to share any articles from hoax news websites or hyper-partisan sites that provide only positive information about their candidates without context.