

# Fake News - Trust

## EXPLANATION:

If it seems as though misinformation, or fake news, can be found everywhere in today's digital world. How do you know what to trust? This activity gives students an opportunity to investigate potential instances of misinformation and look for strategies to determine authentic news sources.

**GRADE LEVELS:** 11–12

**STUDENT GROUPING:** Whole group discussion and investigation in pairs

**ACTIVITY LENGTH:** 60 minutes approx.

## CASEL CORE COMPETENCY: *RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING*

- Learning how to make a reasoned judgment after analyzing information, data, and facts
- Recognizing how critical thinking skills are useful both inside and outside of school
- Evaluating personal, interpersonal, community, and institutional impacts
- You can learn more about the CASEL framework [here](#)

## SCOPE OF TASK:

What is fake news?

Fake news consists of news, stories, or hoaxes created to deliberately misinform or deceive readers.

Some things read in print and online (especially on social media) may appear to be true but often are deceptive. The aim of misinformation is often to influence, push a political agenda, sell something, or cause confusion. Stories containing misinformation can appear on reputable sites and can appear to be endorsed by media celebrities.

Many people now get news from social media sites, and often it can be difficult to tell whether stories are credible or not. Websites with misinformation may have web addresses that look authentic, and, due to information overload, misleading messages and hoax stories are increasing. The Internet has enabled a whole new way to publish, share, and consume information—but there is very little regulation.

There are different types of misinformation:

- **Clickbait:** Stories that are deliberately fabricated to gain more website visitors and increase advertising revenue for websites; truth or accuracy is not necessarily a priority
- **Propaganda:** Stories, usually political in nature, that are promoting a biased point of view to persuade readers
- **Satire:** Websites—such as *The Onion* and *The Daily Mash*—that publish fake stories to entertain viewers
- **Poor journalism:** The presentation of inaccurate information due to journalists not checking their facts
- **Biased news:** The tendency of social media news feeds to display news and articles based on users' personalized search history; continually viewing the same kind of content confirms biases



1. This activity is introduced by Sandra Sully, a renowned Australian news presenter and journalist. She shares her insights into the media and the news. Play for the students before beginning the activity:



2. Activate students' prior knowledge to discover what knowledge and experience they have concerning misinformation:
  - How do you know how to trust information—in print or online?
  - What are the clues you look for to decide if information is true, correct, authentic, or real?
3. Remind students that knowing how to determine what information to trust is essential for many aspects of their lives, such as trusting and understanding the information provided about phone plans to ensure the services and data advertised are correct. Ask students:
  - What other scenarios exist in which you need to be able to trust information on the Internet?
4. Explain the task: students in pairs are to search print or online platforms to find an example of misinformation. Make sure to provide guidelines about appropriate Internet usage in the school context. They need to identify the following:
  - What is the purpose of the information: advertisement, reporting, etc.?
  - What is the type of misinformation? (See list above.)
  - How did they know that the information was untrustworthy? Consider the web address, visuals (accompanying photos), claims, reported facts, etc.
5. After students have conducted their searches, ask them to share with the class what they have found and report on why the information was not to be trusted. As students make their reports, make a list on the board of ways that students can evaluate information.
6. Complete the activity by summing up the students' findings and highlighting how digital media can impact trust, confidence, self-esteem, and general well-being.

## RESOURCES:

- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Computers with Internet access

Online video: “The Kindness Curriculum - Trust with Sandra Sully,” sourced from:  
[https://youtu.be/4\\_ewR5pTxiM](https://youtu.be/4_ewR5pTxiM)