Why Teach About Fake News

CIIT OUT AND TAPE NEAR YOUR COMPUTER OR TV

Last year Oxford Dictionary declared 'post-truth' the 2016 word of the year. While life skills are not tested by the state, we as social studies teachers are often compelled to develop students into thinkers who are able to place the events happening around them into context. In the post-truth world, in which we currently live, anyone with an internet connection can produce and disseminate information under the guise of journalism; thus, our students need the ability to discern real from false and identify hyperbole.

I tasked my high school aged world history students with bringing a piece of reliable journalism and an article that showed gross bias. I was left in a cold sweat at the end of the discussion in which students shared their articles because all the articles shared were of highly questionable validity and my students seemed totally oblivious to the blatant bias present in the articles they were sharing as reliably sourced news. It was in at the end of this lesson that I realized the need to teach students how to approach all news with a level of skepticism and the need to arm them with tools and strategies for determining what news is valid and what is totally fallacious.

As testing comes to an end and you are considering on what to spend your class time now that the pressure of testing is allayed, consider taking this time to work with students on honing their skills of detecting validity in their information sources and training them to stay accurately well-informed in the post-truth world in which they live.

BREAKING NEWS CONSUMER'S HANDBOOI

FAKE NEWS EDITION

- 1. Big red flags for fake news: ALL CAPS, or obviously photoshopped pics.
- 2. A glut of pop-ups and banner ads? Good sign the story is pure clickbait.
- Check the domain! Fake sites often add ".co" to trusted brands to steal their luster. (Think: "abcnews.com.co")
- 4. If you land on an unknown site, check its "About" page. Then, Google it with the word "fake" and see what comes up.
- 5. If a story offers links, follow them. (Garbage leads to worse garbage.) No links, quotes, or references? Another telltale sign.
- 6. Verify an unlikely story by finding a reputable outlet reporting the same thing.
- Check the date. Social media often resurrects outdated stories.
- 8. Read past headlines. Often they bear no resemblance to what lies beneath.
- Photos may be misidentified and dated. Use a reverse image search engine like TinEye to see where an image really comes from.
- 10. Gut check. If a story makes you angry, it's probably designed that way.
- 11. Finally, if you're not sure it's true, don't share it! Don't. Share. It.



ONTHEMEDIA.ORG

Information on Need for News Literacy Education

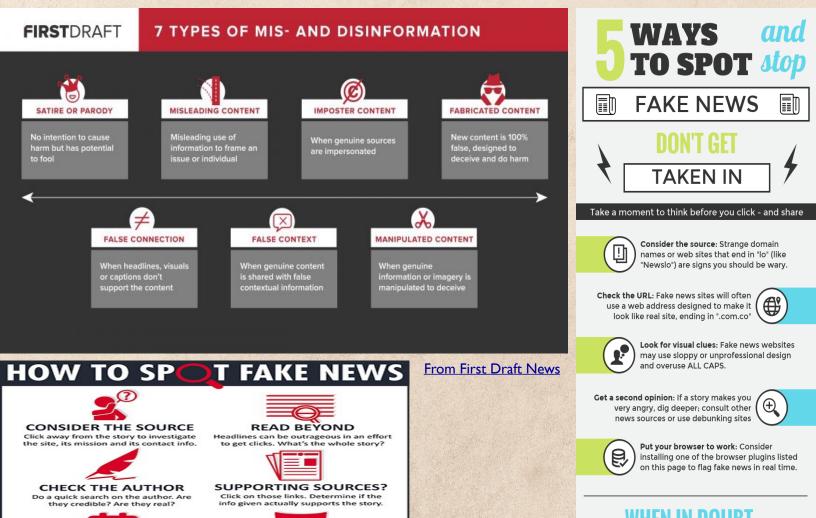
- Most Students Cannot Distinguish Fake and Real News Video from the Wall Street Journal
- Students Have Dismaying Inability to Tell Fake News from Real, Study Finds NPR Article
- 5 Ways Teachers Are Fighting Fake News NPR ED Article

From On the Media

Fake News/News Literacy Essential Questions

- Can different perspectives of the same event be true simultaneously?
- · Is the truth defined by facts alone?
- Does perception shape the truth?
- Can the truth ever be fully known?
- How can I identify different types of bias and propaganda?
- How do we know what is true if we "weren't there"?
- In what ways does propaganda influence people's opinions and decisions?
 How does documentation establish credibility?
- Does propaganda influence your opinions today?
- · Whom do we believe and why?
- · Is news inevitably biased?

- · How does on define news, opinion, advertising, publicity, entertainment, propaganda and raw information?
- · What is fairness?
- Why is it important that thus subjects of reports be given the chance to tell their side of the story?
- How does one know what visual images to trust?
- Why does context matter?
- · How will learning to navigate the wealth of information available on the internet help keep students from being deceived?



From IFLA

IS IT A JOKE?

If it is too outlandish, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.

ASK THE EXPERTS Ask a librarian, or consult a fact-checking site.

Videos

- How to Separate Fact and Fiction Online TED Talk
- How Fake News Does Real Harm TED Talk

Lessons

- How False New Can Spread TED Ed Lesson
- How to Choose Your News TED Ed Lesson
- Not all Scientific Studies are Created Equal TED Ed Lesson
- Evaluating Sources in a 'Post Truth' World Ideas for teaching and learning about fake news from the New York Times
- Facing Ferguson: News Literacy in a Digital Age Unit on the role of journalism in a democratic society and being a responsible consumer of information. Part of a Unit Series on Democracy and Civic Engagement including Minimizing Bias and The Power of **Images**

Resources

Current Events/Articles

CHECK THE DATE

Reposting old news stories doesn't mean they're relevant to current events.

CHECK YOUR BIASES

Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgement.

- · Long Before There was 'Fake News' There Were 'Fake Photos' - NPR Article
- How to Spot Visualization Lies: Keep Your Eyes Open
- Lies, Propaganda and Fake News: A Challenge for Our Age - BBC Article
- Four Tricky Ways That Fake New Can Fool You - TED Article

Research Articles

- Fake News and The Spread of Misinformation
- 6 Research Articles from Peer Reviewed lournals

ASK A LIBRARIAN

asklib.hcl.harvard.edu

From Harvard Library

Source: An informal list compiled by Dr. Melissa Zimdars, Assistant Professor at Merrimack College