



Safer Schools Lesson Plan – Fake News – Lower & Middle Secondary



Crib notes

Aim of the lesson:

Fake News is an issue which has been all over the news and social media in recent years. It is an important topic for pupils to understand. This lesson aims to give them the skills and knowledge to challenge Fake News, whether they see it online, in the newspaper or on TV.

Teacher's Notes:

Here's the bit where we give you some key information so you can seem *even smarter* in the eyes of your pupils.

According to the 'Commission on Fake News and the Teaching of Critical Literacy Skills':

- Only 2% of children have the critical literacy skills they need to tell if a news story is real or fake.
- Half of children (49.9%) are worried about not being able to spot Fake News.
- 60.6% of children now trust the news less as a result of Fake News.
- 60.9% of teachers believe Fake News is harming children's well-being, increasing their anxiety levels.
- Half of teachers (53.5%) believe that the national curriculum does not equip children with the literacy skills they need to identify Fake News.



Lesson plan

Resources:

Fake News PPT, News Evaluation sheet doc., Fake News Printouts, tablets or laptops.

Learning objectives:

- Learn to identify if news is real, fake or satire.
- Understand how to spot Fake News.
- Develop our knowledge of how to challenge Fake News.



Teaching:

Slide 1 and 2: Title page and L.O.

Slide 3: REAL acrostic for spotting Fake News.

Research – check the publisher. *Who or where did the story come from, what other stories do they have and what do you know about the news outlet?*

Evidence – check the sources. *Who does the news story quote? Do they mention experts or other news outlets?*

Analyse – check the date. *When was the article published? It might be old or reposted.*

Learn – google the quotes. *Have they been used by any other news sources? Is it a real quote?*

Slide 4: FAKE acrostic for spotting Fake News.

Facts – use a fact checker. *There're lots of websites that check facts, and stories reported in the press. Have a look at www.fullfact.org to fact check.*

Attention – pay close attention to images. *They may not be recent and may have been reused, or they may be fake.*

Knowledge – look at what the experts are saying. *Research whether this story is opinion or fact.*

Examine – look at the language used – is it dramatic or hyperbolic? (Hyperbolic – exaggerated / over the top on purpose)

Slide 5: How you can challenge Fake News. *Speech bubbles appear one at a time with the following questions:*

- *Ask - who wrote this? Why did they write it?*
- *Is the story from a credible newspaper, website or platform?*
- *Is it for or against something?*
- *Is it simply telling me something or trying to shock or worry me?*
- *Are other platforms, news companies or websites reporting on it?*
- *Do the sources check out?*
- *Does the URL or link look legit? (does it look like a real website? A URL stands for Uniform Resource Locator – It is simply the address of the webpage – such as <https://oursaferschools.co.uk/>)*

Slide 6: What is satire?

Satire is different from fake news; it uses sarcastic comedy on purpose to entertain people. It can trick young people, who might repost it as a truthful source if they aren't familiar with it.

- *Satire often mocks, jokes or parodies current events.*
- *If it's sarcastic, odd, funny and dramatic at the same time, it might be satire.*
- *Satire will sometimes use words with double meanings, lots of puns, or silly quotes.*
- *Satire is different from fake news; it uses sarcastic comedy on purpose to entertain people.*



Task:

Slide 7: News Evaluation

Hand out News Evaluation worksheet. Pupils must evaluate the example stories from the PPT and identify if they are true, false or satire.

Pupils may need computers / tablets to complete the worksheet.

Slide 8: Brightside article – Some true elements, some false elements.

- Can we fact check this? (*There's no actual study mentioned*)
- Can we check the source? (*The quotes are potentially not from Prof. Horne*)
- Do we trust this website? (*Website is mostly clickbait – stories with misleading or contentious headlines designed to make you click and read*)
- Can we fact check this info? (*"Science says..." Does it? Or does one flawed study say it?*)

Slide 9: Waterford Whispers News – Satire.

- Does this seem like a real news story?
- Is there humour?
- Check the website – are all their articles satirical?

Slide 10: The Guardian – Real.

- Trusted newspaper? (Reputable newspaper which is left of centre)
- Can we check if this is reported in other news outlets?
- Can we find out if this tweet existed? (*The tweet below was then deleted as his misspelling of unprecedented was flagged up. Plus, the tensions this tweet created with the Chinese government created a political storm.*)



Plenary:

Slide 11: Feedback as a class – review worksheets.