



## Activity 3: Misinformation in the news







## Objective:

To recognise signs of misinformation in the news.



Omar

Olive



Newsi:

Hi! My name is Newsi and these are my friends Omar and Olive. We are members of our school's News Club. We have been exploring online news sites to find ideas for our School News Bulletin.





**NEWS  
FLASH!**

We have been looking at lots of different news websites but we have noticed that some news sites contain articles that are full of people's opinions and things that are not true. It seems that some websites present lies and opinions as the truth.



That's right! Sometimes the information that is on the internet is not factual. Sometimes, stories or websites that are posted online are exaggerated or completely made up to make the reader think or feel a certain way. This can affect the choices that people make and the way that they behave.





**NEWS  
FLASH!**

This is called

***misinformation***



NEWS  
FLASH!

This is called

**mis**information



This prefix is used to show that something has been  
done wrong or badly.







**NEWS  
FLASH!**



Omar

Why would someone create news that wasn't real or spread misinformation?

AJ

People often use misinformation to grab people's attention. They want as many people to read and share it as possible.





NEWS  
FLASH!



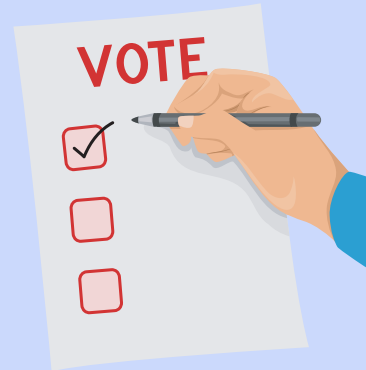
Olive

Why are they looking for attention?

There can be lots of reasons but they are mainly...



...to make  
money from  
advertising on  
their website.



...to make  
someone think a  
certain way and to  
influence them.



...because they  
think it is funny.







**NEWS  
FLASH!**

Thanks AJ! Let's look at some news websites to explore how we can tell if an online news story contains **misinformation**.





**NEWS  
FLASH!**

# Headline

Is it...  
...sensational?  
...designed to make  
you emotional?  
...designed to make  
you feel angry?  
...a joke?  
...unrelated to the  
actual story?  
  
Does it misrepresent  
the facts?

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Wednesday 5 May 2021

### 10,000 scientists Admit that Climate Change is a Hoax!

by Jerry A.

An online petition stating that climate change is a hoax has now been signed by 10,000 people who say are scientists.

The petition states that climate change, and the (also fake!!!) greenhouse effect were invented to hide the truth.

I have never doubted climate change was a lie, and I am relieved that this is now proven.

#### Popular posts

World ending:  
The prophecy is Real!



Mermaids exist - and there  
are photos to prove it





**NEWS  
FLASH!**

## Headline

If the answer is "yes"  
then this story may  
contain **misinformation**.  
Why not fact-check it?

Is it...

...sensational?

...designed to make  
you emotional?

...designed to make  
you feel angry?

...a joke?

...unrelated to the  
actual story?

Does it misrepresent  
the facts?

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NEWS  
FLASH!

# Author

Is there a **by-line**?

Was it written by a  
real person?

Is this their real  
name?

Can you identify  
them?

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**NEWS  
FLASH!**

Author

If the answer is "no" then  
this story may contain  
**misinformation.**

Why not check the  
website's 'About' page?

Is there a **byline**?

Was it written by a  
real person?

Is this their real  
name?

Can you identify  
them?

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**NEWS  
FLASH!**

## 'About' page

Does the author  
identify themselves?

Is there any contact  
information listed?

Is this a real journalist?  
Are they employed by  
a reliable organisation?

Are they reporting the  
objective truth?

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## About me



Hi!

My name is Jerry and I am from England.

On my website I search for the TRUTH about aliens,  
monsters and other things.

## Popular posts

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**NEWS  
FLASH!**

## 'About' page

Does the author  
identify themselves?

Is there any contact  
information listed?

Is this a real journalist?  
Are they employed by  
a reliable organisation?

Are they reporting the  
objective truth?

If the answer is "no" then this  
website may contain  
**misinformation** and the writer may  
have a **hidden agenda**.  
Why not see if you can find the  
story on another site?

Posted by Jerry A.

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has now been signed by 10,000 people who say are  
scientists.

Hi!  
The petition states that climate change, and the (also  
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relieved that this is now proven.





NEWS  
FLASH!

Date

Is the story or  
photograph recent or  
from months or years  
ago?

Has it been reposted to  
make people feel an  
emotion like anger or  
fear?

Is all of the information  
in the article up to date?

http://jerrysthoughts.net/posts/1000-scientists-admit-that-climate-change-is-a-hoax

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Wednesday 5 May 2004

## 10,000 scientists Admit that Climate Change is a Hoax!

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An online petition stating that climate change is a hoax  
has now been signed by 10,000 scientist.

The statement in the petition says climate change, and  
the (also fake) greenhouse effect are terms created by  
politicians!!!

I have never doubted it was a hoax, and I am relieved  
that this is now backed by scientists.

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**NEWS  
FLASH!**

Date

<http://jerrysthoughts.net/posts/1000-scientists-admit-that-climate-change-is-a-hoax>

Is the story or photograph recent or from months or years ago?

Has it been reposted to make people feel an emotion like anger or fear?

Is all of the information in the article up to date?

**Be careful!**

Sometimes, people share or repost stories that are old or out of date. The information in the article may no longer be true and they may be doing this to make people feel angry, scared or upset.

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**NEWS  
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## Fact or Opinion?

Does the article contain facts that can be proven and found elsewhere?

Are the "facts" vague and unspecific or a little too convenient?

Does it contain opinions?  
Are those opinions presented as facts?

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## Fact or Opinion?

Does the article contain facts that can be proven and found elsewhere?

Are the "facts" vague and unspecific or a little too convenient?

Does it contain opinions?  
Are those opinions presented as facts?

The writer of this article clearly has a strong opinion about this subject and they are keen to share this with the reader.

It presents the author's opinions as facts and clearly has an agenda.

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FLASH!

## Sources

Where do the "facts" in this article come from?

Are these SOURCES named?

Are these SOURCES experts in the subject or are they ordinary people commenting on the story?

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## Sources

Where do the "facts" in this article come from?

Are these SOURCES named?

Are these SOURCES experts in the subject or are they ordinary people commenting on the story?

The source of the information in this article is "An online petition". Which online petition?

Does a petition count as evidence or proof?

Who signed it?

If the author doesn't give specific details then this can be a sign that their sources are not reliable.

Posted by Jerry A.  
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**NEWS  
FLASH!**

## 5 W Words

Does the article contain  
details of all 5 W words?

What?

Who?

Where?

When?

Why?

tps://jerrysthoughts.net

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## 5 W Words

← → ↻ ⓘ <https://jemysthoughts.net>

Does the article contain details of all 5 W words?

What?

Who?

Where?

When?

Why?

If an article leaves out one or more of these W words then you need to consider why the author has done this.

Is the author trying to avoid sharing something that they don't want you to know?

Why not try searching for the missing information on another website?

An online petition stating that climate change is a hoax has now been signed by 10,000 people who say are scientists.

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Newsi:

Wow! Thanks AJ. That was really useful. Now I know how to spot whether a news article might contain misinformation.



AJ:

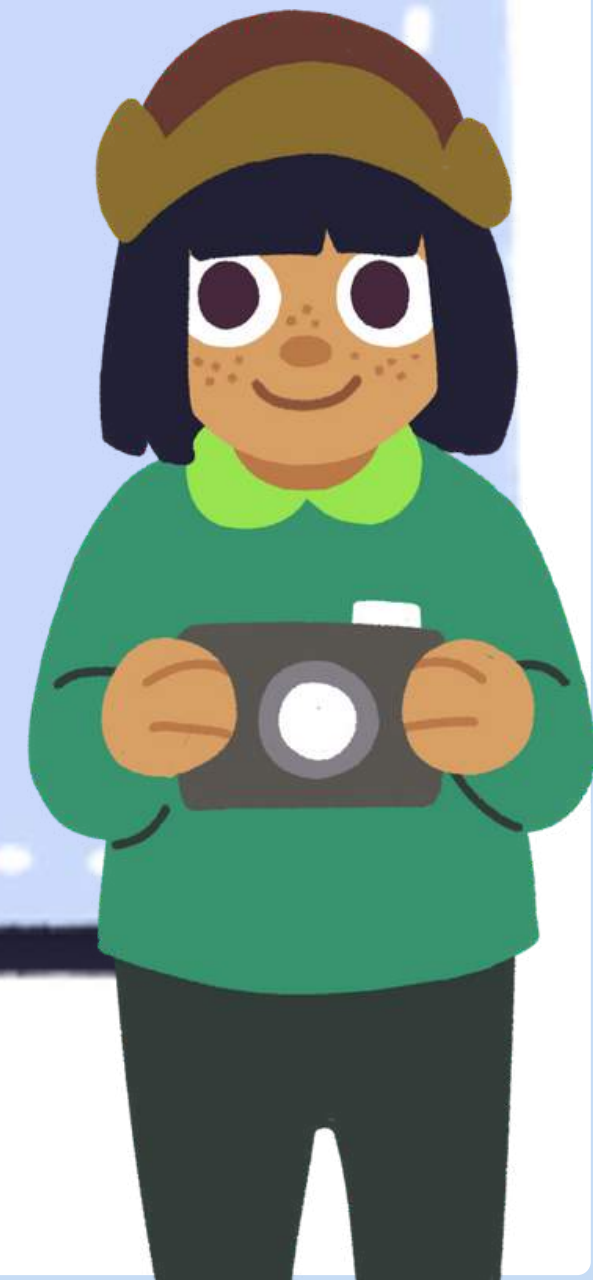
As long as you know what to look out for and you are happy to fact-check anything that you are unsure of, you will be able to keep yourself safe from misinformation.



That's right!

To make sure that you are aware of misinformation in the news, remember to:

- Choose what you read, watch or listen to very carefully.
- Look out for sensational headlines, anonymous authors, authors that have an agenda, out-of-date stories, missing facts and opinions that are presented as fact.
- **FACT-CHECK** the things that you read if you are unsure whether they are true.





## Task

Create your own "Fake News" article using some of the advice that I have given you today. Try to include:



A sensational headline that is designed to shock the reader and make them feel an emotion.



A by-line that implies that the author wants to remain anonymous.



Make clear that the article is out-of-date.



Present opinions as facts.



Be vague about your sources.



Leave out key facts eg. who, what, where, when, why.





Have you played the



game yet?

Go to [www.newsflashgame.org](http://www.newsflashgame.org) to solve the mystery and uncover the truth!

