

LESSON 6

Fake or real news (PSHE education)

Learning objective

To use strategies to identify fake and real news stories

Learning outcomes

- Define key terms, including fake news, hoax and reliable source
- Describe some strategies that can be used to identify fake news
- Decide if a news story is fake or real by using different strategies

Curriculum links

PSHE education - Living in the wider world:

- that not all information seen online is true (KS1)
- recognise ways in which the internet and social media can be used both positively and negatively
- how to assess the reliability of sources of information online; and how to make safe, reliable choices from search results
- how text and images in the media and on social media can be manipulated or invented; strategies to evaluate the reliability of sources and identify misinformation

Digital literacy/computing:

- Evaluate digital content

See 'NewsWise and your curriculum' for a more detailed breakdown of how this lesson links to your national curriculum objectives.



This lesson focuses on the NewsWise value: **truthful**.

28 NewsWise

Journalist training school context

Good journalists must only report things that have actually happened. This means they have to be great fake news detectives so that they don't accidentally report fake news themselves.

Core knowledge/skills

- Sometimes, people deliberately make up news that is not true or only tells some of the truth with the intent of misleading others.
- Fake news is created and shared for many reasons: as a joke, to make money through advertising or to influence someone's beliefs. In some cases, it can be shared by mistake or accident.
- Fake news can have negative consequences because it may make people believe something that isn't true and influence how they think or act.
- To avoid fake news, take time to stop, question the source, check the information and the coverage of the story and then you can decide whether to believe, share or challenge it.

Before teaching this lesson, refer to guidance on **creating a safe learning environment for PSHE education**, including establishing agreed ground rules for discussion.

Starter/baseline assessment [5 mins]

1. Remind the class of the ground rules for PSHE. Using slide 3, ask pupils to imagine a child who is 8 or 9. They've seen a news story online - but there's something about it that makes them unsure if it's true. Individually students should note down their thoughts on:
 - What could be making them uncertain?
 - What could they do to find out if the story is true?
2. Use this assessment to inform the lesson and make adjustments as needed. Share the learning objective and outcomes.

Learning activities

Activity 1 [10 mins]

1. Ask small groups to match the key terms on slide 5 to the correct definition and example. (This slide can be printed for pupils who would benefit, and for younger children it may be advisable to remove the examples

and just ask them to match the word and definition.) As a class, check answers using the following slide.

Support: Remove hoax and have pupils focus on fake news and reliable source.

Challenge: Ask pupils to come up with one similarity and one difference between ‘fake news’ and ‘hoax’.

2. Explain that there are different reasons why people might report fake news. For example, they might want to trick people (like the [spaghetti tree hoax news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/april/1/newsid_2819000/2819261.stm](https://www.bbc.com/news/health-2819000/2819261)) or they might not have checked the story and report fake news by mistake. So, it’s useful for reporters and readers to be able to spot fake news, so they don’t report it or share it. Fact-checking news websites tell people if news stories are fake or if information or facts they include are wrong.

Activity 2 [10 mins]

Tell pupils they will be learning how to identify fake news. Use slides 8-16 to introduce the NewsWise Navigator, using the discussion questions and answers on the slides to support pupils’ understanding. Slides 10-12 help pupils understand what a professional online news report might look like - so use the word ‘professional’ (as detailed in the slide notes). When discussing reliable sources of news on slides 9 and 16, collect and record ideas from pupils to produce an agreed list that can be referred to throughout the unit of work. (You may want to offer pupils some initial ideas.)

Activity 3 [20 mins]

1. Now pupils are going to use the NewsWise navigator to become fake news detectives! Show the headlines on slides 17-19 and ask for gut reactions on whether they are fake or real news stories. For example, using eyes closed and thumbs up (real) or down (fake).
2. Give each small group the **Clue cards worksheet** and ask them to move around the room looking at the **Fake or real clue cards**. Note that the cards could be cut up and placed randomly around the classroom, or organised in a carousel so the clues for each headline are at different stations. For each card, the group should decide if it points towards the headline being true or being fake. They should record their responses on the **Clue cards worksheet**, with a ✓ for real, ✗ for fake, or ? for not sure.
3. Finally, the group should agree whether they think each headline is about a real or fake news story. Do a class vote and reveal the answers:

- Dad uses a swing for over a day to set world record - **real** (clues: reported by a trusted source, the report is neat with no mistakes, it has quotes from different people and other reliable sources are reporting the story too)

- Rhino and elephant horns dyed pink to protect them - **fake** (clues: shared by less trustworthy online sources, like social media - and there were mistakes in it. Fact-checking websites also reported the story - and remember that these are special websites that identify fake news! The photo also looks like it could have been edited and there are no quotes. This could be a hoax fake news story - designed to trick or fool people)
- Scientists build computer powered by seaweed - **real** (clues: same as the first ‘Dad uses a swing...’ story - plus, captions to explain the photo)

Challenge: For any stories the group thinks are fake, why might someone have written this fake news story?

Signposting and plenary [10 mins]

1. Remind the class that they can use the NewsWise navigator whenever they come across news they are unsure about. If they are still unsure, they can ask a trusted adult to help them check the information (for example, using a fact-checking website or another reliable news source).
2. Finally, return to the child from the start of the lesson. What three top tips could pupils share to help them identify fake news?

Questions for assessment

- What is fake news?
- Why might someone report fake news?
- How can people spot fake news?

Extension opportunities

Pupils create a glossary to build on the key words in **Fake news key terms**. For each word, they should aim to include a definition of the term and an example.

Pupils create their own version of the NewsWise navigator, with illustrations to help readers understand each of the different questions and checks.

Resources checklist

- Lesson slides: **Fake or real news** (adapt and print slide 5 as needed)
- **Clue cards worksheet**
- **Fake or real clue cards**