

Fake News Resource

Children and young people today come into contact with more information from more places than ever before.

This resource is designed to help learners understand how to evaluate the reliability of the sources they will find in a variety of places. It can be used across the broad general education with activities to suit even quite young learners. Social studies provides an excellent context in which to place the exploration and understanding of information.

Social Studies Es and Os

I can understand that evidence varies in the extent to which it can be trusted and can use this in learning about the past. SOC 1-01a

I understand that evidence varies in the extent to which it can be trusted and can use this in learning about current issues in society. SOC 1-15a

I can use primary and secondary sources selectively to research events in the past. SOC 2-01a

I can use evidence selectively to research current social, political or economic issues. SOC 2-15a

I can use my knowledge of a historical period to interpret the evidence and present an informed view. SOC 3-01a

I can use a range of maps and geographical information systems to gather, interpret and present conclusions and can locate a range of features within Scotland, UK, Europe and the wider world. SOC 3-14a

I can use my knowledge of current social, political or economic issues to interpret evidence and present an informed view. SOC 3-15a

I can discuss the extent to which my choices and decisions are influenced by the ways in which I am informed. SOC 3-17b

Social Studies Benchmarks

- Identifies the difference between a more or less trustworthy source.
- Identifies a reliable and an unreliable source.
- Uses both primary and secondary sources of evidence in an investigation about the past.
- Selects appropriate evidence and uses it to research a social, political or economic issue.
- Compares a range of primary and secondary sources of evidence, to present at least three valid conclusions about a historical period.
- Reviews at least two simple graphical sources to interpret information and form a conclusion, for example, a map and a graph.
- Reviews basic sources of evidence such as newspapers or surveys used in arguments about current affairs to form a valid opinion.
- Identifies at least three sources of information that influence the ways in which he/she is informed
- Provides at least two valid opinions about the ways in which choices and decisions might be influenced by bias or exaggeration.

Possible Resources

Not all of these resources are suitable for younger learners. Teachers should always check the suitability of websites before using them.

BBC Newsround: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/38906931>

BBC: <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-38636042>

CBBC: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/quizzes>

IFLA: <https://www.ifla.org/publications/node/11174> with free poster.

Cracked 5 Fake Stories: http://www.cracked.com/article_20293_5-clearly-fake-news-stories-media-told-you-were-true.html

The Social Historian: <https://www.thesocialhistorian.com/fake-news/>

Literacy Trust: <https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/fake-news-and-critical-literacy-resources/>

Townhall: <https://townhall.com/columnists/johnhawkins/2016/12/10/the-7-worst-examples-of-fake-news-from-the-mainstream-media-n2257896>

Austin Community College: <https://sites.austincc.edu/student-skills-workshops/critical-reading/what-makes-information-reliable/>

Possible Activities: First Level

The experiences and outcomes in this level relate to 'trustworthiness' two areas:

Historical sources, these could be, for example, books, photographs, letters, newspapers, websites.

Firstly explore the idea of 'trust'. Learners could draw a picture or write words to describe someone in their life they trust.

Then try to compare and contrast with different sources:

- Loch Ness Monster photographs and news reports <http://www.nessie.co.uk/> , <https://www.mirror.co.uk/all-about/loch-ness-monster>
- Fossils/Dinosaurs on Skye <https://www.theskyguide.com/see-and-do-mainmenu-35/27-natural-wonders/174-dinosaurs-at-staffin>
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-43620237>
- Global Warming http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/find_out/guides/world/global_warming/newsid_1575000/1575441.stm

Current affairs, these could relate to any story being reported on for example Newsround/First News.

- What is news? – Paired activity pupils draw a sweet wrapper on an A3 sheet of paper (one sheet per pair) Individually they jot down their ideas in the end wrapper parts. They should then discuss their thoughts and in the centre write their definition of "News". You could differentiate by length/criteria of definition.
- CBBC quizzes. There are lots that are true/false <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/quizzes> and learners could talk about how they make their decisions, and where they get their information.
- Paired activity org – This is a structured sort of reliable/unreliable sources (there can be overlap!) Print out a selection of logos/app tiles e.g. Facebook, You Tube, BBC, STV, National Geographic, variety of newspaper app tiles – this can be differentiated by the pupils creating the list of news sources and/ or finding the apps themselves. Place the logos/app tiles on the floor in groups under headings to show which are reliable and which are not.
- Based on resources from the Literacy Trust. <https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/fake-news-and-critical-literacy-resources/> Research in pairs or small groups (depending on age and level) – a. List Reputable News Companies, b. real website addresses, c. find a news story from 2 or 3 different sources, d. list the types of experts who can give quotes/comments e.g. a doctor, geologist, scientist, e. list the types of organisations that can provide more information e.g. specialist website/periodical. Learners could go on to compare and contrast a news story/article with one that is well written and one that isn't? They should give 4 examples from each text to justify their point of view.
- Pupils create a checklist/credit card size aid memoire (ICT) for deciding whether something is true or fake .

Possible Activities: Second Level

Learners could:

- Work in groups of three or four. They should think of three things they can tell their group. Two should be true and one should be a lie. The group could then decide between them what is true and what is a lie. After they have all had a turn telling their three things, they should discuss the following?
 - what helped them make their decision?
 - what things do they usually take into account when deciding if something or someone is trustworthy?
- Choose a topic for example, Climate Change. Learners could consider which sources they could use to find out about their topic, e.g. newspapers, tv news, websites, encyclopaedia. In a group choose a source each to research, and make a decision about the trustworthiness of each one. They should then make a case to the rest of the group about their decision.

Possible Activities: Third Level

Statistics can be used in a variety of ways. Sometimes they can just as easily be used to back each side of an argument.

Learners could:

- Listen to the BBC radio programme 'More or Less' about statistics: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b093hf8v>, an episode on Natural Disasters, and answer the questions below.
 - What does the listener say has happened to the number of natural disasters?
 - Where did the data first come from that was cited by the United Nations?
 - What was the original source of the data?
 - How many countries are used in the data collection?
 - What are the three criteria used in the collection of the data?
 - Between which years did the number of natural disasters actually quadruple?
 - What reasons are given for the rise in natural disasters?
 - What has happened to the number of natural disasters in the last 5 years?
 - What could you do to check a statistic you're not sure about?

Learners could listen to the second segment of the programme and think about how the statistics have been used in this case. Have they been used correctly or manipulated to suit an argument? Write a summary of the issue and how the statistics have been used. What other source could learners find to corroborate (back up) this use of the statistics.