

The Digital Literacy Series: Fake News

Why Do We Fall for Fake News?

| Suggested Responses





Comprehension Questions

1. True
2. People are often tempted to merely skim through news stories because they are busy and it is easier to get news in short formats to save time. This is problematic because skimming it makes it hard to get all the different sides to a story, to understand the context, or to pick up any inconsistencies, misinformation, and other details that suggest a story isn't correct.
3. "Confirmation bias" refers to how we like facts that back up the opinions and beliefs we already have. It can contribute to the spread of fake news because when we experience the superior feeling of being proved right about an important topic, we want to share those stories.
4. b) Repetition
5. In the context of falling for fake news, the term "lazy thinking" means that it is quicker and easier to believe what we read than to put in the time to really question and analyze what we have been told.
6. c) a website for satire or pure fantasy.
7. True
8. According to the video, people read, shared, and spread the fake news story about Pope Francis and Donald Trump because the story combined powerful figures with a highly controversial idea.
9. True
10. The fake news writer interviewed by the BBC said the top comment on his articles was "I hope this is true."

The extension activities that accompany this video are designed to both consolidate and assess learners' understanding of the content. In addition to this, they contain unique opportunities for teachers to measure learners' capabilities in the following areas:

 Critical & Creative Thinking  Ethical Considerations  Personal and Social Skills

Masking the Issue

-  1. Students' responses will vary. However, they should identify that the image and fake news story could create a strong emotional reaction and provoke fear, revulsion, disgust, or anxiety. Students should demonstrate an ability to describe how and why people's emotional responses may change when presented with a confronting story.
-  2. Students' responses will vary. However, they should identify that people who are against wearing face masks, for a variety of reasons, may be more inclined believe this story as it confirms their belief that masks are bad. People with racist ideologies may also be more inclined to believe this story due to the references to "cheap", "imported" masks. Students' responses should demonstrate an ability to identify these groups regardless of whether these groups' values and beliefs might be different or similar to their own.
-  3. Students' responses will vary. However, they should demonstrate an ability to suspend their own judgments temporarily and consider how their own preconceptions may limit their ability to consider the ideas and alternative viewpoints of others in relation to this fake news story.
-  4. Students' responses will vary. However, they may explore the extent of ethical obligations in relation to the wearing of masks during a pandemic and the consequences of actions that people may decide to take in response to fake news stories.

Transcript – For student and teacher use.