common sense education·

GRADE 6

Finding Credible News

How do we find credible information on the internet?

NEWS & MEDIA LITERACY

We are critical thinkers & creators.

OVERVIEW

The web is full of questionable stuff, from rumors and inaccurate information to outright lies and so-called fake news. So how do we help students weed out the bad and find what's credible? Help students dig into why and how false information ends up online in the first place, and then practice evaluating the credibility of what they're finding online.

Students will be able to:

- Learn reasons that people put false or misleading information on the internet.
- Learn criteria for differentiating fake news from credible news.
- Practice evaluating the credibility of information they find on the internet.

Lesson Snapshot   **Estimated time: 45 mins.**

Warm Up: Tricky Wiki   10 mins.

Analyze: News or Fake News?   25 mins.

Wrap Up: Fighting Fake   10 mins.

Key Standards Supported

Common Core ELA

L.6.1, L.6.2, L.6.2.B, L.6.3, L.6.3.A, L.6.3.B, L.6.4, L.6.6, RI.6.1, RI.6.2, RI.6.4, RI.6.6, RI.6.8, RI.6.10, SL.6.1, SL.6.1a, SL.6.1b, SL.6.1c, SL.6.1d, SL.6.2, SL.6.3, SL.6.4, SL.6.6, W.6.4, W.6.8, W.6.9, W.

CASEL

1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 2f, 3a, 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, 5f

AASL

I.A.1, I.A.2, I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.C.1, I.D.1, I.D.2, I.D.3, I.D.4, II.A.1, II.A.2, II.B.1, II.B.2, II.B.3, II.C.1, II.C.2, II.D.1, II.D.2, II.D.3, III.A.1, III.A.2, III.B.1, III.B.2, III.C.1, III.C.2, III.D.1, III.D.2, IV.B.2, IV.B.

ISTE

2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d

What You'll Need

Spanish-language student and family resources available soon!

- **Lesson Slides**
- Student Handout: News or Fake News? **Student Version Teacher Version**
- Student Handout: Example #3 Article **Student Version**
- Lesson Quiz **Editable Google form Answer Key**

Take-home resources

- **Family Tips**
- **Family Activity**
- **Family Engagement Resources**

LESSON PLAN

Key Vocabulary:

bias
showing a strong opinion or preference for or against something or someone

corroboration
an additional source that confirms or supports a news story, article or piece of information

credible
able to be believed; trustworthy

evaluate
to carefully examine something to figure out its value

Warm Up: **Tricky Wiki**   10 mins.

Note to teachers: The **News or Fake News? Student Handout** contains active links to news sources, which students will review and analyze. If you are going to print out the handouts for students to complete, you will also need to print out the linked news sources. **Example 3** is from a fictitious news source and can be accessed only through the lesson.

1. **Ask**: *Has anyone here ever seen a corn tree? Or gone corn-picking?* Allow students to respond without giving away that this information is from a hoax.

2. **Tell** students that you just read some disturbing news about the dangers of corn. You never considered that corn could be dangerous until you read it in an online encyclopedia. Project **Slide 4** and have a student read the article text aloud.

3. **Ask**: *Is anyone surprised by this? Or did you all already know this about corn?* Allow students to respond. Acknowledge that this information may not be true and ask: *How could it be on a site like Wikipedia if it's not true?*

4. **Allow** students to respond, and reveal that this information came from an imitation site and is meant to be a joke. Explain that there are many situations where information that you find on the internet can look credible but actually may not be. Define **credible** as *able to be believed; trustworthy*. (**Slide 5**)

5. **Project Slide 6** and say: *People put information that may not be fully true online all the time.* Have students read each of the categories aloud (editorials, satire, and hoaxes).

   Say: *Today we're going to talk about strategies you can use to figure out when information on the internet is credible and when it's not.*

Analyze: **News or Fake News?**   25 mins.

1. **Say**: *Fake news can be tricky -- sometimes it's really hard to tell. To figure it out, you have to do some investigation.* Distribute the **News or Fake News? Student Handout** and read the directions aloud. Define **evaluate** as *to carefully examine something to figure out its value*. (**Slide 7**)

2. **Have** students read the Internet Investigator Checklist silently.

   - For the second item on the Checklist, explain that **bias** means *having a preference for one thing over another in a way that's unfair* (**Slide 8**). Explain that someone can be biased in favor of others or against them and that it is unfair in either case because the belief is subjective and not based on fact.
   - For the third item, explain that **corroboration** means *an additional source that confirms or supports a news story, article, or piece of information*. (**Slide 9**)

3. **Have** students click on the **first article** in the table.

   Note: Because this lesson involves using third-party websites, including sites that run ad content, we recommend you preview the sites before sharing them with your students.

   Explain that you will model doing the example for them. Project **Slide 10** and click on the link to open the article. Do a think-aloud to model a close reading of the text ("I see _____, and that makes me think _____"). Narrate your thoughts as you do each of the following steps:

   1. Scan the text features of the article (headline, subheadings, byline, pictures, captions, bolded words, graphics, etc.).
   2. Identify webpage elements that are not part of the article (ads, sponsored content, etc.).
   3. Read the introduction to the article (everything up to the first subheading).

4. **Summarize** the main idea and any information that stands out by typing into the "Read closely" column on **Slide 10**. Have students fill in their handouts at the same time. Use the Teacher Version to support your answers.

5. Repeat Steps 3–4 for each of the remaining two columns, using the following steps:

   A: Analyze the source.

   - Identify the owner of the site by looking at the site header and the URL ("Vox"). Scroll to the bottom footer of the news article and click the "About Us" link to learn more about the organization.
   - Do a **Google search on the site owner's name**, and review the results to see what other sites say about this site. Note that you are not just clicking the top result and avoiding clicking "sponsored" results but also looking down the list for credible sources. The Wikipedia entry is a good place to start, especially the "References" section, which links out to primary sources.*
   - Do a **Google search on the author's name** (also add the source name, "Vox," to help narrow down results), and review the results to see what other types of articles the author has written.

   B: Look for corroboration.

   Do Google searches on some of the article's key points, including:

   - **San Francisco Proposition F, 2016 election**
   - **Low voter turnout in midterm 2014**
   - **Are 16-year-olds mature enough to vote?** (Highlight the science-based results.)

   *Note: If time allows, use this step as an opportunity to address **bias** in a more substantial way. Ask: *Does this website or author seem to have beliefs or experiences that would influence their position on this topic? Does this bias seem to influence what they've written?*

6. **Ask**: *Now that you've analyzed the first article, what do you think? How credible is it?*

Call on students to share out. Prompt students to use and weigh the checklist criteria to answer whether the article makes sense, is from a credible source, and can be corroborated. Highlight any ideas that call into question the article's credibility. Project **Slide 11** and explain that if you can answer yes to all the questions on the checklist, then the article likely is *credible news*. If not, it may be *fake news* or at least *questionable* and in need of further research.

7. **Have** students complete the "How Credible?" question independently and then work in pairs to complete Examples 2 and 3 on the **News or Fake News? Student Handout**.

Wrap Up: **Fighting Fake**   10 mins.

1. **Use** the **Teacher Version** to review Examples 2 and 3 from the handout.

   - For Example 2, when you review "Analyze the Source," highlight that this source is likely biased on this topic. Explain that the National Youth Rights Association has a history of advocating for the protection and expansion of youth rights, which means they likely will have a bias in favor of lowering the voting age.

2. **Have** students complete the **Lesson Quiz**. Send home the **Family Activity** and **Family Tips**.