

Can You Believe It?

Activity 1: News in My Life

In small groups, students will discuss some of the ways they spend time, digest news and look for information in the online world.

Format:

- Small Groups (2-4)

Materials:

- None

Instructions:

1. Have students get into small groups and talk about the following questions.
Questions:
 - Where do you spend most of your time online?
 - Do you ever read/watch the news? If so, where?
 - Have you ever wondered whether something you saw on social media or read on the online was real? What did you do?
 - When you are looking for information about something, how do you find it? And, how do you know that the information is right and that you can trust it?
2. Have students share their answers to the last question with the class, allowing a short class discussion around being a critical consumer.

Activity 2: Spot It – News Edition

Students will watch a CBC Kids News video explaining the differences between real and fake news before looking at examples of online information that are either plausible or lead to skepticism. As a class, they will discuss green flags and red flags about each example to try to identify what helps suggest to students that something is in fact, "real news".

Format:

- Teacher-Facilitated Group Discussion

Materials:

- Computer
- Projector

Instructions:

1. Watch the CBC Kids News video What is fake news – explained (2:19):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RDOft1tFYx8&t=2s>.
2. Play some of these online quizzes as a class, or in small groups if there are enough computers:
 - Full list: <https://teachingkidsnews.com/fakenews/>
 - Doubt it: <https://doubtit.ca/test-yourself/>

- Reality Check: <https://mediasmarts.ca/sites/mediasmarts/files/games/reality-check/index.html#/sites/mediasmarts/files/games/reality-check/>
 - Discuss green flags and red flags about each one as a group.
3. Lead a discussion with the class:
- What suggests to you that something is "real news"?
 - What questions could you ask yourself/others about these stories to get to the truth?

Activity 3: The Making of Real News

Students will imagine that they are an editor of a newspaper and plot out the process involved in the creation of real news stories for their writers (sources, fact-checking, corrections if needed). The teacher will lead a discussion about the safeguards that the process of developing real news has built in and how this can help students differentiate real news from fake news, even when it looks very similar.

Format:

- Groups of 2

Materials:

- Printouts of the **Making Real News handout**
- Pencils

Timing:

- While reading – after Chapter 3

Instructions:

1. Set the stage for students: Imagine you are an editor for a newspaper. You are teaching the writers at your newspaper how to put together reliable news articles. Use the handout provided to plot out the process involved in the creation of real news stories (sources, fact-checking, corrections if needed).
2. Divide the class into groups of 2 and distribute the Making Real News handout.
3. Lead a discussion with the class:
 - In what ways can misleading/fake news appear the same as real news? (have the same structure - title, byline, photo credit, etc.)
 - What safeguards does the process of developing real news have built in that fake news does not?

Activity 4: Content Sorting

Students will complete a handout asking them to match descriptions and visual examples of various types of content they may come across online.

Format:

- Individual

Materials:

- Printouts of the Content Sorting handout

Timing:

- While reading – after Chapter 4

Instructions:

1. Distribute the Content Sorting handout.
2. Guide students to connect the definition to the type of online information.
3. Discuss any outstanding questions as a class.
 - Option: look up example of each type of content online.

Content Sorting

Name: _____

Connect the name of different types of online information to their respective definitions.

Clickbait

Aimed to sell a product or service. Companies buy space for ads in publications, in videos and on websites to talk about how great their product or service is and why people should buy it.

Advertorial

A type of “news” meant to make you laugh. Satire exaggerates or twists news to make it funny. Humour can be used to point out something the writer thinks is important.

Advertisement (Ad)

An article usually with a lot of ads with a catchy headline that makes a lot of people click on it.

Propaganda

Also known as columns or editorials. These include the writer’s opinion and have a deliberate bias that’s obvious and not hidden.

Satire

A type of fake news that is usually about politics or world events and is very misleading. Propaganda hides its intention which is usually to use lies to make you feel strongly about something.

Opinion

An advertisement that looks like an editorial. It’s still an ad paid for by the company promoting the product or service, but it is made to look like a regular news article.

Activity 5: Critical Carly the Internet Investigator

Students will complete a handout with the characteristics of a good Internet investigator: questions they ask, skills they have, actions do they take, emotions/feelings they look out for.

Format:

- Individual

Materials:

- Printouts of the Internet Investigator handout
- Pencil
- Colouring pencils, markers, crayons

Timing:

- While reading – after Chapter 6

Instructions:

1. Distribute the Internet Investigator handout.
2. Guide students to colour in Critical Carly and fill in the boxes on the handout: questions they ask, skills they have, actions do they take, emotions/feelings they look out for.
 - Remind students of examples in chapter 5-6 to draw from
3. Have students share the attributes of a good internet investigator with the class.

Internet Investigator

Name: _____

Colour in Critical Carly, the Internet Investigator and fill in the boxes about how she works.

Emotions and feelings
she looks out for:



Questions she asks:

Actions she takes:

Skills she has:

Activity 6: You're a Chameleon

In this multi-part activity, students will work in pairs as reporters/journalists to create a chameleon news story from start to finish.

Format:

- Groups of 2

Materials:

- Letter size paper
- Pencils
- Computer(s)
- Other: variable by group and type of content being developed

Timing:

- Following the post-reading discussion

Instructions:

In this multi-part activity, students will work in pairs as reporters/journalists to create a chameleon news story from start to finish (see p.34). The activity is broken into the following phases:

Phase 1: What's the story?

1. Divide students into groups of 2
2. Instruct students to brainstorm ideas and select a topic for their story.
3. Guide students to draft the questions they need to research/interview someone about.
 - Think of the 5Ws.
 - Get really curious!

Phase 2: Get the facts.

4. Give students time and tools to conduct research/interviews to gather the facts they need to write their story.
 - Internet
 - Someone at the school
 - Friends/family

Phase 3: Chameleon Superpowers.

5. Help students harness their chameleon powers and guide them present the facts of their story in 3 different ways of their choosing:
 - Real news article
 - Clickbait
 - Opinion piece
 - Advertisement
 - Social media post by an influencer.

Phase 4: Trade and Label.

6. Each group will trade the three versions of their content with another team.
7. Faced with the 3 versions of another groups story, each pair will determine what type of content they have been presented with and label them using small scraps of paper or post its.

Phase 5: Group discussion.

8. Lead a discussion with the class:
 - What did you learn from taking your story and presenting it in 3 different ways?
 - Was the other team right about how they labeled your content?
 - Was it hard to label the content of others?