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COMMUNICATION

Dealing with fake news

LEVEL	NUMBER	LANGUAGE
Intermediate (B1)	EN_B1_1041X	English

Learning outcomes

- I can identify and explain the main characteristics of fake news.

- I can talk about an online news story I've read recently and say how reliable it was.

Warm-up

1. **Read** the quote and **discuss** the questions with a partner in breakout rooms.
2. **Share** your thoughts with the main group.

"

You can't trust everything you see on the internet!

Do you agree with this statement?

Did you read or watch anything interesting online in the past week?

What do you understand by the term **fake news**?

What is fake news?

Read this short article and answer the questions below.

What do we mean when we say that something is fake news? In general, we are describing stories that spread false information.

With so much content online, it can be difficult to know what to believe. Fake news can be dangerous when people make important decisions, such as voting in an election, based on false or unreliable information.

When you scroll through your newsfeed on social media, you probably see lots of eye-catching videos and headlines that make you want to watch or read the full thing. This is called clickbait. It's always a good idea to ask the question: does this information come from a reliable source?

1. Can you find the adjective in the text that means the opposite of **reliable**?
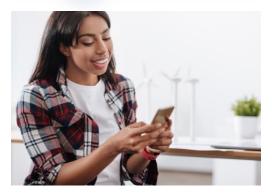2. How can you tell if a source is reliable or not? Share your ideas with the rest of the class.

I scroll through my newsfeed in the morning.

A lot of content on social media is just clickbait.

I knew it was clickbait from the eye-catching headline

How long do you usually spend **scrolling through your newsfeed**

How can you tell if something is **clickbait**?

Can you describe an **eye-catching** headline that you saw recently?

Match the words and phrases from the text

1 *With so much **content** online, it can be difficult to know what to believe.*

a something that immediately makes you pay attention to it

2 *There is so much **clickbait** on the internet these days.*

b a source you can trust to have the correct information

3 *What do we mean when we say something is **fake news**?*

c articles, blogs, videos and social media posts

4 *On social media, you probably see lots of **eye-catching** videos and headlines.*

d an advertisement or post that looks very interesting and makes you want to click on it

5 *Does this information come from **a reliable source**?*

e stories that spread false information
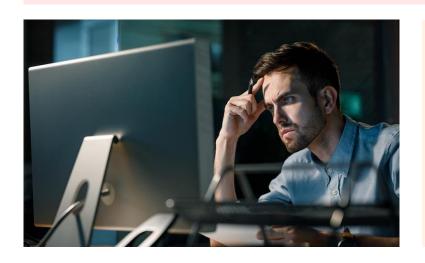
Discuss

What kind of eye-catching stories do you like to read on your mobile phone? Why?

How often do you check your newsfeed?

Have you seen that video?

Maria and James are classmates. After their lesson, they discuss a video. Read a part of their conversation and answer the questions below.
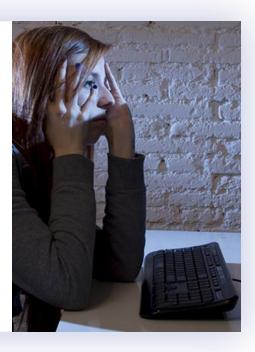

Maria: Hey, have you seen this? It's a video that appears to be real. It shows the president throwing rubbish out of her car window!

James: Hmm. I doubt that this video's real.

Maria: What do you mean? It's definitely the president – you can see her face. And a lot of people are commenting on it.

James: That's the whole point of deepfakes. They look so realistic. It's easy to fall for them. You have to question the source – where did you see the video?

Maria: A friend sent it to me... But it's all over social media now too. Well, I totally fell for it. It's so realistic. I mean, that's if it *is* a fake...

1. What does the video that Maria and James are talking about show?
2. What does James mean when he says that it's ***easy to fall for*** deepfakes?
3. Have you heard the word ***deepfake*** before? What do you think it means?

I totally fell for that video!

It's easier to spot fake news texts. They're often badly written.

Can you think of a synonym for **to fall for** something? What's the opposite of **badly written**?

Questioning a source

Read these sentences from the text and answer the questions in the blue box below.

James

I doubt that this video's real.

Maria

The video appears to be real. It shows the president throwing rubbish out of her car!

- Use the verbs _____ and _____ to say you are not sure about something.

- If we say that something **appears to be** a certain way, do we think it's definitely true? Or only possibly true?

Fill in the gaps

Fill in the gaps using the correct word from the red box.

1   I highly _____ that people are going to fall for such a silly story.

2   Loads of people commented on the video, but that doesn't mean that it comes from a _____ source.

3   No one knew that video was a _____ because it looked so realistic.

4   _____ videos make you want to click on them to watch the full thing.

5   You shouldn't _____ all of the stories you read online. If they're _____, you should question the source.

fall for
badly written
deepfake
doubt
reliable
eye-catching

Discuss

Take a look at the questions and share your answers with the rest of the class.

Why do you think so many people **fall for** fake news?

What are some of your favourite **reliable** news sources? Why?

What do you do when a video **appears** to show something you think isn't true?

Do you have family or friends that fall for **fake news**? How can you prove to them that it's fake?
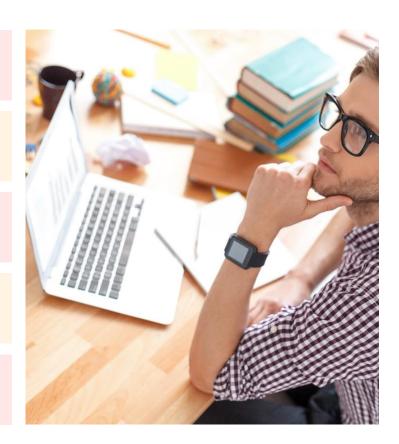
Can you believe it?

Take a look at these headlines. Which ones do you think are real? (*Hint: 2 of them are real*!) Which ones do you think are fake? How can you tell?

1 New study shows that sleeping on books helps you memorize new vocabulary over night!

2 Dog eats owner's AirPods and learns how to sing

3 Queen Elizabeth II is the owner of her very own McDonald's!

4 Locals scared of a monster that turns out to be a croissant

5 Health breakthrough! Drinking 15 cups of coffee a day lowers high blood pressure!

Now it's your turn to write some fake headlines!

Take a minute to write down as many fake headlines as you can. Then share them with the rest of the class!

Let's reflect!

- Can you identify and explain the main characteristics of fake news?

- Can you talk about an online news story you've read recently and say how reliable it was?

Your teacher will now make one suggestion for improvement for each student.

Idiom

Bad news travels fast

Meaning: People share information about bad news with each other very quickly

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Additional practice

Fill in the gaps

Complete the sentences using vocabulary words from this lesson.

1 That online paper always has such _____ headlines. That's why they are so popular with readers!

2 She shares so many stupid videos on her _____ that I don't watch them anymore.

3 There's a lot of _____ online right now because of the election – people don't know what to believe!

4 I try to ignore all of the _____ that I see online – but it's difficult! They know how to catch your attention, but when you click on it the story is usually badly written.

5 He tries to not spend too much time _____ through his newsfeed.

Multiple Choice

1 I'm not sure if I believe that story. Someone sent it to me, but I don't know where it came from originally. It's not a _____ source.

    a. reliable   **b.** unreliable

2 That headline is so _____! It makes me want to read the article.

    a. clickbait   **b.** eye-catching

3 That news report seemed quite strange. There were a lot of mistakes – in fact, it was quite

    a. well written   **b.** badly written

Additional practice

Famous actor by day, CRIMINAL by night!

Would you believe this headline? Why or why not?

Unscramble to make sentences

1

that	false	means	spread
news	stories	fake	information

2

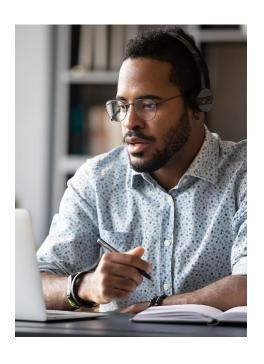| deepfakes	look	very	videos and images
edited	real	are	that

Vocabulary review slide

Review vocabulary from the lesson. Can you think of any other words or phrases related to these? Choose a word or phrase and build a sentence

eye-catching	**clickbait**
well written	**reliable**
reliable source	**to doubt**
to scroll through your newsfeed	**to appear to be**

Discuss

How can social media users identify false sources?

Should social networks do more to make people aware of this?

Think of some of the ideas you had about the world when you were a child.

When did you begin to question these ideas?

Discuss

Are **fake news articles** always badly written? How can we tell a **deepfaked** image or video from a real one? Discuss the problems with (and possible solutions to) to the way information is created and spread online today.

Education	Individual user
Technology companies	Government policy

Answer Key

P.4
1. Unreliable
P.6
1. (c) 2. (d) 3. (e) 4. (a) 5. (b)
P.8
1. The president throwing rubbish out of her car
2. It's easy to believe...
P.9
Opposite of badly written = well written
P.10
1. Doubt and appears; only possibly true
P.11
1. doubt 2. reliable 3. deepfake 4. eye-catching 5. fall for, badly-written
P. 13
The two real headlines are 3 and 4
P.18
1. eye-catching 2. newsfeed 3. fake news 4. clickbait 5. scrolling
P. 19
1. (a) 2. (b) 3. (b)
P.21
Fake news means stories that spread false information
Deepfakes are edited videos and images that look very real.

Summary

Fake news:
- Dealing with **fake news** can be difficult, so we must learn to tell a reliable from an unreliable source.

Key nouns:
- clickbait, content, deepfake

Key verbs
- to doubt, to question, to fall for, to appear to be

Key phrases
- well written, badly written, to scroll through your newsfeed

Vocabulary

content	Fake news spread (false) information
newsfeed	deepfake
clickbait	rubbish
fake news	realistic
eye-catching	well written
source	badly written
reliable	to doubt
unreliable	to question
I always scroll through (my newsfeed)	to fall for
headline	to appear to be

Notes