

**Session 4: Fake Stories - Teacher Guide**

The materials for the session can be found on PowerPoint (“Fake Stories”). The PowerPoint has notes which outline the content and other information which might be useful. This session should take around 60 minutes to complete, but please feel free to be flexible on timings depending on student interest. You will need a projector to show the slides and to be able to play the videos. Videos are embedded, but the links to the original YouTube videos can also be found in the notes section in case of any issues. You do not need any special equipment for this session.

The aims of this session are to teach students to:

* Understand why people might create and share conspiracy theories​
* Explore how to spot conspiracy theories
* Explore the potentially negative impact of conspiracy beliefs​

**PLAN FOR THE SESSION**

* The session starts with the SHARE guidelines. Please remind students of these from the previous sessions.
* As a starter, you can ask the students if they know what a conspiracy theory is – a definition is on the slide (and will appear when you click the mouse). Next, ask students what conspiracy theories they have heard of, and prompt them to think about any related to their hobbies (e.g., there are a lot of conspiracy theories in football). You could get them to discuss this in pairs or have a full class discussion (5 minutes).
* Before a short video, ask the students in pairs/small groups/as a whole class to think about the two questions on the slide (are conspiracy theories new; human nature). Get students to feedback to you before playing the video on the next slide (5 minutes).
* The video by Dr Daniel Jolley will explain what a conspiracy theory is (and whether they are *new),* why people might believe in conspiracy theories and the best ways to spot the key ingredients of a conspiracy theory (6 minutes).
* The main activity involves students working in pairs/small groups to write their own conspiracy theories based on whatever topic interests them. They will also be asked to write a fake news story about the same topic. Encourage students to use the key ingredients that Daniel spoke about in his video (i.e., the conspiracy needs to be about a large event/issue, where something is being hidden/kept in secret, by a powerful group). Students will be asked to share their conspiracy/fake news story with a group. The task will be whether the other group can spot the conspiracy. Depending on your class dynamic, you could have groups submit them to you to read out – the class could then vote (hands up) which one out of the pair is a conspiracy. Alternatively, you could ask two groups to pair up and share their two stories and have them guess which is fake news and which is a conspiracy (25 minutes for both making and spotting)
* On Slide 8, if the students are struggling for inspiration, there is an example of a conspiracy vs. fake news. At the bottom of the slide, some tips highlight why the ‘Beyonce’ one is a conspiracy theory.
* Next, there is a short video from Dr Daniel Jolley to discuss why we should care about conspiracy theories – can conspiracy theories have a real-world impact? (4 mins)
* As a closing activity, have the students in pairs/small groups/ class discuss the questions on the slide. These will follow from the video on the consequences of conspiracy theories. Have students think about the consequences of the conspiracy they made up – for example Beyonce one, it could potentially increase mistrust in the music industry; if people believe that Beyonce is a robot, could they stop buying her music? Could the conspiracy beliefs lead to negativity towards Beyonce? Of course – mundane example, but you could highlight if the students are struggling a little. (10 mins)
* There is a final slide on how they can use the information they have learned in their other lessons. Please feel free to edit this, so it fits with other curricula.

The session next week will focus on Fake videos, i.e., looking at edited and fake videos.

If you have any comments or thoughts as you deliver the project to help us improve it, please contact [Yvonne.Skipper@](mailto:Yvonne.Skipper@glasgow.ac.uk)glasgow.ac.uk