

FactCheck.Org Analysis

After the initial data cleaning, there were 511 fact-checks published by FactCheck.Org between January 1st 2016 and June 30th, 2021. The dataset only includes fact-checks by Republican or Democratic political figures, excluding Donald Trump.

We began with some exploratory data analysis to understand the specifics of the data we were working with. Knowing the challenges of previous data, we first analyzed the `textualRating` category.

Table 1: TextualRating Distribution

textualRating	n
FALSE	158
Misleading	73
Spins the Facts	40
Distorts the Facts	32
Not the Whole Story	23
Exaggerates	21
Lacks Context	16
No Evidence	16
Unsupported	12
Cherry Picks	9
Distorts The Facts	4
Spinning the Facts	4
Disputed	3
Exaggerated	3
Out of Context	3
DOJ: Killed; Not Murdered	2
Experts Divided	2
Twists the Facts	2
We Explain the Number	2
We Explain the Science	2
We Review His Record	2
We Review the Record	2
6% is too low	1
A Matter of Dispute	1
About 14.5F Degrees Warmer	1
ACA Has Broader Coverage	1
Among Loan Holders Only	1
Answer: Yes; Clinton	1
Biden Is Not Wrong	1
BLS Projects for 2026	1
Close; But Not Quite	1
COVID-19 Origins Remain Unknown	1
DoD Certified Per Law	1
Evidence Unclear	1
Experts Say Modest Effect	1
Facts Contradict His Argument	1

textualRating	n
False: Distorts Facts	1
Falso	1
Half- Right	1
Here's the Trend Line	1
Here's What Trump Said	1
IG Says 'False'	1
IRS Says They Will	1
It's Not That Simple	1
McCain Was Anomaly	1
Millions Will Lose Medicaid	1
Misuse of IRS data	1
Most Secret Service Working	1
Mueller Believed McGahn	1
Mueller Report Refutes That	1
No Clear Pattern	1
No Evidence to Date	1
No Official Tally	1
Not Every Country	1
Not What CBO Said	1
Not What Data Show	1
Not What IG Found	1
Not What Mueller Said	1
Not What Plan Says	1
Not What Study Says	1
Not Worst Per Capita	1
Origen COVID-19 aún es incierto	1
Other Measures Differ	1
Outdated Evidence	1
Outdated Figure	1
Press Partly Allowed	1
Proposed Cuts Not Enacted	1
Rate Same Since 2009	1
Said on March 11	1
Science Says He's Wrong	1
She Supports Current Laws	1
Small Share of Donations	1
Some Experts Doubt It	1
Some Pros; Many Cons	1
Studies Show Mixed Results	1
Studies: Already Done	1
Takes Too Much Credit	1
The increase is 63%	1
There Are Others	1
There Was Contact	1
There Were Many Reasons	1
There Were Warnings	1
Trade Talks Involve Both	1
Trump Admin. Provided Number	1
Trump Hasn't Been Clear	1
Trump Signed Two Bills	1
Trump's Quote; Not Reality	1
U.N. Doesn't Endorse Estimate	1

textualRating	n
Unclear	1
Unclear When They Knew	1
Unlikely in Next Decade	1
We Explain the Bill	1
We Explain the Numbers	1
We Explain The Science	1
We Explain Why	1
We Explain Zelensky Comments	1
We Provide Full Context	1
We Provide the Context	1
We Provide the Facts	1
We Review the Data	1
We Review the Trends	1
Wrong	1

There were some common ratings: Unsupported, Spins the Facts, Out of Context, Not the Whole Story, No Evidence, Misleading, FALSE, Exaggerates, Distorts the Facts, and Cherry Picks. Calling these “normal” assignments, there were 391 normal claims and 120 anomaly claims. However, there were no definitions for these common claims that would allow us to utilize the data.

At the point, we concluded that FactCheck.Org does not have a sufficiently ordered tier rating system like PolitiFact and the Washington Post. Rather they have list of descriptive ratings they more commonly assign to claims. FactCheck.Org only publishes claims they find to have some level of false information. Their assessments are descriptive of the nature of the falsehood rather than assessing the level of false information. Because of the wide variation of textualRatings assigned, there was no structure for standardizing and comparing claims. Thus, we decided not to proceed with granular analysis of the FactCheck.Org data.