

Fake News:

How and why should we talk about it in High School?



Fake news, what is it?

false or misleading information presented as news, often to damage reputation or make money

[Fake News definition- Wikipedia](#)

Fake news, what is it?

Fake news is false or misleading information presented as [news](#). It often has the aim of damaging the reputation of a person or entity, or making money through [advertising](#) revenue. Media scholar Dr. Nolan Higdon has offered a more broad definition of fake news as “false or misleading content presented as news and communicated in formats spanning spoken, written, printed, electronic, and digital communication.”

[Fake News definition- Wikipedia](#)

Disinformation X Misinformation

Misinformation is false or inaccurate information that is communicated regardless of an intention to deceive. For example, when we repost things without fact checking.

Disinformation is **misinformation** that is deliberately deceptive. For example, malicious hoaxes, computational propaganda, conspiracy theories.



How is Fake News spread?

- satire or parody ("no intention to cause harm but has potential to fool")
- false connection ("when headlines, visuals or captions don't support the content")
- misleading content ("misleading use of information to frame an issue or an individual")
- false context ("when genuine content is shared with false contextual information")
- impostor content ("when genuine sources are impersonated" with false, made-up sources)
- manipulated content ("when genuine information or imagery is manipulated to deceive", as with a "doctored" photo)
- fabricated content ("new content is 100% false, designed to deceive and do harm")

[Fake News Glossary](#)

Example of fake news that created chaos:

Back in March 2016, ESPN's Adam Schefter appeared on NFL Live to discuss the breaking news of Olivier Vernon signing with the Jacksonville Jaguars on a four-year deal worth \$75.5 million. The only problem was that the deal never actually happened.

“NFL Live ran with the report and **Schifter** started analyzing the **fake** deal. **Vernon** went on to **sign** an \$85 million deal with the New York Giants. **Schifter** apologized on the air shortly after the segment ran.”

[ESPN wastes 1 hour commenting on fake news](#)



Data and Our part in it:

- Research has found that false political information tends to spread "3 times" faster than other false news.
- False news have 70% higher chance of being retweeted than truthful news.
- More so, it is humans who are responsible in disseminating false news and information as opposed to bots and click-farms.
- There are enormous potential ramifications to these results. False news can drive the misallocation of resources during terror attacks and natural disasters, the misalignment of business investments, and can misinform elections.

[article source](#)

Data and our part in it:

- The tendency for humans to spread false information has to do with human behavior; according to research, humans are attracted to events and information that are surprising and new, and, as a result, causes high-arousal in the brain.

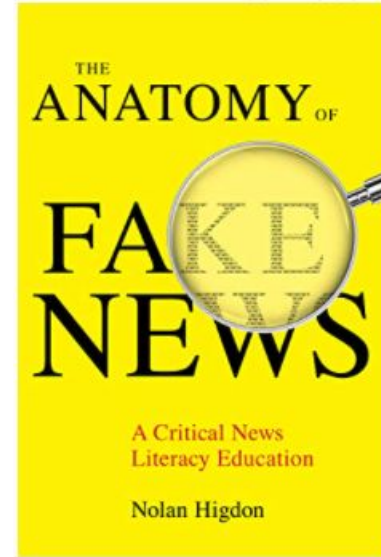
[article source](#)

Calls for action

- In an effort to reduce the effects of fake news, fact-checking websites, including [Snopes.com](https://snopes.com) and [FactCheck.org](https://factcheck.org), have posted guides to spotting and avoiding fake news websites.
- Social media sites and search engines, such as Facebook and Google, received criticism for facilitating the spread of fake news. Both of these corporations have taken measures to explicitly prevent the spread of fake news; critics, however, believe more action is needed.

Book Club

Media scholar Nolan Higdon has offered a more broad definition of fake news as “false or misleading content presented as news and communicated in formats spanning spoken, written, printed, electronic, and digital communication.” He argues that relying on tech-companies to solve the issues with false information will exacerbate the problems associated with fake news, because tech-companies lack an incentive for solving the problem because they benefit from the proliferation of fake news. Higdon cites tech-companies utilization of data collection as one of the strongest forces empowering fake news producers.





Calls for action in Education

Rather than government regulation or industry censorship, Higdon argues for the introduction of critical news literacy education to American education.

The News Literacy Project offers several resources and services for educators, including an online learning platform, a free weekly newsletter, professional development opportunities, a variety of classroom materials and more.

<https://newslit.org/educators/>

"We are aiming to pre-emptively debunk, or pre-bunk, misinformation by exposing people to a mild dose of the methods used to disseminate fake news."

Dr Sander van der Linden, Head of the Social Decision-Making Lab

[Cambridge game 'pre-bunks' Covid19 fake news](#)

[Go Viral game](#)

Bad News - Interactive Game

[Bad news game information](#)

[Bad News game - Play it!](#)

Coding activities for students:

For Advanced Students

[Using Python to Detect Fake News](#)

For Intermediate

[Students Worksheet](#)

[Example Program
Solution](#)

Protocols for students:

Video Explaining Protocol

Protocol Handout of Guiding Questions

C

Currency

The timeliness of the information

When was the information published or posted?
Has the information been revised or updated?
Does your topic require current information, or will older sources work as well?
Are the links functional?

R

Relevance

The importance of the information for your needs

Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question?
Who is the intended audience?
Is the information at an appropriate level (i.e. not too elementary or advanced for your needs)?
Have you looked at a variety of sources before determining this is one you will use?
Would you be comfortable citing this source in your research paper?

A

Authority

The source of the information

Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor?
What are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations?
Is the author qualified to write on the topic?
Is there contact information, such as a publisher or email address?
Does the URL reveal anything about the author or source?
examples: .com .edu .gov .org .net

A

Accuracy

The reliability, truthfulness and correctness of the content

Where does the information come from?
Is the information supported by evidence?
Has the information been reviewed or refereed?
Can you verify any of the information in another source or from personal knowledge?
Does the language or tone seem unbiased and free of emotion?
Are there spelling, grammar or typographical errors?

P

Purpose

The reason the information exists

What is the purpose of the information? Is it to inform, teach, sell, entertain or persuade?
Do the authors/sponsors make their intentions or purpose clear?
Is the information fact, opinion or propaganda?
Does the point of view appear objective and impartial?
Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional or personal biases?

Fake news or not? This is the best course EVER!

