

Living in a post-truth society

READING

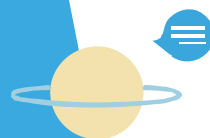
LEVEL
Advanced

NUMBER
C1_2023R_EN

LANGUAGE
English



lingoda

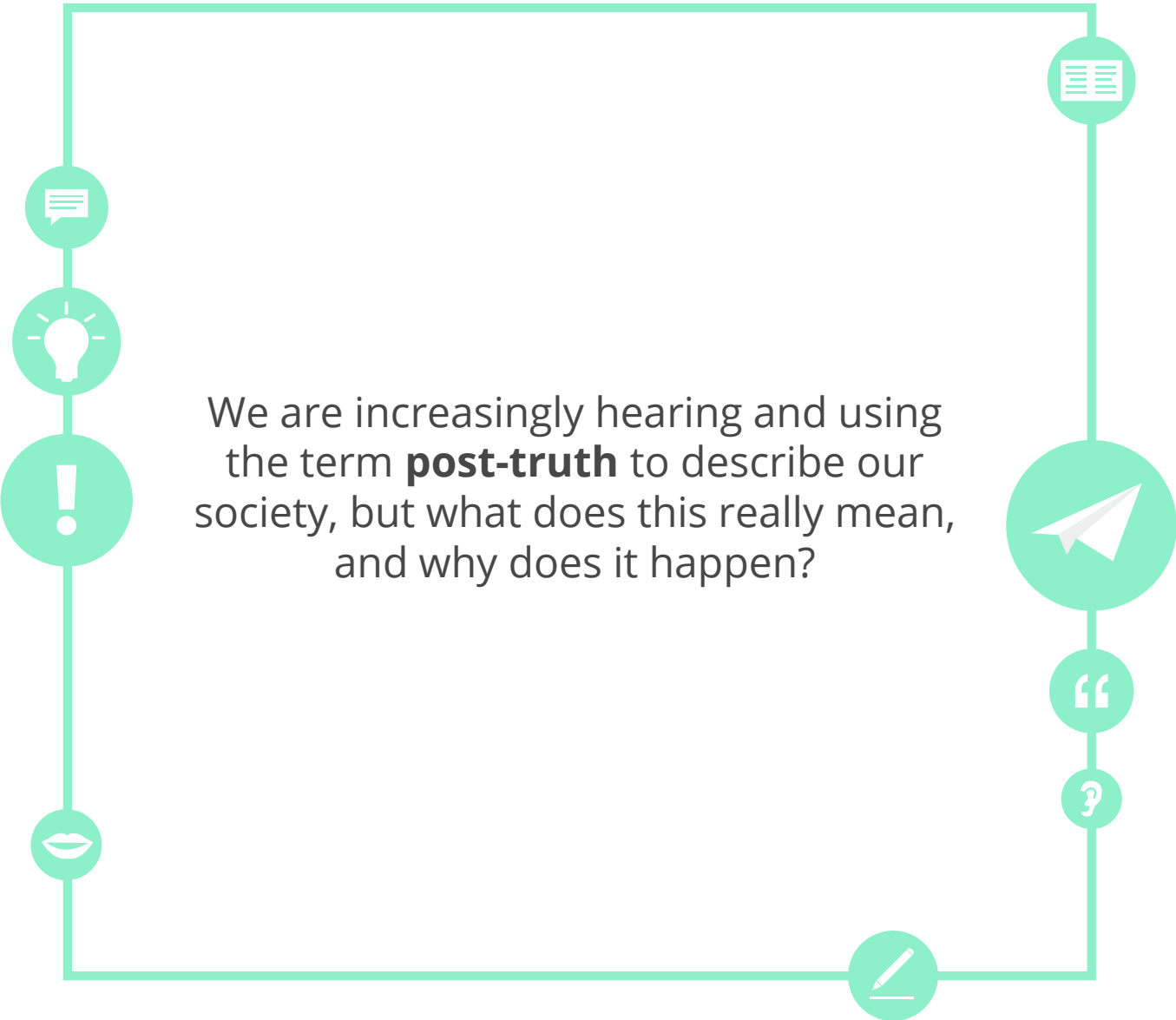




Goals

- Can read and understand a complex text about living in a post-truth society.
- Can express my own opinion on the news, emotions and fact-checking in depth.





We are increasingly hearing and using the term **post-truth** to describe our society, but what does this really mean, and why does it happen?



Warm up

**Do you read
newspapers or
magazines to find out
the news? Why or why
not?**





Getting the news



Which newspapers, magazines and websites do you read? Do you like to read a wide variety of sources, or do you prefer to stick to just one or two?



Trusting sources

Do you generally trust the news you read? Do you usually read articles all the way to the end, or do you sometimes trust what the headline says?



objective?
subjective?

biased?
comprehensive?



Politics and post-truth

'Post-truth' was the word of the year according to Oxford Dictionaries in 2016. "Word of the year" implies a celebration of something positive, but the **ascent** of post-truth politics in recent years is hardly something to celebrate. Post-truth refers to the **tendency** to form opinions and base decisions on emotion rather than facts, and has been identified in manifold societies around the world.





Politics and post-truth

One politician in England has famously said 'people in this country have had enough of experts,' and this statement seems to **ring true** for the way in which society **digests** news and information in recent years. Post-truth refers to telling a story to appeal to individuals' emotions, and ignoring factual **refutations** on a given topic. This is a growing issue with the rise of social media and internet access.



Politics and post-truth

These days, it has become increasingly easy to read false news with the rise of social media. In line with its deep-rooted presence in every aspect of modern life, social media plays an enormous role in the post-truth era. Many young people get much of their news from social media, and many of the news sources which we are shown are not **impartial**. The rise of clickbait has caused an increase in news **hoaxes**, with many websites spreading false and controversial information simply looking for increased traffic onto their sites. Social media is **curated** and personalised for us: thus, we are shown news stories which correspond with our interests, and with things we have already read or watched.



Politics and post-truth

Fact-checking of these stories is rarely a priority as we are more likely to be convinced by something that corresponds to what we already **hold true**. In other words, the news we are shown on social media only reinforces what we already believe. We have a human tendency towards **rationalisation**, which is the process by which we look for reasons to justify the beliefs we already hold, rather than **vice versa**. The way it should ideally be is that we research the facts and then form an opinion or make a decision based on these facts. Unfortunately, however, with the rise of post-truth and false information, this is harder to do, and we are less **inclined to** do it.



True or false?

	TRUE	FALSE
1. 'Post-truth' was word of the year in 2016.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Post-truth relies on emotions rather than facts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The rise of social media has had no effect on the problem of post-truth.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Most news stories nowadays are impartial.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Rationalisation is the process by which we research and fact check extensively before making a decision.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. We are less and less inclined to fact checking these days.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Do you know what these words from the text mean? What did they refer to?

to ring true

to hold true

hoax

to digest (information)

vice versa

to be inclined to do sth

rationalisation

refutation

impartial

to curate

ascent

inauguration



Can you think of any examples of false news that you have heard of or seen?

Why do you think so much false news is spread nowadays?

social media

biased

hoax



About you

Have you had an emotional reaction to any recent news stories? Why do you think you reacted in the way you did?





Rationalising

'We have a human tendency towards rationalisation, which is the process by which we look for reasons to justify the beliefs we already hold.'



1

Do you think rationalisation is a significant problem with the way we make decisions?

2

Have you ever caught yourself in the act of rationalising something? Why do you think we rationalise?

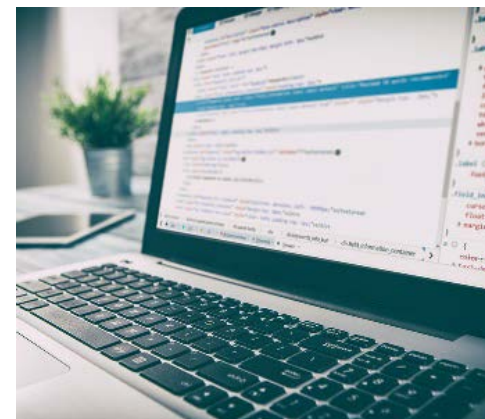
3

What ways can you think of to counter the tendency to rationalise?



Politics and post-truth

So what can we do to **combat** post-truth politics? Firstly, seeking out impartial news sources, or sources of news which have a different viewpoint to the one that you hold can go a long way to helping you gain a balanced view of the world. We should be **sceptical** both of the news which we want to believe and that which we don't. Secondly, we can react **rationally** rather than emotionally to a claim; much of the information in the post-truth era is highly **emotive**, and our immediate reaction is likewise emotional. Taking the time to consider the source of the story or the likelihood of it being entirely true can stop us from spreading lies further.



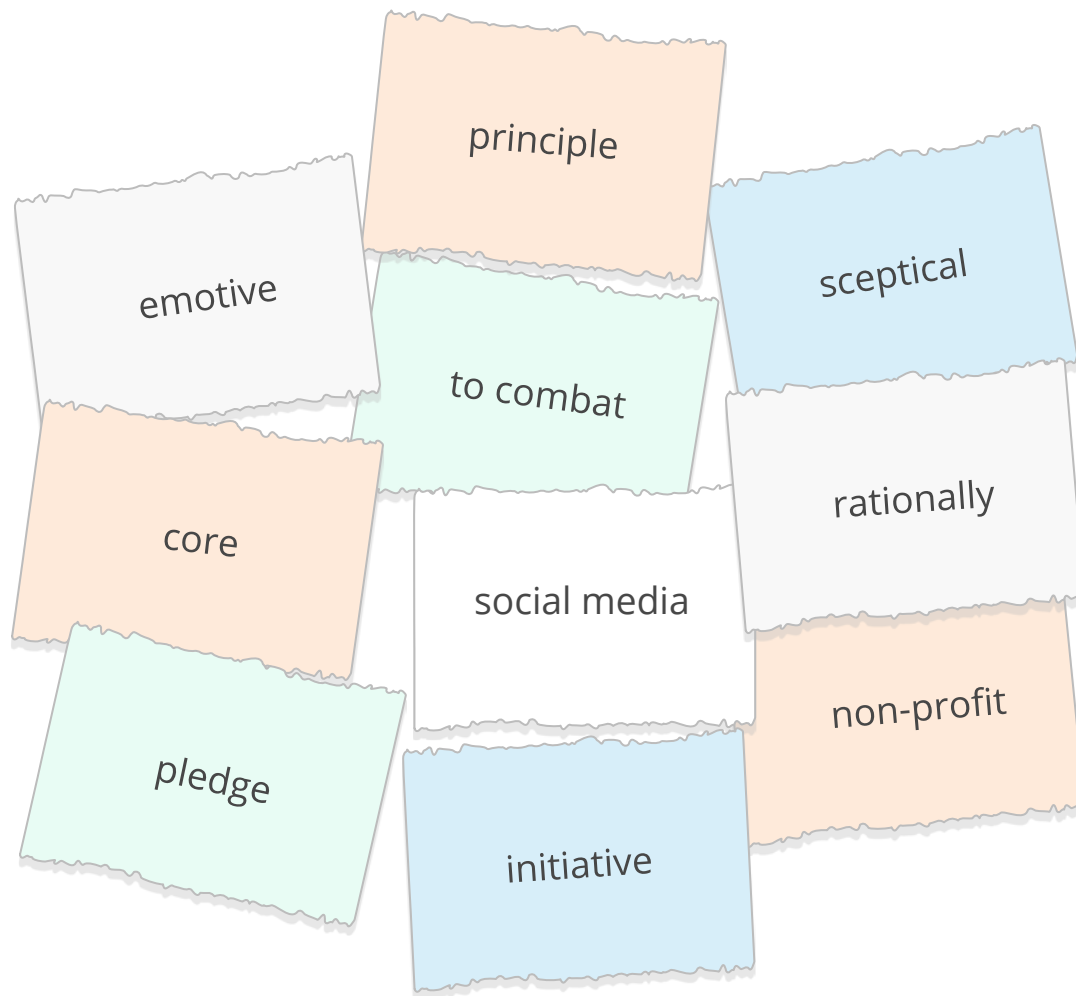


Politics and post-truth

In 2017, a non-profit project called The Pro-Truth Pledge was started. This is an online **initiative** which promotes fact checking and only sharing information which has been backed up by fact. Their **core** values are to 'share truth, honour truth, and encourage truth' and their **principle** aim is 'to get people to care about truth in politics and to provide them with the tools and resources to use evidence and reason in making wise political decisions that will benefit our society as a whole.' To this day, up to 5424 individuals have signed the pledge, including various government officials and public figures. One excellent way of fighting the post-truth problem is to add your name to the growing list of signatures, and strive to adhere to their values in the future.



Briefly summarise what you read in the text for your teacher. Use the words below to help.





Over to you

Answer the questions using ideas from the text to help you.



1

Do you get any of your news from social media? Do you think it is an impartial source?

2

Which of the suggested ways to combat post-truth do you think is the easiest to implement?

3

Will you be changing the way you get your news after reading this article?



Combatting post-truth

**Would you consider
signing the Pro-Truth
pledge? Why (not)?**

promise

pledge

values

ethics



Think about the meaning

This image appeared earlier in the lesson. What do you think it means? Is it trying to give a message of any kind?





Post-truth and speculation

Can you think of any books or films which bring ideas about post-truth in society to scary eventualities? Did they make you rethink your understanding of modern society? Did they make you want to change any of your behaviour?





Reflect on the lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!

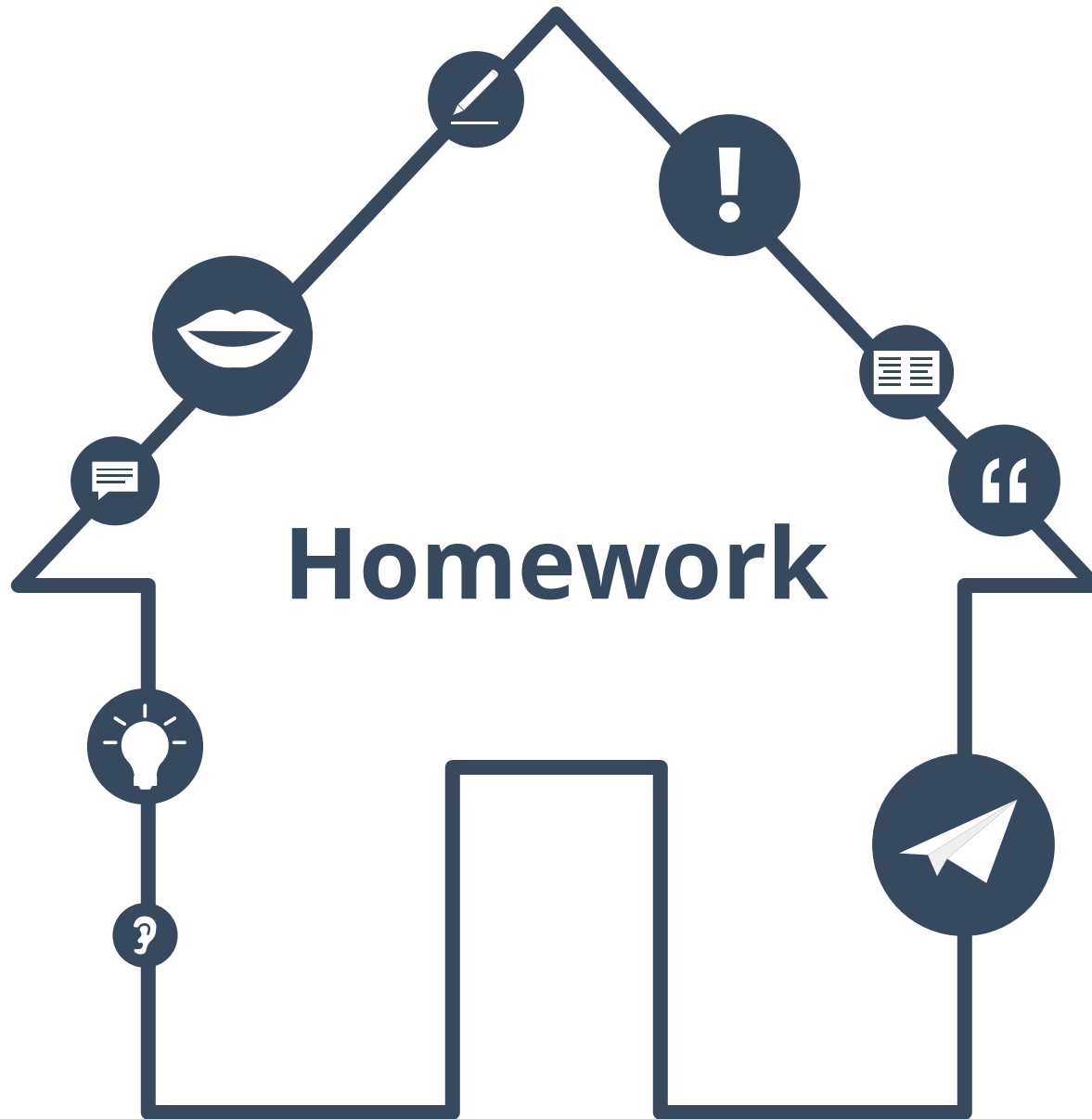




Answer key

Exercise p. 11

1. T, 2. T, 3. F, 4. F, 5. F, 6. T





New vocabulary

Which words from the lesson were new for you today? Write a list here.

A graphic of a spiral-bound notebook with a light gray cover and white pages. A white sticky note with a torn edge is attached to the top right of the notebook. The sticky note has the text "New vocabulary" written on it. The notebook has several horizontal lines on its pages. The word "post-truth" is written on one of the lines. There are several other blank lines for writing.



Writing exercise

Using the new vocabulary, write a short text about how to combat the problem of post-truth news.

○
○
○

New vocabulary

to be inclined to do sth

○
○



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