

## 4.4 Harmfully Misleading Information

Use the **Lowest** rating for pages that mislead people in ways that can cause harm to people and society.

Misleading pages may have been produced with the intent to misinform people, or the content creator may believe that the inaccurate information they are sharing is true. There is an especially high standard for accuracy on clear YMYL topics or other topics where inaccurate information can cause harm. Be sure to research consequential facts or claims as necessary and to the extent the task time allows.

Pages should be considered to contain Harmfully Misleading Information when they contain *at least one of the following*:

Type of Harmfully Misleading Information	Description	Examples
Harmful and clearly inaccurate information	Content that can be refuted by straightforward and widely accepted facts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>False claims that a world leader died</li><li>False dates for an election</li></ul>
Harmful claims that contradict well-established expert consensus	Content that is inconsistent with positions, facts, or findings that are widely agreed upon by authorities in the relevant field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Claims that lemons cure cancer</li><li>Claims that buying lottery tickets is a guaranteed way to save for retirement</li></ul>
Harmful unsubstantiated theories/claims	Content that is not grounded in any reasonable facts or evidence, especially those that could erode confidence in public institutions. This includes unsubstantiated theories that have been thoroughly debunked or are too outlandish to be given credence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Claims that the 9-11 attacks were planned by the U.S. government</li><li>Claims that world leaders are lizard people</li></ul>

Harmfully Misleading Information can occur from any websites or content creators - even seemingly "expert", "authoritative" or "official" ones. Any type of page with Harmfully Misleading Information should be rated Lowest, regardless of the source.

However, note that some types of information are subjective, debatable, unverifiable, or inconsequential. For example, pages should not be considered to contain Harmfully Misleading Information if they *exclusively* contain:

- Non-YMYL content created with a clear entertainment purpose, containing no hard claims of factual accuracy and are not harmful to people or society. Examples include many types of fiction, satire or parody, astrology, folklore, myths, and urban legends.
- Reviews expressing personal preferences, opinions, or value-based judgments about a product, restaurant, book/movie/TV show, etc.
- Claims or statements that are reasonably debatable when there is not a single established correct answer or truth (e.g., discussions about the relative effectiveness of different healthcare systems)
- Insignificant errors or inaccurate information about a trivial topic (e.g., inaccuracies in the height of a celebrity)

Pages that aim to persuade others that a certain position or perspective is correct are fairly common on the Internet. Pages with one-sided/opinionated/controversial/polarizing content should not be considered to contain Harmfully Misleading Information unless they could create harm to individuals or Specified Groups (as described above) and contain clearly inaccurate information, contradict well-established expert consensus, or are not grounded by reasonable facts/evidence.

A webpage may be considered to have Harmfully Misleading Information based on the MC or on other characteristics of the page or information about the content creator (e.g., the title of an article is harmfully misleading, even if the article on its own is not; a creator blatantly misrepresenting their medical credentials for a video on medical topics).

Harmfully Misleading Information can be especially hard to identify because it may require research from outside sources. Reputable fact-checking websites can't always keep up with the volume of unsubstantiated theories/claims produced by