

HOW TO_

SPOT

AND

STOP

FAKE NEWS

GUIDE

YOUNG PEOPLE
AGED 11+ (SECONDARY/ HIGH SCHOOL)



FROM THE DIANA AWARD

INTRO

The internet and social media are full of helpful information, news and advice.

When we feel worried about a situation, we want to share the information we see with friends and loved ones, often in messages or group chats on WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat or TikTok.

But when photos, videos or posts are shared quickly, again and again without thinking, messages can get confused, the wrong information can spread and people may start believing false facts.

In fact, research shows that nearly half of 12-15 year olds who use social media for news find it difficult to tell whether a news story is true (Ofcom, 2017).

PEOPLE MIGHT START TO

- Follow bad medical or financial advice that can be dangerous to themselves or others
- Feel anxious about a situation that is untrue or has been exaggerated
- Feel angry at other people who haven't done anything wrong

This can lead to increases in cyberbullying behaviour like repeatedly saying mean things about someone in a fake news story or continuing to share a post even when they know it's not true.

The best way to help yourself and others is to get better at spotting fake news and stop sharing it.

SPOT FAKE NEWS

When you spot something that looks off remember these four simple tips. Be aware, be suspicious, be curious & be honest. We break down each one below.

BE AWARE_

How does the post make you feel?

- Be aware if you think: "This can't be true!" - Your gut reaction might be right!
- Be aware of any strong emotions you feel when seeing it. If you laugh, then it might mean to be funny, not factual. If it uses extreme language or images to make you feel very shocked, sad or stressed, the story might be exaggerated or totally fake.
- Be aware of how sharing it might affect others. If the post strongly encourages you to pass it on, especially by copy and paste, it may not be trustworthy. Will sharing genuinely help or will it make someone feel more stressed, worried or angry?

BE SUSPICIOUS_

Do you trust the source of the story?

- Be suspicious of the website, especially if it looks official but ends in something unfamiliar like '.com.co'. The most reliable information comes directly from trusted sources such as the government, the BBC, major newspapers or experts. Their URLs normally end in things like '.com', '.co.uk', '.gov.uk', or '.net'.
- Be suspicious of strange-looking accounts. Unrelated or no profile picture, username with lots of numbers, lots and lots of posts? They may not be who they say they are.
- Be suspicious if you're not hearing it directly from the source. Did you watch it on YouTube, hear it from someone who heard it from someone else, learn it on social media or get it "forwarded" to you on WhatsApp? Try to find the same story from a trusted source. If you can't find anything, it may not be entirely true.
- Be suspicious if you don't recognise the person who shared the post, especially if they ask for money or your contact details.

SPOT FAKE NEWS

BE CURIOUS_

Is this information genuine?

- Be curious about who it comes from. Is it official advice from the government, your school or experts? If it is just someone's opinion, it may not be totally accurate.
- Be curious about whether all the facts make sense. Just because one part is true, doesn't mean all of it is. Only share if you can trust it all.
- Be curious about whether the story is new or old. If it's old, the information may not be true anymore or may have been taken out of context.
- Be curious about images, videos and quotes. Do they match up to the story? Are they genuine or even realistic? Could they have been taken out of context? Try a reverse google search! To do this, go to images.google.com and press the camera button, where you can then upload a photo or copy and paste a link to an image. See if the image comes up anywhere unrelated to the story you're investigating.

BE HONEST_

If you're not sure, talk!

- Be honest with yourself. Keep looking for evidence that the information is real.
- Be honest with a trusted adult. Show them the post and ask them what they think. A second pair of eyes can help you spot anything that looks unusual.
- Be honest with the person who posted or who you want to share it with. Tell them that you're not sure if all the information is true and use this advice together to understand whether it is.

Now that you're aware, suspicious, curious and honest, you might not believe everything you see. Or you still might not be completely sure.

STOP FAKE NEWS _WHAT TO DO NEXT

Resist the urge to pass it on.

- The fewer people who share it, the less it spreads.

See if it's been fact checked before.

- FullFact.org or Snopes.com are professional fact checkers.

Share your doubts with the person who shared it with you or whose feed you saw it on.

- You can private message them to explain why you don't think it's all truthful.
- "I'm not sure I believe everything in this post because..."
 - ...The source doesn't look very trustworthy
 - ...Experts are saying something different and I think we should believe them
 - ...I think the images might have been altered
 - ...I think some parts are exaggerated to shock us
 - ...I think there is more to the story that we need to understand

Be an upstander if you see cyberbullying happening

- Remember to REPORT and BLOCK if you experience or see cyberbullying. If you feel safe to do so, you could also private message people to say the news they're sharing isn't true and the comments they're making can be harmful to others. They might not realise the effects of their words – you can help them understand!

Ask people not to share similar posts again, especially if they make you feel worried.

- "Thank you for sharing this with me and I know you're trying to help me. However, I would prefer if you didn't send me posts like this in the future. Would that be ok? I'm trying to get my news and advice from official sources because I worry that other information might not always be reliable. I hope you understand."

Talk to a trusted adult about what you've seen.

- "I'm worried about something I saw online. Can I show you and get your opinion?"
- "I've heard a news story that I'm not sure about. Have you heard about this story before? Do you think it's true?"
- "Have you heard of this website before? Do they give reliable advice?"
- "A friend believes this. Can you help me explain to them why I think it's untrue?"

Limit what, where and how often you see the news.

- There's a lot out there, so consider following only official news outlets on social media and unfollowing people who share a lot of less trustworthy information.
- Only look at the news once or twice a day to make sure you're getting the key information.
- Make sure to get some positive news in your life as well! Follow feel-good Instagrammers or search out the good-news stories in online

Next time you see something that could be fake news, remember to be aware, suspicious, curious and honest.

We're proud to be the only charity set up in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales and her belief that young people have the power to change the world. It's a big mission but there are two things within it that we focus our charity's efforts on – young people and change.

Throughout all of our programmes and initiatives 'change' for and by young people is central, including our anti-bullying work which encourages change in attitudes and behaviours.

We hope you found this resource useful and wish you all the best in your anti-bullying journey. If you would like to help us create more resources and train even more Anti-Bullying Ambassadors you can make a £5 donation by texting CHANGE 5 to 70470 or visit diana-award.org.uk/donate

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