

TEACHER GUIDE

Unit

Fake news.

Unit Description

Information presented as news can often be created to influence public opinion or obscure the truth. An awareness that social manipulation involves using deceptive tactics.

Career

I'm an investigative journalist.

Every unit is based on a career to help students see the relevance of what they are learning to the real world and to help schools achieve Gatsby benchmarks by linking curriculum learning to careers.

Career overview

As an investigative journalist, I uncover and report on important stories that require research and digging deeper. This involves interviewing sources, analysing documents, spotting fake news, social manipulation and piecing together evidence to reveal the truth.

Key question

How can we uncover the truth online when some information is designed to be misleading?

Every unit is designed to help students answer one over-arching key question relating to the units four knowledge statements.

Unit objectives: knowledge statements

1. **Know** how to identify fake news presented by online sources.
2. **Know** that information presented as news can be created with the intent to influence public opinion or obscure the truth.
3. **Know** the techniques used in social manipulation.
4. **Know** the impact of fake news and social manipulation on society.

Unit outcomes

1. Learn it workbooks evidencing the learning journey.
2. Make it workbook evidencing application of learning with an artefact.
 - a) A professional response to a real-world fake news scenario.
 - i) Identifying suspicious content and explaining how to verify it.
 - ii) Analysing the intent behind misinformation and its impact on opinion.
 - iii) Spotting manipulation techniques used to influence behaviour.
 - iv) Creating a clear, responsible press release to counter the fake new.
3. Review it workbook evidencing assessment and review.

Prior learning / spiral curriculum

No previous learning is necessary because all units have been developed in a modular way to allow you to plug them into your existing scheme of learning.

However, if you are following our recommended pathway for curriculum 2028 here is how this unit fits into the year 7 → 9 progression pathway.

The big picture: a three-year progression

Once the national curriculum programme of study has been released, we will update this section with how this unit fits into a progressive pathway across Key Stage 3.

How the three units connect

Once the national curriculum programme of study has been released, we will update this section with how this unit fits into a broader theme of units.

Contents

In addition to this teacher guide this unit also includes the following resources:

- Folder: Extension work. Use these activities to extend any lesson or for 7–8-week terms.
 - 1 teacher extension answers.
 - 1 student extension workbook.
- Folder: Homework. Use these activities for work outside of the lesson. They are independent of the lessons and can be set at any time.
 - 1 teacher presentation.
 - 3 videos.
 - 3 video scripts.
 - 3 worksheets.
- Folder: Lesson 1 – Learn it. This lesson addresses the key question and first knowledge statement.
 - 1 lesson plan.
 - 1 introduction video.
 - 1 teacher presentation.
 - 1 student workbook.
 - Any associated resources required for the lesson.
- Folder: Lesson 2 – Learn it. This lesson addresses the key question and second knowledge statement.
 - 1 lesson plan.
 - 1 teacher presentation.
 - 1 student workbook.
 - Any associated resources required for the lesson.
- Folder: Lesson 3 – Learn it. This lesson addresses the key question and third knowledge statement.
 - 1 lesson plan.
 - 1 teacher presentation.
 - 1 student workbook.
 - Any associated resources required for the lesson.
- Folder: Lesson 4 – Learn it. This lesson addresses the key question and fourth knowledge statement.
 - 1 lesson plan.
 - 1 teacher presentation.
 - 1 student workbook.
 - Any associated resources required for the lesson.
- Folder: Lesson 5 – Make it. This lesson provides an opportunity for students to evidence their learning.
 - 1 lesson plan.
 - 1 teacher presentation.
 - 1 student workbook.
 - Any associated resources required for the lesson.

- Folder: Lesson 6 – Review it. This lesson provides an opportunity for students to check their understanding of the key vocabulary and knowledge statements plus dedicated improvement and reflection time.
 - 1 lesson plan.
 - 1 teacher presentation.
 - 1 student workbook.
- Folder: Reading. Use these activities to support reading initiatives in your school.
 - 3+ two-page reading passages with 5 questions.

PowerPoint format is used for workbooks as it allows for easy sharing on displays, animations, simultaneous collaboration and pasting without disrupting content on other pages. All PowerPoints have been checked for compatibility with Google Slides.

Differentiation

Differentiation should be provided through “adaptive teaching”. This is defined as, “The opportunity for all pupils to experience success, by adapting lessons, whilst maintaining high expectations for all, so that all pupils have the opportunity to meet expectations”. This also meets the expectations of Deborah Eyre’s [High Performance Learning](#) strategy. Differentiation is provided by instruction and support rather than by task.

Vocabulary

Term	Definition
Fake news	False or misleading stories made to look like real news, often to trick people or change what they think.
Critical thinking	Carefully looking at information and ideas, asking questions, and using facts to decide what is true or best.
Credibility factors	Clues that help you judge if information or a source can be trusted, like who made it or where it came from.
Timeline mapping	Laying out events in the order they happened, often on a line, to see how they connect and change over time.
Sentiment analysis	A way computers figure out if something written sounds happy, sad, angry, or neutral, by looking at the words people use.
Bias	When a person or article unfairly prefers one idea, person, or group over another, often without looking at all the facts.
Natural Language Processing	Computers understanding and working with human language, like speech or writing, so they can answer questions and chat with people.
Social manipulation	When someone tries to influence or trick others to get what they want, often by using emotions, lies, or pretending to be someone else.
Clickbait	Online headlines or images that are designed to grab your attention and make you click, often by using shocking or emotional language.
Deepfake	A fake video, image, or voice recording made using a computer that can make it look like someone said or did something they never actually did.
Digital forensics	The process of finding and investigating clues on computers, phones, or other devices to understand what happened.
Misinformation	False or wrong information that people share because they think it's true, without meaning to trick anyone.

Lesson overview

Detailed lesson plans for each lesson are provided in the relevant lesson folder.

Lesson	Lesson Type	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
1	Learn it	Career overview	Use a checklist of credibility factors to evaluate a selection of headlines for signs of fake news.	Investigate the origin and spread of one fake news story (e.g. “The Ghost of Kyiv”) using timeline mapping.
		Students consider what an investigative journalist does and what skills / knowledge they need.	Students are shown 10 headlines and give them each a credibility score.	Students create a timeline to show how fake news is spread by computing systems and human engagement.
2	Learn it	Retrieval	Use contrasting news articles to identify and highlight language techniques that influence opinion.	Investigate how different headlines frame the same event and affect reader perception using an annotation task.
		Students decode anagrams, identify 3 key words and write definitions of each key term.	Students highlight persuasive and emotive words in a text.	Students work in a group to write a factual or opinion-based news article.

3	Learn it	Retrieval	Use a simulated social media feed to identify manipulation techniques such as bots, clickbait and emotional triggers.	Use online tools to create a synthetic image and appreciate the difficulty of distinguishing between reality and deepfakes.
		Students decode an anagram, identify 3 key words and write definitions of the key term before writing a multiple-choice question.	Students explore a social media feed and decide how trustworthy each post is.	Students use MagicQuill to create a deepfake image.
4	Learn it	Retrieval	Use a real-world scenario (e.g. a hoax or misleading health claim) to explore consequences for public behaviour and trust.	Investigate how digital platforms detect and respond to fake news using algorithmic and ethical decision-making.
		Students decode anagrams, identify 3 key words and write definitions of each key term.	In pairs, students use decomposition, sequencing, abstraction and loops to track a fake new story.	Students design a system to detect fake news.

5	Make it	Retrieval	Make a newsroom response to a real-world misinformation scenario.	
		Students decode an anagram, identify 3 key words and write a definition of the key term before writing a multiple-choice question.	Students answer a series of questions exploring a fake news story.	
6	Review it	Assess	Self/Peer review.	Reflect and improve.
		Students complete a multiple-choice quiz.	Student's mark each other's answers to the quiz and self-assess or peer-review work from lesson 5.	Students RAG rate themselves against a series of "I can" statements. Students improve their work or undertake extension activities.

Homework

3 activities provided.

Students watch up to a 5-minute video about the hinterland (discovering), real-world application (exploring) or consolidation (revisiting) related to the unit. Students complete a simple sheet, with all the information required to complete it included within the video.

Homework is designed to require no parental support and is independent of any lesson.

Homework	Title
1	How to spot fake news.
2	Social manipulation.
3	How fake news affects people.

Extension activities in the student extension workbook could also be used for homework.

Assessment

Students are graded intern, junior, associate and senior to reflect the careers-oriented approach.

Artefact

It is recommended that the Learn it workbook is used for students to record their development in learning, new knowledge and skills. They may need help with these activities in order to make progress, and therefore it is not the best work for assessment.

Instead, assess the Make it artefact workbook. This should be the best work the student can produce and will allow you to judge their independence.

 Intern	- At least one knowledge statement is achieved. - Identify a single suspicious element in the scenario (e.g. missing source or edited image). - Identify a basic verification method (e.g. checking one website).
 Junior	- At least two knowledge statements are achieved. - Explain how misinformation could influence opinion or behaviour. - Include basic facts in your social media response. - Use at least one trusted source to support the response.
 Associate	- At least three knowledge statements are achieved. - Identify manipulation techniques and explain how they affect public trust. - Create a clear, audience-appropriate response using structured writing. - Reflect on ethical computing (e.g. accuracy, responsibility, public impact).
 Senior	- All four knowledge statements are achieved. - Refined response demonstrating clarity, tone, and ethical responsibility. - Use multiple verification sources and justify choice. - Explain how the response helps reduce harm and builds trust.

Tick the statements that best apply to the student when making their artefact. Award a best-fit mark of intern, junior, associate or senior.

Multiple-choice quiz

A 24-question multiple-choice quiz assesses the 4 knowledge statements and vocabulary of the unit. Award intern for 0-9 marks, junior for 10-16 marks, associate for 17-21 marks and senior for 22-24 marks.

You may choose to put the quiz into Microsoft Forms or equivalent for automatic marking.

Students should not open their Learn it workbook or Make it artefact workbook when completing the quiz.

Reflection

Lesson 6 provides an opportunity for students to review the work of their peers, identify and carry out improvements to their own work. It may not be necessary for teachers to mark the artefact for every unit for every student. Instead, you could take a moderation approach instead, sampling just a few pieces of work.

It is suggested that peers highlight statements on the assessment grid in yellow and teachers highlight in green to distinguish the two markers.

Grading

Consider both the mark for the artefact and the mark for the quiz to award a best-fit judgement.

National curriculum links

These will be populated when the new National Curriculum is released.

Applications of AI

How students can use AI to produce or enhance their work in the Fake News unit. Includes guidance on how AI use can also be avoided to strengthen independent thinking and digital literacy.

1. Investigative Research & Source Tracing
 - Using AI: Students can use AI-powered search tools (e.g. Bing AI, Copilot, Google Bard) to trace the origin and spread of fake news stories. These tools can summarise timelines, identify key actors, and suggest related articles or social media posts.
 - Without AI: Students manually map the timeline by searching archives, using advanced search filters, and cross-referencing dates and sources. They practise verifying URLs, checking publication timestamps, and identifying repost patterns.
2. Language Analysis & Bias Detection
 - Using AI: AI tools can help students compare tone and sentiment across articles. For example, sentiment analysis features in LLMs can highlight emotionally charged or biased language.
 - Without AI: Students annotate printed articles or use highlighters to mark persuasive techniques, emotive language, and factual vs opinion-based statements. They discuss findings in pairs or groups to deepen understanding.
3. Deepfake & Synthetic Media Creation
 - Using AI: Students use an AI image generator (MagicQuill) to create synthetic images and explore how realistic they can appear. They reflect on the ethical implications and the challenges of distinguishing real from fake.
 - Without AI: Students analyse existing deepfakes using case studies or curated image sets. They identify visual inconsistencies and discuss how context and metadata can help verify authenticity.
4. Algorithmic Decision-Making & Platform Responses
 - Using AI: Students simulate how platforms use AI to detect and respond to fake news. They can model simple classifiers or explore how ethical rules are embedded in moderation algorithms.
 - Without AI: Students role-play as platform moderators using printed posts and a decision grid. They debate which posts should be flagged, removed, or left untouched, justifying decisions based on ethical principles.
5. How to Avoid Using AI

To ensure students develop core skills independently, teachers can:

- Encourage manual source evaluation using checklists and credibility rubrics.

- Assign tasks that require students to explain their reasoning and cite evidence.
- Use printed materials or offline simulations to reduce reliance on digital tools.
- Facilitate peer-led discussions and collaborative analysis to build confidence.
- Provide scaffolded worksheets with sentence starters and word banks to support diverse learners.
- By balancing AI-enhanced tasks with manual approaches, students build both technical fluency and critical resilience—essential traits for uncovering truth in a digitally manipulated world.

Software

PowerPoint or equivalent for students to complete the workbook and teachers to show class presentation.

Web browser to provide them with access to the online tools required for completion of this unit.

Online and unfiltered sites required

[MagicQuill](#) is used in lesson 3, phase 3 for students to create a deepfake image. It can take a minute or two for images to be rendered as there is an online queue. If this is unlikely to be suitable there is an alternative activity outlined in the lesson plan.

An alternative to MagicQuill is: [AI Replace: Quick and Easy AI Object Replacer Tool](#).

The following site is used to host our homework videos for this unit:

- <https://www.tella.tv>

Extension activities

These can be used as additional activities in 7–8-week terms, for alternative homework, or for additional activities in lessons.

Extension activities are included in a separate workbook for students “Student Extension workbook.pptx”

Extension answers are included in a separate presentation for teachers “Teacher Extension answers.pptx”

Extension 1	Headline remix challenge
Activity	Choose two headlines, and rewrite them each in the following three ways : • As a clickbait version • As a neutral, factual version • As a misleading version with emotional bias
Extension 2	Bias compass
Activity	Create a “Bias Compass” showing how four different news outlets might report the same event. Use the example as guidance and create your own compass based on an event you have made up or heard about in real life. Instructions: • Place each outlet on a spectrum from neutral to biased • Justify each placement with one example of tone or framing
Extension 3	Manipulation mastermind
Activity	Invent two fictional social media posts designed to go viral. Use at least three manipulation techniques from the list below. Techniques to Choose From: • Emotional trigger (fear, outrage, joy) • Bot amplification • Clickbait headline • Misleading image • Fake quote or statistic

Extension 4	Misinformation Diary
Activity	Imagine you're living through a week where a fake news story has gone viral in your town. Write a short diary entry from the point of view of: • A member of the public who believed the story • A local business owner affected by the misinformation • A journalist trying to correct the story Instructions: • Choose one role. • Write a diary entry (150–200 words) describing how the fake news changed your day, your decisions, or your trust in others. • Include at least two realistic consequences and one emotional reaction.
Extension 5	Platform ethics debate
Activity	Imagine you're designing a new social media platform. Choose three rules your platform will follow to detect and respond to fake news. Rule Examples: • Flag posts with disputed claims using fact-check labels • Limit sharing of posts identified as misleading • Use AI to detect deepfakes and alert users Justify each rule with a short explanation of its ethical impact
Extension 6	Famous deepfakes
Activity	Research these famous deepfakes and explain briefly where and what the person was supposedly doing or saying.

Reading

This unit includes a folder titled, “Reading”. The files in this folder contain passages of text about scenarios related to the topic and each include five questions. These resources can be used in many ways. For example:

- Guided reading and oracy activities in terms of more than six weeks.
- Cover work.
- Work for students disapplied from the lesson.
- Alternative homework.

Guided reading is where the teacher reads the text to the students who follow along with a ruler on the line being read. To support literacy, it is important that students are both supported and challenged with text that is accessible and in places more demanding. The text has been checked that it meets these criteria and is suitable for a reading age of 11–14.

The associated questions go beyond simple comprehension using a framework that provides progression from basic understanding to deeper analytical thinking. Either moving students through increasingly demanding reading skills—retrieval, vocabulary, connection, inference and evaluation or encouraging students to identify and critique the structure of an argument or explanation.