

Understanding fake news

A guide to help you tell what's true and what's not!



What are misinformation and disinformation?

Misinformation: This is when someone shares false information by accident. They might think it's true, but it's actually wrong!

Example: A friend shares a post saying a famous singer has quit their job, but it's not true!

Disinformation: This is when someone shares false information on purpose to trick others.

Example: A group might make up a fake story about an actor to make people dislike them.

How to spot fake stories

Here are some simple ways to help you recognise false information:

1. Check the source (the person or website where the news has come from)

- **Good sources:** News websites you know, like BBC or trusted experts.
- **Red flag:** If the source is unknown or always shares things that aren't true, be careful.

2. Look for evidence

- **Good news:** Shows facts like studies or quotes from real experts.
- **Red flag:** Claims with no proof, or just say 'experts say' without saying who they are.

3. Beware of emotional headlines

- **Red flag:** If the title is full of strong emotions like fear or anger, it might be trying to trick you!

4. Check the date

- **Old stories:** Sometimes old news gets shared again and looks like it's new.
- **Red flag:** If it's an old story without updates, it might not be true anymore.

5. Check other sources

- **Good news:** If lots of websites say the same thing, it's more likely to be true.
- **Red flag:** If only one website or person is talking about it, you should check it carefully.

6. Be careful with photos and videos

- **Red flag:** If the photos or videos look weird or fake, it might be part of a trick!

How can I help stop fake or false news?

We all have a job to do to stop fake information from spreading.



1.

Pause before sharing: Always think before you share something online. Make sure it's true first.

2.

Report fake content: If you see something suspicious, tell an adult/teacher or report it online.

3.

Teach others: Share what you've learned with your family and friends so they can stay safe too.

Spreading misinformation is harmful because it confuses people, causes concern, fear or hurts others. In the UK, it can become a crime if it includes things like lying to trick people, encouraging hate, or damaging someone's reputation. Sharing false information online, like fake health advice, could lead to serious consequences such as warnings, fines, or even going to court. It's important to check facts before sharing.

Conclusion

Misinformation and disinformation can cause big problems, but you can help stop it. By checking sources, looking for evidence, and asking the right questions, you'll make sure you only share true and helpful information.

Remember: Always be careful with what you see online. If something doesn't seem right, double-check it before you believe or share it.

Thank you for reading. Stay smart and stay safe online.

