

Close Reading for Misinformation



Objective

Identify and examine the implications of misinformation.

ELA Common Core Anchor Standards

- CCSS ELA R.8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
- CCSS.ELA R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Connect

What do you think when you hear the term “fake news”?



Misinformation

Misinformation describes the spreading of any false or inaccurate information, including rumors, often unintentionally.

It is important to remember that information may be completely true on its own and still be used to mislead people in different contexts. This can make identifying misleading or inaccurate news especially difficult in some cases.



Types of Misinformation

It can be helpful to consider these common misinformation types:

- false connection: when a source presents a headline or image that is not related to the content of the article
- false context: when a source takes true information and presents it in a context that it does not support
 - e.g. old images that are presented as if they are recent
- misleading content: when information is used to frame an issue in a misleading way.
 - e.g. statistics that are misrepresented to make it appear that they support a certain position

To learn more about different types of misinformation, see this [resource from First Draft News](#).

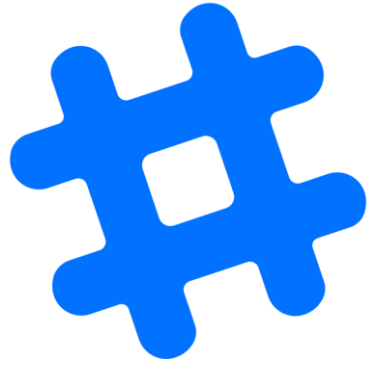


Tips for Spotting Misinformation



- Be on the lookout for provocative language or imagery.
 - Shock value can be used to distract from key information.
- Consider the source. Is a particular agenda being pushed?
- Participate in “lateral reading” or fact checking by looking at other sources.
- Consider whether what you are reading is labeled news or opinion (opinion includes “analysis” or “commentary”).
- Look out for specific types of misinformation false connection, misleading content, and false context.

Practice



Conduct a search for a controversial topic in Mucktracker.

Choose 2-3 articles, and then complete the following:

- Use a canvas organizer or tags to identify whether each story is mainly fact or opinion.
- Cross-check the information in your sources using Snopes.com or another source. Add notes from your fact check and identify any examples of misinformation in the comment box.
- Add “#misinformation” or “#misinfo” tags to articles that contain examples of misinformation.

[Launch Mucktracker Tool](#)

Wrap-Up



- Fact checking like what you did in this exercise is an important activity to limit the spread of misinformation online.
- Reflect on your findings. What trends did you see in the sources you chose? What types of misinformation were present, if any?
- You may have noticed that the opinion articles contained more examples of misinformation. Do you think it is more acceptable in this context? Why or why not?