

## Fact Checking

(45 Minutes)

## OBJECTIVE

- ✓ Determine the credibility and reliability of a news source
- ✓ Compare and contrast how different media outlets report the same news item
- ✓ Explain the importance of presenting factual information

## MATERIALS

- ✓ Computers/tablets (1 per student)
- ✓ Internet
- ✓ White board or chart paper
- ✓ Blank paper (1 per student)
- ✓ Key Vocabulary worksheet (1 per student)
- ✓ Key Vocabulary Working Definitions handout (1 per student)
- ✓ Find 3 handout (1 per student)

## GET READY

- ✓ Print handouts or place online for student access
- ✓ Reserve computer lab
- ✓ Gather paper

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Prior to the start of the lesson, write the terms listed on the *Key Vocabulary* worksheet on the white board or on large chart paper.
2. Provide each student with a *Key Vocabulary* worksheet.
3. Divide the class into small groups of 4-5 students in each.
4. Instruct groups to brainstorm their own definition of the key vocabulary terms and have them write down their definition on the worksheet.
5. After all groups have completed their definitions, provide each student with the *Key Vocabulary Working Definitions* handout which lists the working definitions

of the key vocabulary terms. Alternatively, definitions can be written on the board or on chart paper.

6. Next have students discuss the differences between their definitions and the working definitions in their small groups.
7. Students should write down the differences on the *Key Vocabulary* worksheet.
8. After this has been complete, review the definitions of the key vocabulary terms with the entire class and check for understanding.
9. Distribute the Find 3 handout to each student. Students will each need access to a computer or tablet.
10. Instruct groups to open a news website and locate an article of interest. Articles should be about current new topics.
11. Have groups briefly describe the event or issue that is being discussed in the article by filling out that section of their handout.
12. Then tell students that they will find two more news articles that discuss the same event or issue on two news or informational websites.
13. Students should work in their groups to complete the remaining portions of the Find 3 handout and determine the credibility of each site.
14. Discuss with students about why they felt one site was more or less credible than another site. Ask them if there were key details they found or didn't find that made a site less credible than another.
15. As a class, brainstorm questions that can be asked to determine whether a news article is credible. Record these questions on the white board or on chart paper.

## Fact Checking

Cont'd

16. Also discuss key information to look for to help determine if a news article is credible and record this information on the white board or on chart paper. Possible responses include: listed author, use of sources, date of article, proper grammar, etc.

- ✓ Talk about the effects of social media on distributing news. Possible effects include:
  - News is spread faster online
  - News is up-to-date and relevant
  - News is shareable and engages followers
  - News has become more cost effective

## EXTENTION ACTIVITY

- ✓ Instruct students to create their own fake news article on a topic of their choice.
- ✓ Students may use the *Find 3* handout as a reference to have ideas of what to include and what not to include in order to make the article seem less credible.
- ✓ Encourage students to be creative and subtle so that the article is not immediately recognized as less credible.
- ✓ Students may write out their article or use a computer or tablet to type it up.
- ✓ After the students have created their own fake news article, have them pair up with another student.
- ✓ The students should exchange their articles and read through to determine the pieces that make the article inaccurate or not credible.
- ✓ Students should record their findings on a blank piece of paper.
- ✓ Have students rotate around the room and pair up with other students. This can be continued for three or more rotations.
- ✓ Afterwards, as a class, ask students to volunteer and share some of the techniques they found were used to make their articles less credible.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What makes a news article credible?*
- ★ *What internet sites are reliable and credible? How do you know?*
- ★ *Who has the greatest responsibility in getting the news correct and why?*
- ★ *What is the government's responsibility, if any, in ensuring media information is accurate?*
- ★ *What are three things you can do to verify the truth of something you have seen, read, or heard?*

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**ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP**Gathering and  
Weighing Information**Fact Checking****Key Vocabulary Handout**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTIONS:**

1. Brainstorm and write your own definition to the words at the top/center of each column.
2. Write the working definition your teacher will provide.
3. What are the differences between the two definitions?

<u>News Story</u>	<u>Editorial</u>
My definition:	My definition:
Working definition:	Working definition:
Differences:	Differences:

<u>Opinion</u>	<u>Advertisement</u>
My definition:	My definition:
Working definition:	Working definition:
Differences:	Differences:

Grades 6-8

GATHERING & WEIGHING  
INFORMATION

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ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Gathering and  
Weighing Information

## Fact Checking

Key Vocabulary Handout  
Cont'd

My definition: <u>Bias</u>	My definition: <u>Evidence</u>
Working definition:	Working definition:
Differences:	Differences:

My definition: <u>Source</u>	My definition: <u>Transparency</u>
Working definition:	Working definition:
Differences:	Differences:

## Fact Checking

## Key Vocabulary Working Definitions Handout

<b>News (Story)</b>  <b>Definition:</b> News (story) is a report of recent events. It is material reported in a newspaper or news periodical or on a newscast.	<b>Editorial</b>  <b>Definition:</b> An editorial is a newspaper or magazine article that gives the opinions of the editors or publishers.
<b>Opinion Piece</b>  <b>Definition:</b> An opinion piece is an article that expresses someone's beliefs or views.	<b>Advertisement</b>  <b>Definition:</b> An advertisement is a public notice; one that is published in the press or broadcast over the air.
<b>Bias</b>  <b>Definition:</b> Bias is an inclination of temperament or outlook; a personal and sometimes unreasoned judgement.	<b>Evidence</b>  <b>Definition:</b> Evidence is an outward sign or indication; something that furnishes proof.
<b>Source</b>  <b>Definition:</b> A source is the point of origin; one that supplies information. It is a firsthand document or primary reference work.	<b>Transparency</b>  <b>Definition:</b> Transparency is the quality or state or being transparent. Something free from pretense or deceit; easily detectable or seen through; readily understood; characterized by visibility or accessibility of information especially concerning business practices.

Source: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary>

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**ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP**Gathering and  
Weighing Information**Fact Checking****Find 3 Handout**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTIONS:**

On the Internet, open a news website. Locate an article of interest and write a brief description of the event or issue the article is about. Open two more news or information websites and find the same event or issue. Complete the questions below to compare the 3 stories.

**Website Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

Briefly describe the event or issue listed in your chosen article. For example, "The school day should be shorter."

**Site #1- Website Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

What sources did the article cite?	What is the headline?
Can you tell what the author's opinion of the subject is? Why or Why not?	
Is the article a news story, an editorial, an opinion piece, or an advertisement? How do you know?	Does the article incite your emotions? How?
How does this information differ from the information in the first article?	
How is this information similar to the information in the first article?	
Write 2 unbiased sites where you can fact check the article.	

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GATHERING & WEIGHING  
INFORMATION

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**ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP**

Gathering and  
Weighing Information



**Fact Checking**

**Find 3 Handout  
Cont'd**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Site #2 Website Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

What sources did the article cite?	What is the headline?
Can you tell what the author's opinion of the subject is? Why or Why not?	
Is the article a news story, an editorial, an opinion piece, or an advertisement? How do you know?	Does the article incite your emotions? How?
How does this information differ from the information in the first & second article?	
How is this information similar to the information in the first article?	
Write 2 unbiased sites where you can fact check the article.	