Lie Detectors
CRITICAL THINKING

THE LIE DETECTORS NEWS CHALLENGE

Hello students,

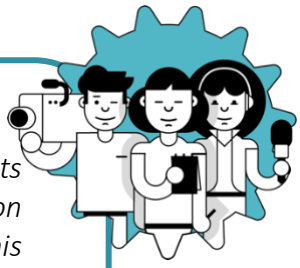
Grab your notebooks and get ready to sharpen your investigative skills. As you know, you can find tons of photos, videos, and articles about just about any topic imaginable online. You can trust many of them. Others are misleading - sometimes intentionally so. And some are simply untrue. In our news challenge, we have three online posts for you. Can you figure out how to separate the fake items from the truth? We journalists at Lie Detectors do this every day, and you can, too. You just need the right tools.

How do you do it? Professional journalists have some key tools they use to do their job. Here we'll show you how to use these tools to think critically, just like junior reporters do.

Ready for a news challenge?

On the next page, you will find your journalist toolbox.

- There are 9 tools in the toolbox. Take a good look at them. They will help you do your investigative work. Next to each assignment, you'll see an icon that will point you to a tool that's particularly useful.
- Use the tools to help you figure out which, if any, of these 3 stories are actually true.



What does Lie Detectors do?
We at Lie Detectors work with professional journalists to help show students like you how to tell the difference between true and questionable stories on the internet and also to help you understand how news is created. We do this in several countries: Belgium, Germany, and Austria. It's a fun job, we've won a prize for our work and been on the news a lot, often with groups of students like you.

How long will you take for this challenge? *About 30 minutes.*

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CHECKLIST

HOW TO RECOGNISE DISINFORMATION

SOURCE CHECK

By source we mean: where did it come from? Take a close look:

Where did you read or see this piece of news? What do the contact details and profile tell you?

DIG DEEPER

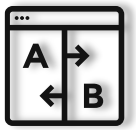
Don't just read the headline:

What's the whole story? Headlines often exaggerate to attract clicks. Are there links in the text you can click that could tell you more?

AUTHOR

Find out more about the author:

Who published this story? Is he or she credible?



COMPARE

Take a look at other sources and compare them:

What do others say about the issue? This is very easy to do with a search engine such as Google, Bing, Yandex or others.

DATE CHECK

Take a look at the date:

Is this a recent piece of news or has somebody just copied an image or story?

HA HA!

Is it a joke?

Does the report seem a bit crazy? It could be a joke or satire, so the true meaning might be different. Check the source and the authors.

EXPERTS

Talk to the experts

What do well-informed people say about it?

KNOW YOUR OWN MIND

It's really important to think for yourself!

What are your own instincts telling you? Have you already formed an opinion about this issue that might be influencing you?

IMAGE SEARCH

Where does the image or video come from?

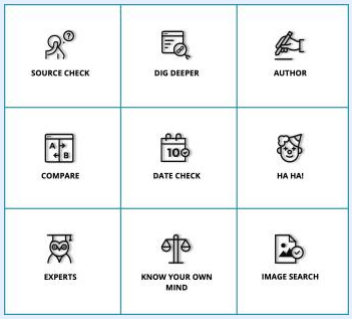
A reverse image search is easy to do and sometimes reveals a lot about the image.

This toolbox is based on resources produced by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). Lie Detectors have added the information about the reverse search tool (bottom right-hand corner).

ARE YOU READY?

Here's the first of the three challenges.

TIP: Use the toolbox and find the right tool to help you investigate whether the report is true or fake.



CHALLENGE 1:

GARLIC WATER BELIEVED TO CURE THE CORONAVIRUS

Lots of people are sharing this story on WhatsApp. It says that a mixture of water and garlic can cure the coronavirus. Garlic is certainly healthy, but does it protect us from catching the infection? Here's the post:

Information about the source:

one of the Lie Detectors received this message on WhatsApp. It has been written in many different languages and shared thousands of times.

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TASK A

Examine the text carefully

1. Can you see who wrote the text?

2. What can you find out about the author? Do you think s/he is trustworthy?

3. What do you notice about the spelling and grammar? Are the words and punctuation all in the right places?

TOP TIP:

If you want to know if a text is believable or not, it helps if you can find out who actually wrote it.

Experts are people such as scientists who know a lot about their speciality subjects. The main job of a journalist is to report information truthfully. The general public usually writes stories for fun, so you can expect there to be mistakes.

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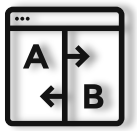
TASK B

Now compare the report post with information on the internet.



1. Use a search engine (e.g. Google) and find out if someone else, or another news organisation, has written anything about this post. Compare the results. What do you notice at first glance?

TOP TIP:

The reverse image search can help you find out if the photos are genuine or if they have been altered or faked. It also helps you to tell if genuine photos are being used with fake text. But this is just one of the many useful tools a Youth Reporter can use.

Important: The search tool might not help you find the answer you need straight away, but it can give you some important clues. Don´t be discouraged, as you know, there are always other tools that can help you.

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TASK C

Talk to experts. Do you know someone who watches the news frequently? Maybe your parents or a teacher?

1. Whom did you ask?

2. Why did you decide to ask this particular person?

3. What did they think?

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TASK D

Think for yourself. Consider what you've learned by putting into practice these tools of journalism.

1. Do you think the information in this post is:

   ☐ fact

   ☐ fake

2. How did you come to this conclusion?

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TASK E

1. Give two reasons why you think this post went viral on the internet

2. Explain why you think it's important to double-check these types of stories before sharing them with friends. Describe the consequences of forwarding them along without doing some investigative work first.

3. Take another look at the toolbox. Which of the tools did you use to investigate the story?

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4. Did you enjoy doing this research? If yes, why? If not, why not?

5. If you could ask a professional journalist one question about this challenge, what would it be?

That's all for today! Next time, we're going to take a look at two videos that have been watched and shared by millions of people. You're going to decide whether the story that the video tells is real or whether the story is wrong or the image has been manipulated.

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Lie Detectors
CRITICAL THINKING

ANSWER SHEET

CHALLENGE 1:

GARLIC WATER BELIEVED TO CURE THE CORONAVIRUS

TASK A

1. Can you tell who wrote the text?
2. What can you find out about the author? Is s/he trustworthy?
3. What do you notice about the spelling and grammar? Are the words and punctuation all in the right places?

Answers to task A

1. No. With WhatsApp and other social media apps, it's tough to tell who originally wrote this reports. These types of chain messages tend to be forwarded by friends or acquaintances who don't know who wrote the message either. That's why it's good to be a bit sceptical about what you read - and to use your critical thinking skills.
2. No, the name can't be found in the text. Without knowing the name, you can't check to see if the writer is trustworthy - another good reason to be suspicious of this message.
3. No. The grammar is pretty bad. Sure, we all misspell a word from time to time, but too many mistakes-including misplaced periods and commas--are definite warning signs. The bad spelling here is a good clue that the text hasn't been written by a professional.

TASK B

Now compare the report with information on the internet.

1. Use a search engine (e.g. Google) and find out if someone else, or another news organisation, has written anything about our report. Compare the results. What do you notice at first glance?

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Answers to task B

1. Yes, a lot has already been written about it, including in newspapers that you've probably heard of, for example, The Guardian (a daily newspaper), The Week (the online portal of a weekly magazine) and many others. Journalists must adhere to professional rules to ensure that their reporting is as accurate as possible. https://www.ipso.co.uk This website is a good place to find out more about these rules. Maybe you found this article in *The Conversation*.

You can also do an internet search if you want to find out more about a newspaper or any other source.

Journalists carry out this research carefully to help them decide if something is real or fake. This is one of the most important parts of their job after all! But it's not always easy ...

TASK C:

Ask an expert

Answers to task C:

There is no one right answer here. The point is, don't hesitate to ask lots of questions when you talk to experts- and make sure that you understand their answers, too! We hope you had fun, and don't forget: the more complicated the question, the more important it is to rely on experts who have specialized knowledge, like scientists or doctors in the case of, say, medical questions. The more qualified the expert, the more you can trust the answer they give you.

TASK D:

1. Do you think this report is true or has it been made up?
2. How did you come to this conclusion?

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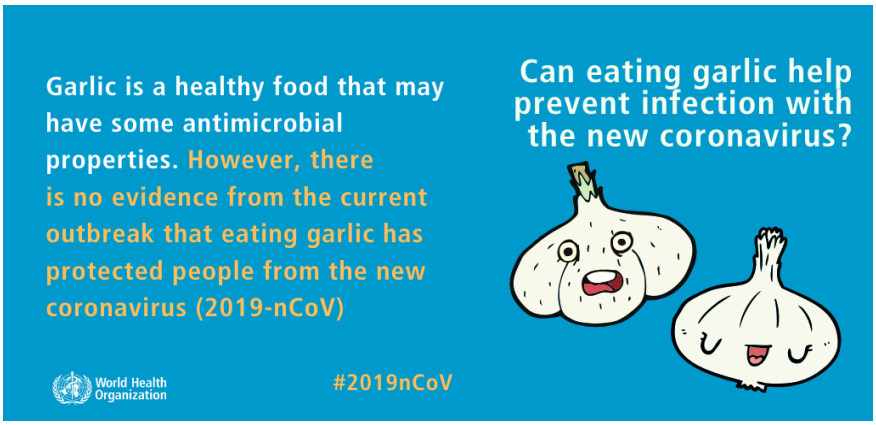
Answers to task D:

1. Fact or fake? **It's fake!**
   There is actually a grain of truth in this hoax: it's true that garlic is quite healthy. **But, according to the latest scientific research, it cannot cure the coronavirus**. The World



   Health Organization (WHO) has confirmed this. Here is a poster that the WHO published as part of its myth busters campaign against fake coronavirus news:

   You can see the poster on the WHO website: https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters)

2. _____This is a question only you can answer.

TASK E:

1. Give two reasons why you think this report went viral on the internet.
2. Explain why you think it's important to double check these types of stories before sharing them with friends. Describe the consequences of forwarding them along without doing some investigative work first
3. Take another look at the Toolbox. Which tools did you use to expose this fake news report?

Answers to task E:

1. **Fake news reports go viral for lots of reasons.**
   People generally have three motives for creating them: fun, money and power.
   Whether they know if the reports are true or not, people tend to share fake news for one or more of these reasons. To:

   □ Draw attention to themselves

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- Make money (this is also called “clickbait” and explains why so many YouTubers are so rich!)
- Sow the seeds of mistrust
- Make people feel uncomfortable or scared
- Be funny
- Send their friends something that they think is genuine
- Sell garlic!

2. Why is double-checking stories important? What kind of consequences can forwarding them along without doing some investigative work first?
   It’s always important to be careful with content, especially when it appears to be exaggerated. This is because:
   - It can frighten people and make them feel unsettled.
   - It can give people false hope or make them feel more in control than they actually are.
   - Even if it was meant to be a joke, people could actually believe it to be true.
   - No one likes to be lied to, even when it’s unintentional.
3. Source check, author check, compare texts, ask an expert, use your own common sense.
   It’s especially important to carry out a source check and to compare the text with other sources. And remember: you’ll need to use investigative skills when you’re deciding whether a report can be trusted or not. Think critically, use more than one of the tools, and carry out your research one step at a time. It will take practice, but that practice will help you develop the good instincts you need to separate fact from fiction.

Have you thought of any more questions after reading through this answer sheet? Please feel free to send them to your teacher. We would be happy to work with your teacher to get you answers.

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