



Spotting fake news – media detectives

AT A GLANCE



Place

Indoors, one phone or tablet per small group



Key idea

Recognising false reports, manipulated images and clickbait, and learning to check information before sharing it



Effort

Materials 10 min · Preparation 30 min



90 minutes



small groups of 3–4



12–16 years



with phone or tablet



Materials

- ☐ printed example reports: real and made-up ones (prepared by the leaders)
- ☐ poster with the five checking questions
- ☐ one phone or tablet with internet per small group
- ☐ pens, paper, red and green cards



Schedule

0–15'

Introduction – True or false? The leader reads out five strange news reports and everyone holds up a red or green card. The answers come at the end.

15–35'

The five checking questions – Work them out together: Who is behind it? Since when has the report been around? Do other reliable sources report it? Does the picture fit the report? Is someone trying to make me angry?

35–65'

Detective round – Each group checks three example reports with the questions and researches online. Result: real, false or unclear – with reasons.

65–75'

Answers – Groups present, the leader reveals the answers. Which cases were particularly hard?

75–90'

Devotion – 1 Thessalonians 5:21: “Test everything; hold on to what is good.” God has given us minds to look closely. Truth matters to him – also in what we pass on.



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How it works – simply explained

- 1 Check the sender: is there a legal notice, a real name, a known newsroom?
- 2 Check the date: old reports are often spread as if they were new.
- 3 Cross-check: is the report also on several reliable news sites?
- 4 Check pictures: use a reverse image search to see where a photo first appeared.
- 5 Check your feelings: does the report make you instantly angry or afraid? Then look twice.

 **Example:** “This post has 50,000 likes – but it is from 2015 and the photo shows a completely different city. Lots of likes do not mean something is true.”



Safety

- Use only prepared, age-appropriate examples; no disturbing images or videos.
- Stay in small groups when researching; a leader looks on.
- Do not post photos or names of group members online.



Variations

- Fake news workshop: groups invent a harmless false report – and then explain which tricks they used.
- Rumour chain: a message is whispered along the line – what arrives at the end?



Something to think about

When did you last pass something on without checking it – and what will you do differently next time?