

Lesson 7: Manipulation

Unit 4 Part B

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Activity	Time	Instructions and objectives
Introduction	2 min	Tell students that in this lesson you will keep talking about manipulative content in the media. Explain that not everyone on social media who shares posts, likes, and comments is a real person - there are bots and trolls. Ask students if they know what bots and trolls are. If someone raises their hand, ask them to explain in their own words. In short - bots are artificial, automatically coordinated users. Trolls are real people who create an alternative online identity and try to provoke others.
Watch a video	5 min	Watch a video that explains what bots and trolls are in more depth and provides some tips to spot them. Link - https://youtu.be/IUHLkng2Gcl
Fake photo challenge	3 min	Invite students to go to https://www.whichfaceisreal.com/ and compare the images of two people. Ask students to play three rounds and try to see if they can tell which one of the images is real. One is always automatically generated. The "learn" section of the website contains tips on what to look for in an image to be able to detect the fakes.
Go through the list of signs that show that an image might be generated automatically	5 min	Slides 5 - 8
Three questions for fact checking	2 min	Mention these important questions to ask yourself when fact-checking: - Who made the claim? Do they have the expertise and information to know that? - What evidence and sources did they provide to back up their claim? Does the source actually say what they claim it does? - What are other sources saying?

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Quiz: Evaluate the Source	10 min	Ask students to fill in a quiz about evaluating sources. Link - https://veryverified.eu/units/unit-4/part-b-manipulation/Fake Expert Opinion & Advertorial section.
Are they an expert?	2 min	Read the description of a situation. A network of 500 accounts affiliated with China were removed from Facebook for promoting the claims of a fake biologist from Switzerland named Wilson Edwards. Edwards, who does not actually exist, was used to claim that the US was meddling in efforts to find the origins of Covid-19. His statements were then re-published on Chinese state media.
Tips to tell if someone is an expert	5 min	<p>Read out the list with tips to check the background of a person and evaluate whether they really are an expert.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Their experience as an expert: where have they worked and for how long? Can you find their resume?- If someone is a reputable expert, it is likely that other media outlets have also used them as a source or they have written articles in different outlets themselves.- Academic books, textbooks, and articles written by them, as well as the number of citations – the number of times other experts reference their findings in other articles and books. You can find this information, for example, on scholar.google.com. When you search for the name of the expert, you can see if they have written about the topic and how many others have found what they said useful enough to cite it.- The reputation of the organization they represent: do they appear to be recognized by others for their knowledge or expertise? For example, are they invited to various conferences, discussions, and other speaking events? Is their name tied to any scandals that have been reported in the media?

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Short practice	10 min	<p>Divide the students in 3 groups. Ask them to use the tips discussed previously to answer these questions. Group 1: Who is Paul A. Offit? What does he specialize in? Does it make sense to ask his opinion about vaccines? Group 2: Who is Neil deGrasse Tyson? What is his education? If you were a journalist, would you pick him as an expert to ask about a monkeypox outbreak? Group 3: Who is Katharine Hayhoe? Does she work in a well-known institution? Does it make sense to ask her opinion on climate change?</p> <p>Ask one representative of each group to briefly answer what their findings were. Emphasize that even if someone is a great scientist in a particular field, they are not an expert on everything. Also, emphasize how all of these are very well-known experts and it is easy to find information about them. If someone truly is a well-known expert, it should never be hard to find information about them.</p>
Quiz - Case Study: Deaths After the Covid-19 Vaccine	6 min	<p>Tell students that another type of very frequently used manipulation is misrepresenting what a source actually says. Ask them to fill out this quiz to see an example of that for themselves.</p> <p>Link - https://veryverified.eu/units/unit-4/part-b-manipulation/ Fact-checking section</p>
Conclusion	2 min	<p>Invite students to look at the fact-checking section of the Very Verified course. It lists some tools that can help with fact-checking. Link - https://veryverified.eu/units/unit-4/part-b-manipulation/ Fact-checking section</p>