

Name _____

Date _____

Fake News

Use the text to answer each question below.

1. Fiction pretending to be legitimate news is shared on social media all the time. Some of this fake news is read and shared as if it were real news. It happened so much in 2016 that one dictionary declared "post-truth" the word of the year. "Post-truth" describes an attitude that the truth doesn't matter as much as emotions and personal beliefs. Some fake news is created to get people to click on links because websites can earn money when people visit them. Those kinds of articles are called "clickbait." Some fake news stories are also meant to trick or confuse readers. Sometimes it's hard to tell real news from fake news.

According to the passage, some fake news is

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| A. fiction pretending to be real news. | B. clickbait. |
| C. meant to trick or confuse readers. | D. all of the above. |
2. Imagine that you're a huge fan of the NBA team the San Antonio Spurs. You never miss a game, you wear the team colors and you've memorized every player's stats. The Spurs' longtime rival is the Los Angeles Lakers, and any rival of the Spurs is a rival of yours. One night, you see an article pop up on your Facebook feed from a gossip site. It says, "Lakers Player Found Using Performance Enhancing Drugs!" You immediately share this article, shaking your head with disgust. But what if the article announced that a Spurs' player had been found cheating? Would you have believed the story as quickly? Probably not. That's confirmation bias. People are generally more likely to accept news stories that confirm their existing beliefs.

What is the main purpose of this passage?

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| A. to compare basketball teams | B. to persuade the reader that basketball is very important |
| C. to inform the reader that sports news is often fake | D. to show the reader what confirmation bias is |

3. There are plenty of easy-to-spot signs that an article isn't trustworthy, but you have to read the article to catch them. Many people make the mistake of reading the headline and stopping there. Oftentimes, the headline will look OK, but deeper into the story, things get sloppy or weird. There may be spelling errors or obviously made-up "facts." You might realize that the article shouldn't be trusted as you read it. People who create these fake news stories often are hoping that you won't take the time to actually read the articles. Surprise them! But also keep in mind that just because an article is well-written, doesn't necessarily mean it's true. Reading the article is just the first step to telling the difference between fake news and real news.

The author of the passage would most likely agree with which of these statements?

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| A. If an article has no spelling errors, you can trust it. | B. If the headline of an article seems true, it probably is. |
| C. Once you read an article, you'll know if it's true or not. | D. An article can be well-written and still be fake news. |

4. The website abc.go.com belongs to a television network in the US called ABC, or American Broadcasting Company. It's a national network that was created about 75 years ago, and it's owned by Disney. ABC's logo is a circle with "abc" written in white in the center of it. The website abcnews.com.co has a similarly designed site and claims to be a news organization, but it doesn't have anything to do with the TV network ABC. It's fake, and it's trying to trick people. You can learn what the well-known fake news sites are and look out for them. In general, be careful of websites that end in .info or .co. Most legitimate websites end with .com, .edu, .gov or .org.

Based on the passage, which of the following websites is the least trustworthy?

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| A. whitehouse.gov | B. npr.org |
| C. columbia.edu | D. cbn.info |

5. Sometimes photos are used to add legitimacy to a news article. But a photo doesn't necessarily prove that something is true. If you see a story that says Barack Obama has a long-lost twin brother alongside an image of a man that looks just like Obama, you might believe that he has a twin. But sometimes fake news articles use photos in misleading ways. You can do a reverse image to see where an image originated from. This photo of Obama's "lost-lost twin?" It might turn out that it's just a photo of the former president himself.

What is the purpose of the underlined sentence in the passage above?

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| A. to provide an example of how a photo can be used to add false legitimacy to an article | B. to provide an example of a time when a photo proved a story was true |
| C. to support the statement that Barack Obama has a twin brother | D. to provide an example of why articles with photos are more likely to be true |

6. When we talk about "bias," we are talking about a preference for one person or thing over another person or thing. If your cousin is biased against small dogs, she already doesn't like small dogs, even those that she has never met. When an article has a bias, it's not objective or neutral. It may not be obvious, but there's an opinion in the writing. News stories, unlike opinions pieces, are not meant to show an author's opinion. When you're searching for facts, you want to avoid articles that show a bias. Sponsored content typically includes some bias because the company or organization paying for the article wants you to share its opinion. The company is using the article to convince you to buy its product.

Based on the passage, which of the following is the best example of sponsored content?

- A. an article in the New York Times that PlayStation has paid for that describes virtual reality in video games
- B. a New York Times report on the growing trend in virtual reality video games
- C. an ad that plays before a YouTube video that you can skip
- D. a television commercial for the new iPhone
7. Some articles might not be intentionally trying to trick you, but they can still contain information that's not true. Wikipedia, for example, is a well-known website that people use all the time. But do you know who writes the articles for Wikipedia? Anybody with a computer and internet access can. The information on Wikipedia might be written by an expert in the field or someone who did a lot of research, but it might also be written by your younger brother. When you're on Wikipedia, or any website that you don't trust, you can check the sources and links provided to verify the information. Some articles may reference real scientific studies, but those studies might not support what's presented in the article. Do your own research to double-check the information you read. As a backup, find other news sources reporting the same story. If something is true, more than one source will be reporting it.

What is the meaning of the word "verify" in the passage above?

- A. to make sure something is true
- B. to re-write something
- C. to click a link on a website
- D. to doubt something