

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Fake News

Extra! Extra!

Learn more about this topic! Each section gives more detail on one of the lyrics from the song. Read each section, and then respond by answering the question or taking notes on key ideas.

1.



b'

Fake news can spread quickly on social media.

\n'

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.

Notes

2.



b'

Confirmation bias is when you easily believe something that agrees with your viewpoint, such as a rival sports team cheating.

\n'

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.

3.



b'

Take the time to read the whole article, not just the headline.

\n'

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.

Notes

Notes

4.



b'

The American Broadcasting Company  
logo

\n'

Notes

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.

5.



b'

Do you think this giant squash is real?

\n'

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.

Notes

6.

## The New York Times

PAID POST



b'

Companies can pay to have articles written in their favor.

\n'

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.

Notes

7.



b'

Some sites can be edited by anyone.

\n'

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.

Notes