

## Fake news

The internet is a fantastic and seemingly endless pool of knowledge, which anyone can contribute to. This makes it easier to share knowledge than ever before, but it also makes it easy to be misled by incomplete or false information, this is commonly known as fake news.

Fake news is information that is either wrong or incomplete causing people to be misled. In some cases, fake news can be spread accidentally, when the person who wrote the news piece didn't have all the facts, but that it can also be deliberate. Have a look at the following links. [Scouts camp in space](#) and [this link](#) to the Twitter feed of the National Trust. These are examples of fake news that have been written to make people laugh. (Did you notice the date for each one?)

Fake news can sometimes be used to mislead people deliberately. This means it makes people think something is true that may not be true, to try and change how people think and what they believe. It can also be used to annoy and upset people ('trolling').

There are groups who are trying to help provide information to check facts that are being claimed online. You can look at some by checking the hyperlinks below.

Cut through the spin and concentrate on the facts.

[BBC Reality Check](#)

Find, expose and counter bad information.

[Full Fact](#)

Test the claims of people in power.

[C4 News FactCheck](#)

When you are reading information for yourself from social media or websites you should think about the 4 Ws.

### Who?

Who wrote the story, does it come from LeGiT\_nEwZ\_pOsTr\_2012 or a named author? Is it from a familiar source? Be wary of social media posts that have no sources or references for where they got their information from.

### What?

Does the story, video or picture look believable? Does it look like someone could've tampered with it? Was there any lead up to the news (eg if someone is reported as having reached the moon, you might expect to find some previous articles explaining how they prepared)?

### When?

Look at when the news came out, the longer ago it was published the more other places should also report about it. When a discovery or event first takes place it can be difficult to find all the facts. It's sometimes best to check back later to see how the story develops before fully believing it.

**Where?**

Where does the story appear, is it found in obvious places online? Does the site appear genuine? Also, check a site is 'secure' – look out for the little picture of a padlock before the address at the top of the page. Sites without this might hide computer viruses and should be avoided. If you aren't sure whether a source is genuine or not you might need to do some more digging before sharing it as fact.

**Task**

You should now come up with one example of a news piece that's either 'real' or 'fake.' You should try to think of 'fake' stories that are convincing, or 'real' stories that people are likely to believe can't be true. You can either find an example online or make your own one up. It can just be a headline or a slightly longer piece.

Please then send it to us at [hilton.scouts@gmail.com](mailto:hilton.scouts@gmail.com)

We will then make a list of all of them and in a different meeting we will ask you all to try and work out which ones are real and which ones are fake.