

Senior: Truth Seeker

Hey Girl Scout! We are often told that we live in the age of information. Its true we're surrounded by data-from TV, the internet, and from our friends. But not all information is created equal. Some is misleading and some is downright wrong. It's important to know how to uncover the truth in what we see and hear, to judge sources on credibility, accuracy, reasonableness, and support for their claims. In this badge, you'll figure out how to separate fact from fiction. When you've earned this badge, I'll be able to figure out what is true in the media, online, and what you hear in your daily life.

Step 1. Evaluate your sources

1. See how different news outlets compare when it comes to accuracy and reliability by choosing a news story to follow in two different forms of media: newspaper, news magazine, online, TV or Radio.
2. When comparing the stories ask yourself these questions
 - a. Do different outlets report the same story differently?
 - i. Take notes on the similarities and differences between the two outlets reports of the story.
 - b. Which one provided the most in- depth coverage?
 - i. Write down a few reasons that you feel this way.
 - c. Which one seemed more reliable?
 - i. Write down a few reasons you feel this way.
3. Did you stop to check if the news outlets you were using are reliable? To determine if the outlet its reliable try using the CARS checklist.
 - C- Credibility- the outlet uses trustworthy sources, or known or respected authorities on a topic
 - A- Accuracy – the information is up to date, factual, exact, comprehensive, and reflect intentions of completeness and accuracy
 - R- Reasonableness- fair, balanced, objective, reasoned, with no conflict of interest
 - S- Support- Are their listed sources, contact information, and claims supported.
4. Can you think of any other ways to make sure your news outlets are reliable?

Supplies:

1. Computer or TV
2. Newspapers
3. Notebook
4. Pen

Step 2: Investigate what the experts say and Step 4. Find truth in your every day life. (combined)

1. You see friends and family repost information on all different forms of social media every day. This week become an investigator to see how much of this information is fact and how much is fiction.
2. Keep track of the stories and links your friends and family member share on their social media platforms. To make it easier on your self I would choose just one social media platform to keep track of.
3. Your goal is to find out if these stories are real and worth sharing or if they are just fake news.
4. Use the tips on page 3 to help determine the difference
5. Take notes on any trends you noticed and jot down a few thoughts. You will use them later.

Supplies:

1. Computer with internet access
2. Pen and paper

Step 5 Become a Citizen Journalist

1. You have done the work researching and tracking the articles your friends and family share. Now try your hand at communicating truthful information by using your notes and stats to write an informative article about your experience and what you have learned.
2. Make sure to fact check your own information and give credit to any sources you use.

Supplies:

1. Your notes and stats
2. Computer with internet access

Step 3. Be a wise consumer

1. Seek truth in advertising, easier said than done especially now with the rise of Instagram influencers. Do influencers post about products because they like them or because they have been paid to promote them?
2. Take a look at the Federal Trade Commission, a governmental agency created to protect the consumer. The FTC has guidelines that regulate how sponsored content must be labeled. Go to their website and take a look at the guidelines. [bit.ly/FTCguidesFAQs](https://www.ftc.gov/ftcguidesFAQs)
3. Write down some of the guidelines for sponsored content and go through your Instagram feed. Can you spot the endorsed posts? Is it always obvious? What are some ways Instagram Influencers are making it less obvious that something is an ad?

Supplies:

1. Internet access
2. computer

BREAKING NEWS CONSUMER'S HANDBOOK

FAKE NEWS EDITION

1. Big red flags for fake news: ALL CAPS, or obviously photoshopped pics.
2. A glut of pop-ups and banner ads? Good sign the story is pure clickbait.
3. Check the domain! Fake sites often add “.co” to trusted brands to steal their luster. (Think: “abcnews.com.co”)
4. If you land on an unknown site, check its “About” page. Then, Google it with the word “fake” and see what comes up.
5. If a story offers links, follow them. (Garbage leads to worse garbage.) No links, quotes, or references? Another telltale sign.
6. Verify an unlikely story by finding a reputable outlet reporting the same thing.
7. Check the date. Social media often resurrects outdated stories.
8. Read past headlines. Often they bear no resemblance to what lies beneath.
9. Photos may be misidentified and dated. Use a reverse image search engine like TinEye to see where an image *really* comes from.
10. Gut check. If a story makes you angry, it's probably designed that way.
11. Finally, if you're not sure it's true, don't share it! *Don't. Share. It.*

ON **[THE MEDIA]**

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