

Lesson Plan for News Literacy/Misinformation

Note to instructors: The following lesson plan includes several activities clustered together on the related topics of news literacy, misinformation, and fact checking. Because these topics are so interconnected, it can be especially helpful to expose students to these concepts together. Depending on the amount of time you have in a particular class session, you may choose to complete these activities together, or to string them together in a series of classes. To save class time and focus it on the activities themselves, it is recommended that students complete the related InfoLit – Core tutorials outside of class time. This will also help provide them with a foundation in the terminology and core concepts related to these topics that will allow the suggested activities to be completed at a higher level.

Introduction

Begin by brainstorming with students about where they get their information about news and current events. This will help establish a baseline of information seeking behaviors and provide a foundation to build on when students go through the tutorials and activities.

Do a chalk talk or group discussion using the following questions:

- What types of sources do they use? (Social media, news sites, friends/word of mouth, newspapers or magazines, radio, television, etc.)
- What, if anything, do students do to determine the reliability of a source?
- What, if anything, do students do to fact check the information in a source?

News Literacy: Small Group Activity

Learning Outcome: By the end of this activity, students will be able to identify the features of a source that make it credible in order to critically evaluate the claims made in the source. Students will also be able to apply research skills to verify information in the original source in order to make evidence-based decisions about its reliability.

Before the activity, it is recommended that students complete the *News Literacy* tutorial.

Begin by splitting the class up into small groups and assigning each group a current event topic. Each group will complete the following steps:

- Classify the type and purpose of information
- Analyze author and publication credentials (remind students here using lateral reading)
- Highlight the main argument of the text
- Make note of the presence of advertisements
- Look for coverage on the topic by two credible sources.
- Compare the original source with coverage by other publications

Misinformation: Small Group Activity

Learning Outcome: By the end of this activity, students will be able to define misinformation and evaluate its impact on readers in order to assess how specific examples of information should be verified.

Before this activity, it is recommended that students complete the *Misinformation* tutorial.

- **Part 1:** Start by asking students to write a definition of misinformation. Students should then provide a short list of consequences of misinformation being spread widely. Note: if you provide specific examples, be sure to use the “truth sandwich” technique (fact-misinformation-fact) to avoid students fixating on the false information.
- **Part 2:** Provide students with short excerpts of text that lack support of credible evidence, such as a tweet, and ask them whether they would share this information with a friend. Students should be able to explain why/why not and brainstorm at least one type of source they would use to verify the information (such as a subject expert).

Fact-Checking: Class Activity

Learning Outcome: By the end of this activity, students will be able to identify the types of information verified during the fact-checking process in order to thoroughly fact-check an example text. Students will also be able to identify credible types of sources in order to determine possible sources of fact verification.

Before this activity, it is recommended that students complete the *Fact-Checking* tutorial.

Present students with a short article from a magazine or newspaper—ideally this source would include a mix of facts requiring verification such as names and title, years, and quotes. This activity works best if the original source can be annotated in real-time based on students’ answers to the following questions.

- What are the facts presented in the original source? (Students should be able to point to the types of information fact-checkers typically verify.)
- Where would you go to verify the factual information in the source? (Students should be able to brainstorm examples of primary sources and subject experts.)

News Literacy: Individual assignment

Learning Outcome: Upon completion of this assignment, students will have a deeper understanding of the role bias plays in the creation of information. Students will also be able to evaluate sources of information from different points of view in order to evaluate which source(s) best support the journalistic values of accuracy and objectivity.

Divide students into 2-3 groups. Each group should be provided with a current event topic to explore. Using the [Media Bias Rating](#) table, students will search for three articles, one from each of the three categories, and compare how their topic is covered in each.

Students should be able to describe how the publication's bias may have colored the way facts were presented. Students should also be able to explain which article(s) they believe follows journalistic best practices related to accuracy and objectivity.