



Spot Fake News and Unreliable Information Online

KS3 Ages 11-14 ⌚ 3 min read

Why Does It Matter?

Every day, we read news stories, watch videos, and see posts online. But not all of this information is **true**. Some websites spread **false information**, either by accident or on purpose. Learning to spot unreliable information is like becoming a detective—it keeps you safe from being fooled and helps you make better decisions.

When you believe fake news, you might feel worried about things that aren't real, or make choices based on lies. That's why checking your sources matters.

Check the Source

The first thing to ask is: **Where did this information come from?** Is it from a well-known news organisation like the **BBC** or **Reuters**? Or is it from a random website or social media account with no name?

Think of it like getting medicine—you'd trust a **doctor** more than a stranger on the street, right? The same goes for news!

Look for **author names** and check if they've written other reliable articles. Big news organisations have **editors** and **fact-checkers** who review stories before publishing them.

Look for Evidence

Good journalism includes **evidence**. This means real quotes from real people, links to studies, or photos that prove what the article claims. If a story makes a huge claim but has no proof, be suspicious.

Ask yourself: Does the article explain **where** the information came from? Are there multiple sources saying the same thing? Or is it just one person's opinion without facts?

Check Your Feelings

Fake news often tries to make you **angry, scared, or excited** very quickly. Real news gives you facts, but unreliable information uses **emotions** to trick you into sharing it without thinking.

Think of it like a magic trick—if you're too excited or upset, you don't notice how it works. Stop and ask: Why am I feeling this way?

Use Fact-Checking Websites

Websites like **Full Fact** and **Snopes** specialise in checking whether famous claims are true. If you're unsure about something, try searching for it on these sites. They explain what's real and what's misleading.

Ask an Adult

If something confuses you or seems too wild to be true, ask a **parent, teacher, or librarian**. They can help you evaluate whether information is reliable. There's no shame in asking—even grown-ups check their sources!