Lesson plan

Fake news: Can you spot it?

Topic

- Learning how to identify fake websites

Aims

- To expand knowledge of vocabulary related to news and the media
- To raise students' awareness of fake news through discussion and reading
- To develop students' 21st-century skills, including critical thinking, collaboration and media literacy

Age/level

Older teens B1+

Time

45–60 minutes

Materials

1. Worksheet
2. High-tech classes: Use the internet. Send students to the three websites online.
   Low-tech classes: Make photocopies of the three website pages and hand them out to students.

Introduction

Ideally this lesson is for teenagers, but it can also be used with adults. The lesson begins with a brief discussion about news and fake news.

Students then skim read three web pages. One website is a fake Facebook profile of a well known gastronomy chef - Gordon Ramsay, the other is a fake web page where the information is shared, and the last one is an authentic culinary web-site where the myth is busted. After a brief reading comprehension activity, students study the websites, using a set of questions to help them. The goal is to discover which one is the fake website and why it's fake!

Procedure

1. Lead-in (5–10 minutes)	• Tell the class that today's lesson is about real and fake news websites. • Hand out the worksheet. Ask students to answer Q1 in small groups. • Bring the class back together. Elicit the meaning of 'fake news'.

	• Encourage students to come up to the board and write a simple definition. Use prompts to help them develop a more complete definition as a class, e.g. Is it deliberate? Is it always a complete lie or does it contain some true elements? Where do you find it? How is it spread? Why is it done? Read out a definition. Answer key Fake news: the deliberate spreading of misinformation or hoaxes spread via traditional print and broadcast news media or online media. Fake news is written and published usually with the intent to mislead in order to damage an agency, entity or person, and/or gain financially or politically, often using sensationalist, dishonest or outright fabricated headlines and images to increase readership. (Wikipedia) Fake news: false stories that appear to be news, spread on the internet or using other media, usually created to influence political views or as a joke. (Cambridge Dictionary)
2. Reading (5–10 minutes)	• Introduce Q2 of the worksheet. Tell the class that they are going to skim read three website pages. (Important: don't explain yet that one is fake.) • Send students to the websites (high-tech) or give them the photocopies (low-tech). https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100090210486372 https://soo2023.my.canva.site/ https://www.greatbritishchefs.com/features/gruyere-fish-cheese-recipes • Set a time limit. Monitor and help students as they read the websites quickly, looking for specific information. Discourage them from spending a long time looking up unknown vocabulary. Then briefly check the answers.

3. Discovery activity (15–20 minutes)	• Lead students into Q3. Explain that one of the three websites was fake! Invite them to guess which one, but don't give away the answer! • Turn to p.2 of the worksheet and explain that we can use five W-questions to help us validate websites. Pre-teach some useful vocabulary from the W-questions: credible/genuine/authentic/legitimate, suspicious, sensational, source, layout, URL, headline, reverse Google image search, Photoshop. • Ask students to work in groups. Tell them to apply the W-questions to the three websites in order to find out which one is fake. Students make notes of the evidence that shows the fake one. Note: students can divide up the W-questions between them to make the activity quicker and easier.

4.Verdict activity (mythbusting activity) (5–10 minutes)	• Finally, as a whole class, elicit the answers. Ask: Which one is fake? How do you know? Elicit the evidence that proves it's fake (1. The URL is incomplete; 2. the content – see the section on history – is sensational and not credible; 3. the images consist entirely of artwork and Photoshopped images – a reverse image search shows this; 4. there is no 'About Us' section or contact information on the page;
	
	• Ask students: Did you guess it was fake? How? What do you think of the quality of the fake website?Let students to agree/disagree with the final verdict. Show to students the credible and authentic web-sites(web pages) to confirm the verdict:
	    • https://piermarket.com/news-events/fish-and-cheese/
	    • https://www.allrecipes.com/article/its-ok-to-pair-fish-with-cheese/
	    • https://www.nestle-family.com/en/mythbusters/eating-fish-and-dairy-together-same-meal-toxic

5. Project (or homework) (5–10 minutes)	• Engage students to think about creating fake news using the following online tools:
	    • https://breakyourownnews.com/
	    • https://www.homemade-gifts-made-easy.com/newspaper-generator.html
	    • https://www.classtools.net/breakingnews/