

# Teach Your Students or Yourself How to Evaluate News by Using Fact Checkers

Collected and organized by The Minnesota Alliance for Geographic Education Member Fred Kunze

## **A General Introduction to Evaluating for Fake Information** (YouTube Video 15:31)

An enthusiastic and accurate introduction, complete with a game and many examples for your students to use for decision making, presented by fairly young people.

## **NPR—Fake Or Real? How to Self-Check The News And Get The Facts** (All Tech Considered, 201)

<https://www.npr.org/sections/alltechconsidered/2016/12/05/503581220/fake-or-real-how-to-self-check-the-news-and-get-the-facts>  
This is a good introduction with specific skill tips from National Public Radio.

## **Common Sense Education: Help Your Students Fat-Check the Web Like Professionals**

<https://www.common sense.org/education/teaching-strategies/turn-students-into-fact-finding-web-detectives>

This site has a short introductory video and (scroll down) numerous links to free topic videos as well as downloadable, printable resources for students. Of course there are lesson plans and activities.

## **What Do You Do If You See Fishy Headlines?** (from RealSimple)

<https://www.realsimple.com/work-life/technology/fact-check-internet>

The first thing is to Google (or any search engine) the EXACT headline. You should immediately see links debunking it if it is fake.

## **10 Tips to Avoid (Spreading) FakeNews During a Crisis:** from "Make Use Of"

<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/quickly-avoid-fake-news-unfolding-crisis/>

**Note:** the list below includes the titles used on the site above. There is usually a paragraph of explanatory text about each title.

1. Examine the Source
2. Consider the Article's Quality
3. Trace the Information to the Source
4. Use Fact Checking Resources
5. Beware of Fake Images and Videos
6. Don't Share Without Thinking
7. Include Verifiable Information When You Post
8. Contest FakeNews When You See It
9. Read Reputable Sources In The First Place
10. Stay calm During Developing Crises

## **Wikipedia List of Fact Checking Sites and Comments About Those Sites**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_fact-checking\\_websites#United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_fact-checking_websites#United_States)

[Media Bias/Fact Check](#) is a web site that rates factual accuracy and political bias in news media. The site classifies most media sources on a political bias spectrum, as well as on the accuracy of their factual reporting.

[PolitiFact](#):—A service of the [Tampa Bay Times](#) - Created August 2007, uses the "Truth-o-Meter" to rank the amount of truth in public persons' statements. 2009 [Pulitzer Prize](#) Winner.

[Snopes](#) focuses on, but is not limited to validating and debunking urban legends and other stories.

[Full Fact](#):—An independent fact-checking organization based in the UK which aims to "promote accuracy in public debate", launched in 2009. Full Fact also goes further than fact checks and even provides a fact-checking toolkit. The site also pushes for corrections from publishers when they publish incorrect or misleading information.

[FactCheck.org](#) and [FactCheckEd.org](#): These are [non-partisan](#), nonprofit sister websites that are self-described "advocates for voters that aims to reduce the level of deception and confusion in U.S. politics," **and serving as an educational resource for high school teachers and students**, respectively (the latter founded 2005). They are projects of the [Annenberg Public Policy Center](#) of the [Annenberg School for Communication](#) at the [University of Pennsylvania](#), and are funded primarily by the [Annenberg Foundation](#).

[TruthOrFiction.com](#) is one of the longest-running fact-checking sites out there. While it initially focused on looking at internet hoaxes and rumors, it has extended its range to include general fake news as well. This includes political stories and viral content. The website gives stories various ratings to reflect their reliability. These include ratings such as true, fiction, unknown, decontextualized, or variations thereof. The analyses of rumors or stories look at the origins of these stories, whether there are elements of truth, and where stories may have gone astray (such as decontextualizing truth).

[Lead Stories](#) is a lesser-known website that helps users fact-check information. The website debunks fake news across a variety of beats, including entertainment, tech, politics, and international news. The website also uses the Trendolizer search engine to monitor trending content—using these results to identify trending fake news. Depending on certain criteria, the site then debunks any trending hoaxes or false information using objective sources.

**Hoax Slayer—Hoax Slayer** is another reliable website that you can use to check out the latest online hoaxes. It focuses primarily on the type of hoaxes and misinformation shared on social media, such as Facebook scams, viral privacy policy hoaxes, phishing scams, and social network rumors. The site mostly stays away from fact-checking politicians, considering there are a number of other sites that do this already. However, it does debunk certain fake news stories with a political agenda. One example includes debunking a WhatsApp message that claimed a billboard in Zimbabwe claimed white people can be killed in South Africa with no consequence, encouraging people to get in touch with South Africa's ruling party to see how. Hoax Slayer is also a much smaller website than others on this list, owned and run by Australian

Brett M. Christensen. Despite this, the site has a stellar rating from MBFC for its factual reporting and neutrality.

### How To Check Out Internet Images

**TinEye** is a site where you can drag and drop an image and the site will provide an immediate list of where else that image appeared. Sometimes you can find when the image first appeared. You might also be able to find an earlier version of the image and compare it to a later version to detect if it has been altered. What is really nice about this site is that it is free, easy to use, fast, and does not require you to sign up or open any account!

**Google Images** is a site where you can drag and drop an image, or browse your desktop for one, and Google will find similar images on the Internet. When you get to the main page by clicking on the title of this paragraph, you will see a camera icon and a magnifying glass icon in the search area. Enter text, browse for an image, drag and drop an image. Fast, free, easy to use, download nothing, sign up for nothing. A YouTube video, **located here**, explains how to use Google Images.

**NooBox** is an Open Source, free site which has several more powerful features than TinEye or Google Images. However, it works on Chrome, and must be downloaded. The benefits are that it uses multiple search engines and has advanced features for finding images or even videos from a screen shot of a video. I did not find it as easy to use at the other two above.

### Tools For Verifying Social Media Videos

(In several ways, videos are the most difficult media to fact check)

10 Tips from ICFN for Verifying Social Media Videos

<https://www.factcheckingday.com/articles/13/10-tips-for-verifying-viral-social-media-videos>

This is a big site which works internationally to promote media literacy. It is the "International Fact-Checking Network" from Poynter. The first stuff you will see is a list of ten tips with a sentence or two and some links out to other sources. **A set of 8 videos about fact checking is located here**. Look in the top for "**Lesson Plan**" as another resource. You can download the lesson in English, Italian, Portuguese or Spanish! You will need to give them some minimum information and then click on a link or to before you get access to the lesson plan. That part will take only a minute.

Bellingcat's Online Investigation Toolkit

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BfLPJpRtyq4RFtHJoNpvWQjmGnyVkfE2HYoICKOGguA/edit#heading=h.tj5dec9psy05>

This site has tables with links to tools for checking a variety of media and evaluations of that tool. Maps and data visualization are included. The site links go far beyond media, with names such as "Transportation" and "Water" and "Phone Numbers". Many similar tools are included in the same content type table. The types of content in the various tables range widely, not just social media. I don't know how old this site is, but it is detailed and complete.