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Unit Framework

Media Education "Fake News"

Age: 12 - 17

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anthropolis



INTRODUCTION

This unit can be used for the following subjects: German (respectively national language), Digital Basic Education, Ethic or Religious Education.

In this lesson, students will engage with the topic of “Fake News”. Students realise how easy it is to create false news, to create and reinforce stereotypes by spreading false news. This encourages them to critically question (alleged) news and to research further sources if necessary and improves their media literacy.

Tips from youth workers on how to work on the topic of “Fake News” with young people can be found in the appendix.

If the use of smartphones is not allowed in school or in your class during lessons, announce in the lesson before that they may be used exceptionally in the next lesson. However, not every student needs a smartphone for the exercises. Devices can be shared or laptops/PCs can be used.

The whole unit can take place in the classroom or also in the IT room, if available.

Step 1: MOTIVATION

Preparation:

Teachers bring some printed articles, posts, headlines, etc. (true ones and fake ones) from newspapers, magazines and from the internet to put on the table(s) as “requisites” for the students to look through and as inspiration/stimulation for the brainstorming exercise. If possible, some articles should contain photos.

The teacher briefly explains what the topic of today's lesson is and distributes the articles in the classroom.

Here some links to trustworthy websites (German):

<https://www.suedwind-magazin.at/>

<https://science.apa.at/power-search/18076698162213588401>

Fact checks on rumours and fake news circulating on the internet (German): <https://www.mimikama.at/>

You can find useful fake articles on almost any topic on satire sites.



Satire website for “Fake News” examples (German):

<https://dietaagespresse.com/>

<https://www.der-postillon.com/2015/09/munchen-zeltstadt-auf-theresienwiese.html>

Tips:

- Satire articles, even though often very well made, might be too obvious for more experienced students. Teachers could also choose different quality of articles or articles with conflicting opinions/highlights on one topic.

Different styles of articles (e.g. comments, in-depth reports, interviews, etc.) or social media posts could also be used to talk about the difference of intentional or unintentional "Fake News", common facts or opinions.

- When choosing articles (in this section or later) teachers should consider the group they are working with and try not to trigger hard feelings or divide the group into affected and unaffected (in-group and out-group). E.g. the topic of migration is often a heated topic in public media and retraumatization of students might happen, when exposed to a certain kind of discourse.

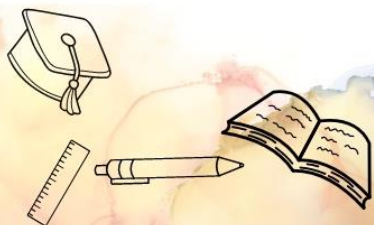
Activity 1

Lie Detector-game in pairs:

The children go together in pairs. Both children in a group come up with a true story and a realistic but invented story about what they did/experienced last weekend.

Instruction for the children:

- Work with a partner.
- Think about: a true event and a fictional event that could be true.
- One partner begins to tell the story.
- The other one has to guess: What is true, what is invented?
Observe the face, body and language very carefully! Can you find out the true story?
- Then you change roles.



This activity shows that it is often easier to recognise a made-up story when it is told to you face to face. But what about stories you read on the internet, in social media and also in print media, which may also be accompanied by fake photos?

If some students do not want to participate, they can go through the “requisites” and guess, if they read true or “Fake News”.

Activity 2

Brainstorming:

The class is divided into several groups. Every group gets a large piece of paper or a baking paper sheet.

On the one hand, there should not be too many groups for time reasons, as the thoughts are then transferred to a common poster, but also not too large groups, so that all pupils have the opportunity to formulate their thoughts.

Now the students write down everything they can think of on the term “Fake News” (for example, let them create a mind map, if students are familiar with this method).

Possible questions for reflection:

- What do you think of when you hear the term “Fake News”?
- What do you associate with “Fake News”?
- Is “Fake News” very widespread in our country?
- Where does “Fake News” come from and by whom?
- Why does “Fake News” exist?
- For what reason is it spread?
- What kind of consequences can the distribution of “Fake News” have?

The teacher tells the students in an appreciative way that all contributions are valid.

The results are hung up. Then the Students decide together what is essential for the topic of “Fake News”. The teacher (as the moderator) underlines these words/groups of words with colour. One pupil transfers the underlined key words onto a second poster, which is finally hung up in the class.





Here the question could be: Which keywords have a lot to do with “Fake News”?

Step 2: INPUT PRESENTATION

Activity 3

The teacher divides the pupils into two equal groups.
After the activity the pupils from group 1 and group 2 go together in pairs.

Instruction:

- Group 1 watches a video clip (youtube video, see link below). The short video explains in simple language why “Fake News” is spread, what consequences it has and how to recognise it.

For group 2 there are 2 options to choose from:

- Group 2 prepares interview questions and interviews group 1 about the video after they watched it. Questions that can not be answered, will be noted and discussed in the plenary.

Tip: Teachers can prepare interview questions OR interview techniques upfront and hand it to the students for preparation.
Students can also do research on “How to conduct an interview”.

or

- Group 2 prepares another video (see link below) and partners from group 1 and 2 try to find similarities or differences in an exchange afterwards.

Tip: Teachers can prepare appropriate questions and offer them in the form of cued cards, for example, if needed.

Examples: “What was the core information in your video?”, “What are the similarities of the videos?”, “Were there any differences?”, “Is there a common definition of “Fake News”?”

Tip: At the end of the activity students can try to note as many signs for “Fake News” as possible together, a full list could be handed out later.

The teacher asks if everything has been understood and if there are terms that need to be clarified. These terms are then written on the blackboard or a flipchart. The smartphones can be used to research the terms.

Youtube videos about “Fake News” explained for kids (in German):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5uQDOlwjHtg>



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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v6nQ_bq3xl4

Youtube videos about “Fake News” explained for kids (in English):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RDOFt1tFYx8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0vjar1iqK-c>

Step 3: FOCUS

Activity 4

True or false activity:

This can be completed in writing or offered as a Kahoot quiz:

<https://kahoot.com/>

The students stay in the same pairs as in activity 3 and answer the questions together.

	True	False
News or stories that come with a photo are true		X
One reason why “Fake News” are produced is to make money	X	
People who produce “Fake News” only want to inform others neutrally about their own ideas and beliefs		X
Headlines in capital letters and with many exclamation marks are an indicator of a true story.		X
Another indicator of a true story is when other major websites also report on it	X	
Lots of pop ups and banner ads are a good indicator that the story you are reading is fake	X	



A rule of thumb is: "If you believe a story to be true, just post it"		X
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Optionally, this quiz can also be answered online by the students (in German, higher level): <https://www.bpb.de/kurz-knapp/deine-taegliche-dosis-politik/308472/das-quiz-zu-fake-news/>

Step 4: PRACTICE

Activity 5

The questions addressed here are:

- How to recognise “Fake News”?
- Who creates “Fake News” and why?
- What are the consequences of “Fake News”?
- What to check before you post/share news/headlines?

Students work in pairs and receive 4 worksheets, which can be found in the appendix.

On worksheet 1 there are different terms and sentences from the former inputs: reasons for “Fake News”, consequences of “Fake News”, tips to recognize “Fake News” and tips on how to communicate. The terms/sentences are written in a jumbled way.

A possible tip for the students: Use different colours to underline or circle the related terms/sentences.

Worksheet 2 (a-c) shows a blank graph. The groups should fill it in correctly using the terms from worksheet 1.

Instead of using worksheet 2 (a-c), the students can also draw their own meaningful and useful graphics.

At the end of the activity the graphics can be hung up in the classroom and the results can be discussed in the plenary.

Tips on how to recognise “Fake News” (German):

<https://www.jugendportal.at/factorfake/fake-news-erkennen>

Tips on how to recognise “Fake News” (English):

<https://www.kaspersky.com/resource-center/preemptive-safety/how-to->



[identify-fake-news](#)

Possible consequences of “Fake News” (German):

<https://www.frieden-fragen.de/entdecken/gewalt-im-netz/was-sind-fake-news/warum-sind-fake-news-gefaehrlich.html>

General Information about “Fake News” and kids (English):

<https://www.unicef.org/globalinsight/media/2096/file/UNICEF-Global-Insight-Digital-Mis-Disinformation-and-Children-2021.pdf>

Step 5: LANGUAGE

Activity 6

“Manifesto of Non-Hostile Communication”

The “Manifesto of Non-Hostile Communication” created by *Parole stili* in Italy and translated into many languages, is a commitment to shared responsibility and aims to promote respectful and civilised online behaviour. The Manifesto can also be used to start a discussion about non-hostile communication within the classroom.

The students read the “Manifesto of Non-Hostile Communication” and a discussion about it is held in the plenary.

Questions might be:

- "Do you agree with these ten rules?"
- "Would you add something?"
- "Would you delete something?"
- "Is this also how you communicate in the classroom?"
- “How do you feel about the communication in the classroom? Do you feel that some agreements would help to develop the communication?"
- "How is communication with teachers?"
- "Is something unclear?"

The teacher can provide language chunks in the form of cued cards that are useful to express your opinion.

Examples: In my opinion... I think...I guess...I’m not sure but...What do you think?...Do you agree?...I feel...

The manifesto can then be hung up in the classroom.

Link to the Manifesto in multiple languages:

<https://paroleostili.it/en/translations/>



Step 6: FOLLOW UP

Activity 1 for the next lesson or homework

The Teacher assigns each student if he or she should research and write a true or fake newspaper article (great way to exercise newspaper article writing - if needed, teachers can provide structures on how to write a newspaper article or let students do a research about this topic). Some topic suggestions and/or images for inspiration should be provided..

Students present their articles in class and let classmates guess if it is a true or fake story. Optionally the students who have to figure out if an article is fake or not can use smartphones to do a background check/research to confirm their guesses.

Work instruction for students:

- Be creative but do not exaggerate. Otherwise you won't be believed!

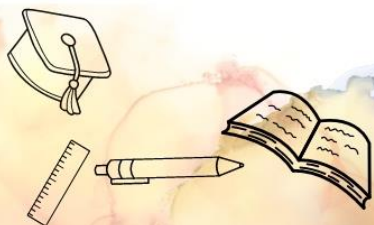
In the end the teacher tells the class the purpose of this activity. The reason is to show how easy it is to manipulate and create and spread false news and how important it is to critically analyse the report and its source.

Tip:

- For more advanced students, teachers can assign the type of manipulation students have to try to achieve and also guess out later on - *economic manipulation* (try to achieve an economic advantage for a group), *political manipulation* (try to convince people to support a certain political issue), write a *satire*. In this way students can learn what kind of and reasons for manipulation exist and that it often takes only one little word or sentence to have a big impact.
- In order to avoid retraumatization or conflict within the group, topics should be chosen that are not too controversial and do not harm participants in the group (e.g. write articles about celebrities or athletes, or more "abstract" topics like cloning or climate change).

Activity 2 for the next lesson

A wall newspaper for the classroom will be created from all the materials developed (mind maps, poster, graphics, articles, articles that have been worked on in the last activity, "The Manifesto of Non-Hostile Communication",).



Step 7: TEST/ASSESSMENT

Activity 7

The teacher hands out different articles, posts or other types of news to students to read in pairs or alone (depending on how students feel more comfortable).

They have to find out if it is “Fake News” or not (smartphones can and should be used).

Students should remember and repeat the characteristics of how to recognise “Fake News” and what to check before posting/sharing news/headlines.

The material that has been hung up in the classroom before (mind maps, poster, graphics, “The Manifesto of Non-Hostile Communication”, the blackboard, ...) can also be used as a source of information.

Under each article there is the possibility to check whether it is “Fake News” or not. Below this, the reasons why the students came to this conclusion can be listed.

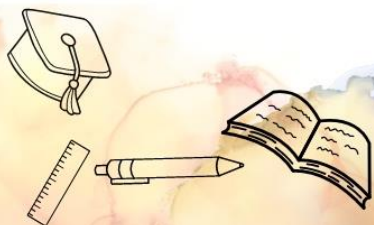
If students think it is “Fake News”, reasons and possible consequences can be listed in an optional field.

The results are collected by the teacher and returned with feedback in one of the next lessons.

Optional:

Students (in pairs or alone) can try to write their own guide on what to consider when sharing or posting on social media. Here, too, the material that has been hung up in the classroom can be used as a source of information.

The results are collected by the teacher and returned with feedback in one of the next lessons.



APPENDIX:

Youth Workers Tips:

- Start the activity by creating a SAFE SPACE and pay attention to the backgrounds of the participants
- ADAPT the exercises to the age and kind of the group and make sure that everyone is on the SAME LEVEL of KNOWLEDGE
- Give to the participant some time for REFLECTION
- Don't worry about the PATH, but be clear about the DIRECTION
- Make a SUMMARY after the activity on how to RECOGNISE fake news
- Be part of the group, be a partner, but don't forget YOUR ROLE as a moderator
- Lead the workshop with a PARTNER
- Don't make fun of the topic but HAVE FUN!

These Tips were created during the Erasmus+ project “Together – to get there” exchange meeting. The tips aim to assist youth workers and workshop facilitators to work with young people on the topic of “Fake News”.

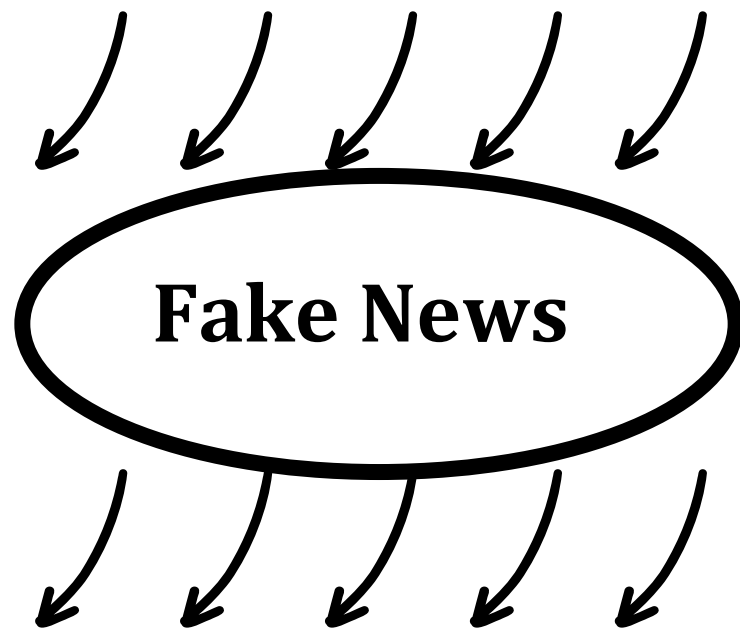




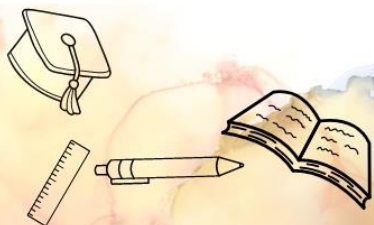
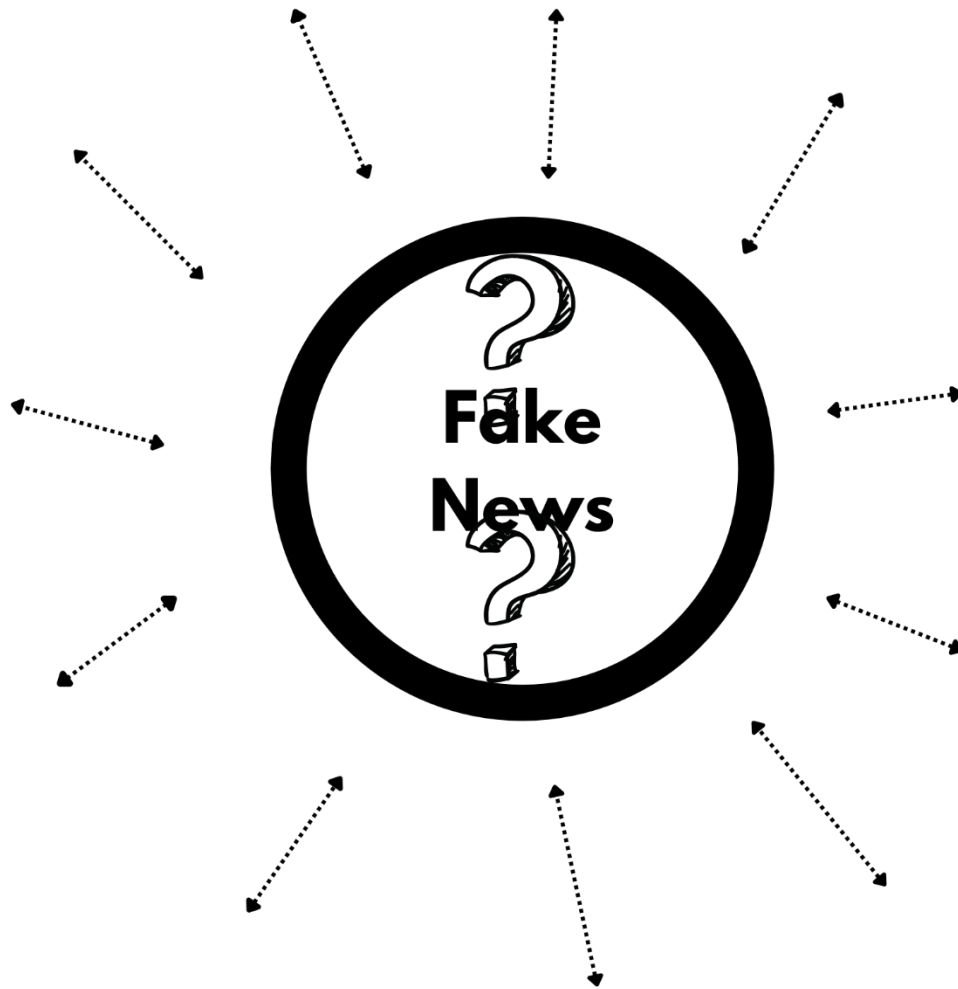
Fake News

- create sentiment against a certain person/group of people
- just ignore it!
- headlines in capitol letter, lots of exclamation marks
- facts are real-stories can be fake
- click bait
- pictures photo shopped
- weird facts
- more people see ads on a web page
- lies about a certain person/group of people are spread
- to spread own ideas/beliefs
- trustworthy source?
- no eyewitnesses
- to make money
- no quotes
- warn your friends
- lots of pop ups/banner ads
- broken links
- message hurtful/insulting to anyone?
- incomplete information in "about us" section
- no authors name
- check website adress
- weird photos
- causing problems around the world
- other sources reporting same thing?
- check date of story
- Question it!
- phoney experts
- spelling mistakes
- If you are not sure that a story is real, don't share it!
- making people believe things that are not true
- elections are influenced
- report it to an adult





Consequences How to recognise? Worksheet 2b



How to recognise?

Rule of thumb for sharing news

Worksheet 2c



Rule of thumb for sharing news



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