

FIVE WAYS TO SPOT FAKE NEWS

Use the five points below as a checklist for determining whether a story is accurate, balanced and fair

1 DOES THE STORY SOUND REALISTIC?

Sometimes, a headline sounds so unlikely that you need to question whether the story can be true. Ask yourself whether the story feels believable: could this really have happened? Check it out with an adult or teacher.

2 CAN YOU FIND THE STORY ELSEWHERE?

Does the story appear elsewhere, or can you only find it in one place? If the story is big news, it should be reported widely – in newspapers and on TV as well as online. Try searching the website of a trusted news organisation, such as the BBC, or watching a school news bulletin such as Discovery Education Espresso News.

3 DO THE FACTS ADD UP?

Do the facts of the story make sense? Can you check with a reliable news source? If basic information like names, dates and places don't add up, you probably shouldn't believe the story.

4 WHO'S BEHIND THE STORY?

The more surprising or eye-catching the news item, the more cautious you should be about believing the 'facts' it's telling you. Ask yourself – what do I know about the people behind this story? Have I heard of them? Are they a well-known news source?

5 IS THE HEADLINE WRITTEN FOR CLICKS?

TV and radio news in the UK is regulated by government body Ofcom. But websites, social media and blogs aren't subject to these standards. Making money from advertising revenue, they sometimes use false headlines to attract as many clicks as possible. If you're reading something that feels exaggerated, it could be click-bait. Don't fall into the trap!

