Spot fake news

Made-up news can be really harmful, but how do you know what's real and what's rubbish?

Fake news is the term given to false news stories that trick you into believing they are true. There are three types of fake news. The first is news people have written to mislead you on purpose. The second is spoof news. These are stories that aren't true but are written in a funny way to make you laugh, and most people know that they aren't real. The third is unintentional false news. This is when people publish or share fake news stories on social media without realising the facts are wrong.

It's not just stories that can be faked. Technology makes it easy to change photographs to look different and mislead people too. Don't worry, though. There are ways to check if what you're reading or seeing is real.

TALL STORY
In 1835, an American newspaper ran a fake news story that there were aliens on the Moon.

You can learn to sort fact from fiction.

THE WEEK JUNIOR

Here at *The Week Junior* every story that we write is checked and checked again to make sure all of the facts are correct. We only use reliable sources and have a dedicated team of production and sub-editors to make sure everything we write is completely trustworthy.

Where does the story come from?

First check that the story, or picture, comes from a website or newspaper you've heard of. You're less likely to get fake news from a trusted source you know – *The Week Junior*, for example. If the story is from somewhere you've never seen before, think twice before you believe it. Also double check the website address (URL). Some websites try to copy real news sites.

Is anyone else covering it?

If this story is only in one place, for example on a social media site, it could be fake. Check and see if other reliable news websites, such as BBC News, are also covering it and if you can find out any more information about the news story. Don't share stories on social media or with friends unless you know for sure that they are from a trusted, reliable source.

Does it contain all the facts?

Most news stories will feature trustworthy evidence from reliable sources and experts. Try to look back and trace where the news originally came from and what the facts of the piece really are. If there are no real facts in the news story then this could be a warning sign that it's not entirely true. If you're in doubt about something in the news, trust your feelings and double check the story with a trusted adult.

Do the photos look odd?

There are a few ways you can spot if a picture has been faked. Look at the shadows, do they line up? Hands and ears can often look odd if an image has been created by AI. Faces in images that have been created by a computer also look unnatural. Use your judgment; if a picture looks unusual or features a situation you find surprising, the image may have been altered.

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SCAN ME