

Examples for Evaluating Online News: Teacher Resource

This collection of links includes fake, real (but surprising or hard to believe) and problematic (where truth and error or spin combine) news stories. Since bogus stories often disappear from the internet (and sometimes real stories, too), you'll also find an archived link for each story that will remain usable even if the original link breaks. (If you need or opt to use the archived URLs, be sure to use them for all examples so they don't give away what's real and what's not.)

Use these stories as conversation starters or in conjunction with our information evaluation tools:

- [E.S.C.A.P.E. Junk News](#): A handy acronym to remember six ways to evaluate information
- [Is This Story Share-Worthy? Flowchart](#): An infographic to guide students as they weigh the value of a story and what to do with it
- [Believe It or Not? Putting the Consumer's Questions to Work](#): A set of questions to guide analysis of sources in research and beyond

IMPORTANT NOTE: Fake news sites often feature content that is inappropriate for a classroom environment. We have attempted to locate examples that will work for different ages based on the content in the story and on the surrounding page. However, ad content and other featured headlines may change over time. **DO NOT ASSUME THAT THESE EXAMPLES ARE CLASSROOM-READY.** Please carefully review your selected examples in advance to ensure they are appropriate for your students. Or, for increased content control, use screengrabs to crop and adapt the content to meet your student's needs.

Real: Middle school and up

| Title | Notes | Archived Link |
|--|-------|---|
| U.S. Navy Will Use Xbox Controllers to Steer Submarine Periscopes | | http://archive.is/aZijs |
| Why the Catholic Church Bans Gluten-Free Communion Wafers | | http://archive.is/7zJjl |
| Uber Has Just Been Barred From London | | http://archive.is/KLERI |
| Elections Judge Accused of Driving Off With Voting Equipment | | http://archive.is/AwHwK |
| Artist of Stolen \$18K Bullet-Riddled Bieber Painting Says Thief Called Him to Confess | | http://archive.is/Jhrrb |
| Ditch the Other Sports, Try Bog Snorkeling Instead | | N/A |
| Clown Candidate Running for Boston City Council | | http://archive.is/4bQ3o |
| Soon You May Be Able to Get Your Suntan From a Pill | | http://archive.is/nguke |
| Pigeons Better at Multitasking Than Humans | | http://archive.is/U5JQL |
| 15 Pounds of Frozen Italian Sausage Crashes Down on Family's Roof | | http://archive.is/ugokJ |
| Fish Fall from Sky with Rain in Northern Mexico | | http://archive.is/v2ZhL |

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|--|---|---|
| The French Have Unveiled 24/7 Oyster Vending Machines Because, of Course | Do not use if you intend to do “Cooking Up Clickbait” activity first; this story is featured there. | http://archive.is/mbBq1 |
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Real: High school and up (more mature content)

| Title | Notes | Archived Link |
|--|---|---|
| Looks Like Breitbart Really Digs the New Taylor Swift | AV Club is a nonfiction entertainment news and criticism site tied to The Onion, a satirical site with fake news. | http://archive.is/FVaUk |
| Duterte: If My Son Is Involved In Illegal Drug Trade, Kill Him | | http://archive.is/n0LOq |
| Coffee Sold in California Could Carry Cancer Warning Labels | | http://archive.is/jMWnj |
| Giant python attacks Indonesian man before being eaten | Do not use if you intend to do “Cooking Up Clickbait” activity first; this story is featured there. | http://archive.is/Rcuaz |

Fake: Middle school and up

| Title | Notes | Archived Link |
|---|---|---|
| Grandpa Nearly Dies after Girl Unplugs His Life Support So She Can Charge Her Phone | There is no about page, byline or dateline. | https://archive.is/FeZdy |
| World’s Most Popular Candy to Be Removed From Shelves by October 2017! | The foot includes the disclaimer that stories “should not be seriously taken.” | http://archive.is/kRHrN |
| New \$20 Bill Featuring Robert E. Lee to Make Early Debut in Southern U.S. | The absurd biography on the about page reveals this is a satirical website. If the story were real, we would have heard about it before. | http://archive.is/Gbcxb |
| Beyoncé, Jay Z Launch Online Contest to Determine Baby Names | This story is on the same site as above. Students can check the alleged TMZ source story; it doesn’t exist. | http://archive.is/jFSuV |
| Virginia DOT Approves \$491 Million Plan to Install Bike Lanes on Capital Beltway | There’s typo in the headline. Apply a reality check. It doesn’t make sense to put bike lanes on a highway. | http://archive.is/DccYr |
| Scientists have discovered a way to destroy cancer tumors using nothing but sound waves | The story is sourced to the eventchronicle.com, a site that provides “the latest alternative news.” | http://archive.is/vSDVb |
| Samsung Pays Apple \$1 Billion Sending 30 Trucks Full of 5 Cent Coins | This story is posted in the satire section of the website. | http://archive.is/1m8gS |
| Eclipse Blinds Thousands of Trump | There is no about page, byline or | http://archive.is/88cvB |

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| Fans After Not Believing Scientists | dateline. | |
| 12 Hurricanes Headed Toward U.S. | Scroll past the main story to find the “create a prank” button. | http://archive.is/QDfUn |

Fake: High school and up (more mature content)

| Title | Notes | Archived Link |
|--|--|--|
| House Vandalized With a CVS Receipt | The photograph doesn't look real and the author's name doesn't sound real. The website's title shows it's a humor site. | http://archive.is/8KzgN |
| UPDATE: Two Clinton Employees Arrested For Destroying Evidence As Uranium Probe Begins | The about section says that the site has “works of pure satirical fiction.” | http://archive.is/Vi751 The official site is now offline; only the archived copy can be used. |
| Carnival Cruise Lines Will Now Offer FREE Cruises | Note the bad grammar and punctuation. Scroll past the main story to find the “create a prank” button. | http://archive.is/f5gFC |
| Fox Sports Cancels All NFL Broadcasts 'Until Players Respect the Flag' | There is no byline. A quick online search reveals that there is no Holly McGee at Fox Sports. | http://archive.is/Ft6eV The official site is now offline; only the archived copy can be used. |
| NFL Fines Pittsburgh Steelers \$1M Each for Skipping National Anthem | There is no byline. There is a big emphasis on sharing the story on social media. | http://archive.is/OLH5U The official site is now offline; only the archived copy can be used. |
| AG Sessions Tells Congress He's Considering Using Guantanamo to House Drug Offenders | The about section shows it's a satirical news site. | http://archive.is/DDpQg |
| Black Lives Matter THUGS Blocking Emergency Crews From Reaching Hurricane Victims | The photo doesn't have an attribution. The byline doesn't sound real. There are typos in the text and a capitalized word in the headline. | http://archive.is/VNWE2 The official site is now offline; only the archived copy can be used. |
| 'We Blew Up WTC 7 on 9/11' CIA Agent Confesses on Deathbed | The photo doesn't have a credit. The website's footer includes the disclaimer that “anyone can write on Disclose.tv.” The about section reveals the site is “dedicated to ... alternative topics.” | http://archive.is/H9t1c |

Problematic: Middle school, high school and up

| Title | Notes | Archived Link |
|--|---|---|
| Top Scientist Tells CBS: HAARP Responsible for Recent Hurricanes | The interview clip is real, but it is several years old and manipulated and taken out of context . | http://archive.is/Kg9mV |
| When BLM Crashed the Trump Party Things Took a Turn No One Expected | This event took place, though as the banner “conservative headlines” suggests, it’s news reported to appeal to a specific audience. | http://archive.is/Vybrl |
| Jared Kushner Registered to Vote as a Woman | Although Jared Kushner was indeed registered as a woman, it turns out this was due to a database error , not what he wrote on his registration form. The headline suggests he made the error, rather than a computer system. | http://archive.is/clEtD |
| Hillary Clinton Funding is Responsible for Antifa to the Tune of \$800K | This article contains some verifiable facts about what happened to Hillary Clinton’s leftover campaign funds, but falsely characterizes the political groups partnering with Clinton’s new organization as Antifa. It also twists what the original <i>Daily Caller</i> article actually said . | http://archive.is/ZMmqj |
| Trump Warns Flu Shots Are the Greatest ‘Scam’ In Medical History | Trump did say this, but this interview is old and the article includes multiple claims about vaccinations that are patently false. | http://archive.is/Rzx8o |
| Bralley Threatened Litigation Over Chickens at Holiday Lake Vacation Home | PolitiFact offers an in-depth explanation of why the claim that this candidate “threatened litigation” does not hold up. | http://archive.is/WKKaU |
| 200 Stranded Marines Needed a Plane Ride Home, Here’s How Donald Trump Responded | Snopes has an in-depth explanation of why although these Marines did fly home in a plane that said “Trump,” Trump himself could not have sent the plane. | http://archive.is/xNM8y |
| British Schools ‘Ban’ Jesus Christ Nationwide | Although schools have decided to stop using B.C. and A.D. with dates in official texts, they have not “banned Jesus Christ.” The headline is misleading. | http://archive.is/cVwar |