

Media Literacy

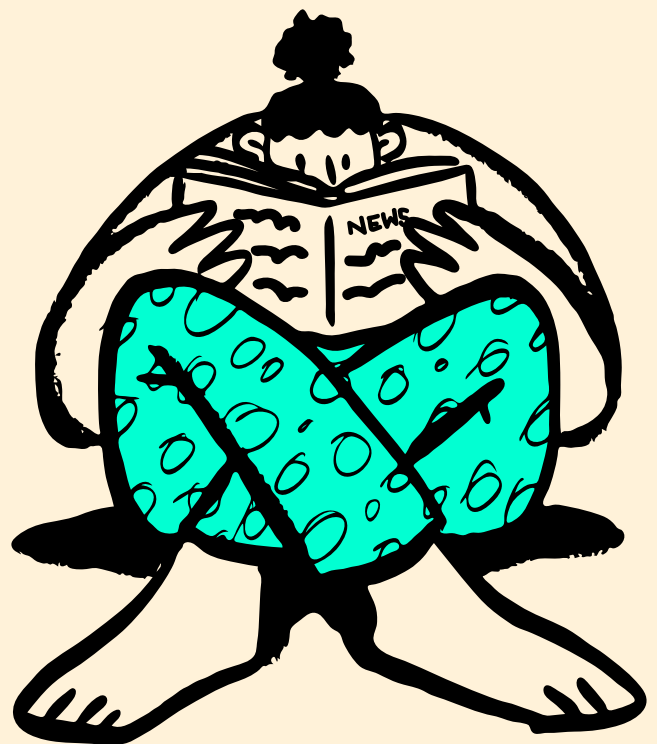
champions

Lesson 1 Is this reliable?

Years 8-10

This is the first of four lessons on digital and media literacy for years 8-10. This lesson focuses on assessing the reliability of media sources, and the impact both accurate and inaccurate media and news can have.

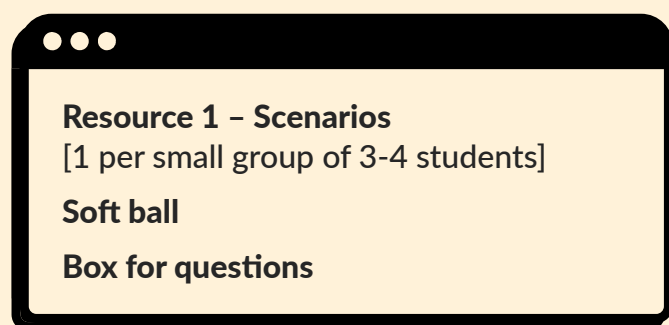
No lesson should be taught in isolation, but always as part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme. These lessons would work well as part of wider learning about life online, including managing personal and professional reputation online, and responding to harmful online behaviours.



Learning objective

To learn about the variety of media sources available and how to establish their reliability.

Resources



Learning outcomes

Students will be able to...

- identify different sources of information, online and in print
- describe features that can help people identify more reliable media
- explain that not all media is factual and that some may cause harm

Overview

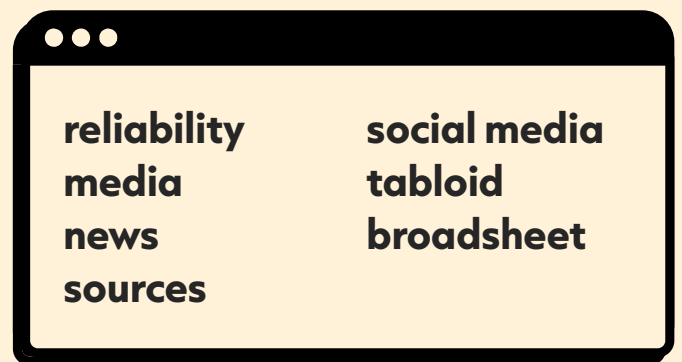
Activity	Description	Timing
Unit baseline assessment	Students complete a structured mind-map on key topics for the unit that will be revisited at the end of Lesson 4.	10 mins
Reliability continuum	Students suggest examples of sources of media and rank how reliable they believe different types of media and news sources are.	10 mins
Reliability recipe	Students create a class list of strategies to assess the reliability of a piece of news.	10 mins
Scenarios	Students identify the impact of accurate and inaccurate news on characters in fictional scenarios.	15 mins

Reflection and endpoint assessment	Students respond to key questions on how people can check if a source is reliable and the effects of unreliable media.	10 mins
Signpost support	Respond to questions and signpost students to relevant support.	5 mins

Climate for learning

Make sure you have read the accompanying teacher guidance notes before teaching this lesson. These include guidance on ground rules, the limits of confidentiality, curriculum links and relevant subject knowledge.

Key words



Unit baseline - Slides 2-4

10 mins

Using **slide 2**, establish or revisit ground rules for the lesson. Remind students of the question box and that they are welcome to add questions at any time, anonymously or with their name.

Show students **slide 3** and ask them to create a mind-map responding to the questions on the slide. As this is a baseline assessment, students should complete their mind-maps individually and without any input or prompting. The activity is intended to measure students' current understanding of misinformation, disinformation, opinion, bias and targeted information and advertising.

Circulate during the activity and identify commonalities between students' mind-maps. Do not share these commonalities with students, but use your observations to adapt teaching as required. Unless completed in an exercise book, collect in students' mind-maps and keep these safe as students will return to this at the end of Lesson 4.

Use **slide 4** to introduce the learning objective and outcomes for the lesson, explaining to students that today's lesson will explore how we can establish whether a source of news and media is reliable, and the effects that media can have.

Reliability continuum - Slides 5-11

10 mins

Show students the definition of reliability in the context of media on **slide 5**. Explain that a source is where we might find news or information.

Ask students to picture an imaginary line running across the room, with one of them being “very reliable sources” and the other end of the line being “not reliable sources”. Ask students to move to any point along the line for each of the types of media source on **slides 5-10** to show how reliable they believe each one is.

Show students **slide 11** as an overview of the types of media sources they have just considered. In pairs, ask them to think of examples of any of the types of source shown.

Students might suggest a range of examples including social media platforms such as TikTok, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook or Discord; news channels such as BBC, Sky News, or young-person-specific examples such as Newsround; blogs and podcasts created by individual people or by organisations including news organisations; broadsheet newspapers and their websites such as The Financial Times, The Guardian, The Independent or The Times; tabloid newspapers and their websites such as The Daily Mirror, The Daily Star, The Daily Mail, The Sun or The Daily Express.

Ask students to discuss the questions on **slide 11** and for volunteers to share their answers.

Key learning:

1. Reasons students may identify for judging whether a source was reliable might include familiarity with the source, which type of platform it was on, or who shared the information – for example whether the person has a title such as “Doctor”.
2. There are variations between the reliability of specific examples within the same type of media. For example, well-qualified experts on a subject may share easily digestible information on social media platforms but a lot of opinions or inaccurate information can be shared on these platforms as well. There may also be differences in the accuracy of reporting across different news channels and newspapers.
3. Some types of media may have a smaller range in how reliable their news is. For example, broadsheet newspapers that report on more in-depth news will need to follow journalistic standards in reporting so these should be factually accurate and present balanced views on an issue. This can mean they are often more reliable than tabloid newspapers that may sensationalise news or report on topics like celebrity gossip. However, critical thinking is needed when engaging with any form of news media and the next four lessons will help students to develop these skills.

Reliability recipe - Slide 12-13

10 mins

Give groups of 3-4 students a sheet of flipchart paper and markers. Ask students to think about how they rated the reliability of each example in the previous activity. In their groups ask students to write down any strategies they can think of to decide whether a source is reliable.

Take feedback from students and create a class list on the board or on a separate sheet of flipchart paper. Share the strategies on **slide 13** with students, identify if any were missing from the class list and add these now.

Key learning:

There are a variety of strategies to help people judge whether a source is reliable. This can include reading beyond the headline to explore the content of the whole article and knowing what it's about before sharing or liking, consulting multiple sources, evaluating credibility based on reputation and adherence to journalistic principles, fact-checking claims, recognising bias and perspective, assessing expertise and sources, being wary of sensationalism and headlines that seem particularly shocking, seeking transparency and accountability, and being aware that some sources such as social media may be more prone to sharing misinformation as individuals may post information and be unaware that the information is inaccurate.

Emphasise that all of the strategies on **slide 13** are helpful in deciding whether a source is trustworthy and accurate. Ask students to vote for the most important 'ingredient' of judging whether a source is reliable from the class list.

Challenge:

Ask students to consider all aspects of deciding whether something is reliable and instead of creating a recipe, create a guide on "how to decide whether to trust a source". They should decide which of the strategies are "quick wins" that someone can do while reading the article or seeing the piece of media online; and which might require more research and time.

Scenarios - Slides 14-16

15 mins

Still in their groups, ask students to read the scenarios on **Resource 1 – Scenarios** then suggest what strategies from the class reliability recipe might help the characters to decide if the news is reliable. Next, ask them to identify the impact the post might have on the people identified in the resource.

To take feedback, ask students to summarise the impacts of accurate and inaccurate media. Show **slides 15 and 16** and ask students if their responses to the scenarios are different. Use the key information below to discuss the impacts of accurate and inaccurate media.

Key learning:

- When news is accurate, it helps people make informed choices, understand the world around them, and form opinions based on facts.
- When false information is shared, it can mislead people. For example, by damaging reputations, causing unnecessary concern, creating or building upon tensions between individuals or groups, and influencing people to behave in a particular way (for example, making a purchase) based on false claims.

Support:

Ask students to focus on Nye's scenario. Ask them to:

- identify who is benefiting financially and who is losing out
- how Nye might feel if the shampoo doesn't work as well as the influencer says it will
- explain why they think the influencer might not be being truthful about the shampoo

Personal reflection and endpoint assessment – Slides 17-18

10 mins

Show students **slide 17** and ask students to suggest either a type of media, an example of one of these types, or a strategy to tell whether a source is reliable by throwing a ball to a student. Start a timer for 4 minutes, ask them to throw the ball to another student when they've given their answer. When a student catches the ball they should answer one of the questions and try to avoid repeating another student until the timer runs out.

Finally, ask students to reflect privately on the questions on slide 18. Their answers to these questions should not be shared with the class:

- How reliable do you think the different sources of media you see are?
- What questions might you need to ask yourself when viewing or reading these?

Signposting support - Slide 19

5 mins

Respond to any questions from the question box. Ensure that students know where they can seek help and advice, both now and in the future, if they are worried or concerned about what they have seen in the news or through media, including social media. Students wishing to seek further guidance can:

Speak to someone in school, such as a tutor or head of year.

Contact

Childline: www.childline.org.uk 0800 1111

Full Fact: www.fullfact.org

Extension activity - Slide 20

Script a conversation between two friends in which one friend has come across some news, and the other friend is advising them on what questions they might want to ask about the news to decide if the source is reliable.