

Media Literacy

champions

Lesson 3

Why would they say that?

Years 8-10

This is the third of four lessons on digital and media literacy for years 8-10. This lesson focuses on strategies to identify fact, opinion and bias in media and news, and the effect that media can have on people's wellbeing.

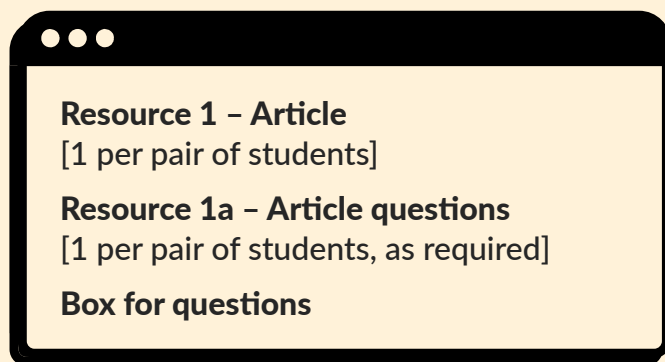
No lesson should be taught in isolation, but always as part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme. These lessons would work well as part of wider learning about life online, including managing personal and professional reputation online, and responding to harmful online behaviours.



Learning objective

To learn about how fact, opinion and bias are presented in media.

Resources



Learning outcomes

Students will be able to...

- identify whether media sources are reporting a fact or opinion
- explain how bias can affect how information is presented
- describe how media may affect wellbeing and strategies to manage concerns
- identify how what is shared online may affect others

Overview

Activity	Description	Timing
Lesson baseline assessment	Students respond to a statement about whether a story is reported in a similar way across different sources.	5 mins
Fact, bias and opinion	Students match examples of fact, bias and opinion to definitions, and then consider the role of opinions in news reporting.	10 mins
Article analysis	Students analyse a fictional article and identify statements supported by fact, unsupported statements, opinion and the bias of the writer.	20 mins

Vignettes	Students explore how characters feel coming across opinions online, and give advice to a character on how to manage discriminatory content.	15 mins
Endpoint assessment	Students return to the statement from the start of the lesson and consider if there are any changes or additions they would like to make to their response.	5 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



Lesson baseline - Slides 2-4

5 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 **slide 3** and ask students to use the prompts provided to write a response to the statement. Gauge students' starting points by circulating during the activity. This will help you to pitch the lesson appropriately

and target teaching to address gaps in understanding. Without adding to their answers, ask volunteers to share key points from their responses.

Use **slide 4** to introduce the learning objective and outcomes for the lesson, explaining that today's lesson will explore the differences between fact and opinion, how bias can affect how information is reported, and how media can affect people's wellbeing.

Fact, bias and opinion - Slides 5-6

10 mins

Show students **slide 5** and in pairs ask them to match each term to a definition and an example. Take feedback, and use the animations on the slide to share answers.

Then ask students to read the question on **slide 6**: “Is it more important for a news article to be factually correct without opinions, or to engage readers with a range of viewpoints by sharing opinions?” Students should spend one minute thinking about what they believe about this on their own, before sharing with a partner. Then ask volunteer pairs to summarise their thoughts to the class.

Key learning:

- The purpose of the news is to share factual, evidence-based information on current affairs. This gives readers accurate information about what is happening locally, nationally or globally. However, sometimes the facts in a story can be hard to gather, or don't always become clear at once; especially now that news is live, 24-hour or 'rolling', meaning more speculation is introduced. Facts also sometimes need to be interpreted into a coherent story, and this is one of the roles journalists provide.
- News should present balanced opinions because it helps people to be aware of the range of viewpoints on a topic. However, many sources of news will have some level of bias, for example, they may tailor their content to people who support some political views over others.
- Opinion pieces should be clearly positioned as such in newspapers so they're not mistaken for factual reporting and people can read the piece while being aware that someone's personal opinions will influence their perspective.
- If news only shares one perspective, it can be like hearing only one side of a story, leading to a limited understanding of the truth or limiting the opinions people are likely to form.
- By sticking to facts or offering different opinions, news allows people to make informed decisions and form their own opinions, as well as seeing the bigger picture if a range of viewpoints are explored.

Article analysis - Slides 7-8

20 mins

In pairs, ask students to read the fictional article about a music award in **Resource 1: Article**.

Please note: The article, organisations mentioned and statistics quoted are fictional.

Ask students to underline any sections they think are factual, and put brackets around any sections that are expressing the writer's opinion.

Students should then answer the key questions on **slide 7** in their books.

Take feedback from students on which sections they think are factual and which are opinions. Use **slide 8** to highlight examples of facts, opinions and identified sources shared in the article, as well as the bias and potential motivation of the writer.

Take feedback from students on the key questions using the key learning points below to support discussion.

Key learning:

1. It is neither misinformation nor disinformation. As the facts have been accurately quoted and the sources for these statistics named, it's unlikely that the writer of this article is attempting to spread disinformation. This article is an opinion piece and has a heading that identifies it as such.
2. Opinion pieces can help people explore their own opinions, e.g. whether they agree with the writer or if their opinion varies.

However, the article doesn't leave room for other people's views, but instead asserts their opinion as correct and is dismissive of potential other opinions. In this case, the writer discusses the positives of UK hip-hop, but is dismissive of UK rock.

In some cases, this can limit people's understanding of the range of views about a topic which exist in wider society. It might overly influence them to make particular decisions, affect their views or make them feel isolated in their view.

3. The writer of this article states that they enjoy hip-hop and that they've made hip-hop music themselves. They are biased towards wanting to see a UK hip-hop artist celebrated on an international level.

However, writers don't always share what their preferences and biases are, so it's down to readers to decide whether it's likely that there are other views on the matter and explore what these might be. With some news outlets or articles, readers can assume a bias because of where they are published (as discussed in the prior activity).

4. The writer is trying to persuade readers to vote for the UK hip-hop entry to an International Music Award. Persuasive media is often shared to influence a reader's decisions and attitudes to the benefit of someone else.

For example, to increase or decrease votes for a political party, create tension between different groups in society, or to persuade someone to buy a particular product.

Considering why an article has been created can help people to decide whether it's trying to influence their decisions.

Support:

Give students **Resource 1a: Article questions** which shows a simplified version of the article, and ask them to answer the questions on the sheet.

Challenge:

Ask students to rewrite the opinion aspects of the article so that other perspectives are given and the article is more balanced.

Vignettes - Slides 9-10

15 mins

Show students the vignettes on **slide 9**. In pairs, ask them to suggest how each character might feel in response to the media they've come across. To take feedback, click on each vignette on the slide and discuss any similarities or differences in the feelings students identified.

Show students the strategies for managing disinformation or hateful content on **slide 10**, and ask students to consider either Farah or Tia's vignette. In their pairs, ask students to imagine that Farah or Tia have gone to a friend for advice on what to do about what they have seen. Students should choose a strategy they think is most appropriate for responding to the content, and script the advice that the friend could give to Farah and Tia.

Key learning:

- Content shared online and through news media can have an impact on others. This could be reassuring, for example in Magda's scenario. Alternatively it could be upsetting or disheartening, as in the cases of Farah and Tia.
- There are a range of strategies to manage disinformation or hate speech such as sexist comments in media (including news media). For example, content can be reported to bodies such as Ofcom, or to social media platforms who might remove the content.

- If someone chooses to share their own thoughts in response to content they've seen, it's important that they don't inadvertently spread the disinformation or hateful content further by replying in comments or by sharing it with their response. This is because if this is online a number of social media platforms use algorithms which may cause this to be shared even further.

Challenge:

Students should script advice to both Farah and Tia, and should justify why they think this strategy is most appropriate for this character in their script.

Endpoint assessment - Slide 11

5 mins

Show **slide 11**. On their own, ask students to make any additions or changes to their earlier response to show their progress within the lesson. If they have the same view now as they did at the start of the lesson, encourage

students to further justify or explain their view, perhaps adding new examples. It may help to remind them of the learning outcomes for this lesson.

Signposting support - Slide 17

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 media content, misinformation and disinformation, or what they've seen on 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

Ofcom: www.ofcom.org.uk

[ThinkUKnow from NCA-CEOP](#) has guidance on how to report content on different social media platforms

Extension activity - Slide 13

Students choose a story, TV show or film and summarise the plot, but only say what happened factually without giving an opinion. See the BBFC for information on which films are suitable for different age groups: www.bbfc.co.uk

Ask students to reflect on how easy or difficult it is to write without including any opinions.