



# CHECK YOUR FACTS

News, Facts, Opinions  
and 'Fake News'



# ABOUT

## What is 'fake news'?

02

Here are the kinds of skills which are Important for this activity:

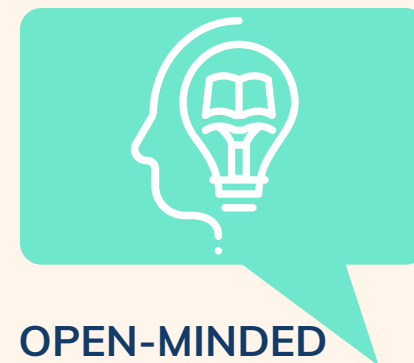
This activity pack will help you think about the news & media coverage you see every day - on Israel/Palestine and a host of other issues. Some of the interesting questions you'll explore:

- What's the difference between facts & opinions?
- What is 'Fake News'?
- What tools can help me check facts?

You can have a go at completing this on your own, but if there is someone who can work on it with you, give it a go together! You could also work in-class in groups, or with others on video-calls.



REASONING



OPEN-MINDED



SCEPTICISM



SPEAKING UP

**Let's get started!**





# WARM UP

## Why is this important?

03

For many reasons - being able to trust what we're reading and making our own decisions as well as about the kind of conversations we want to have with each other. The less we trust our news, the less we trust one another. How often do you hear these kinds of statements:



- Do you trust mainstream news more or less than social media?
- Do you find something more reliable if your friends or family share it?
- Do you know what 'fake news' is and how to spot?





# KEYWORDS

04

## What are facts and opinions?



Video: Courtesy of [factcheckingdaycom](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_0uVgkaTZfw). If you can't watch it in this doc head here to watch it: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_0uVgkaTZfw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_0uVgkaTZfw)





# KEYWORDS

05

## So.... What **are** facts & opinions?

### What is a fact?

A fact is something that can be checked and backed up with evidence. A fact can be shared with or without a source.

- Are the lines between fact and opinion sometimes blurred?



### What is an opinion?

An opinion is a view or judgement formed about something, not necessarily based on fact or knowledge that can be checked.

- What problems do you think arise when opinion is perceived as fact?





# KEYWORDS

## 'Fake News'

Fake news is news/stories that are intentionally false & are deliberately shared. We hear this term thrown around a lot these days.

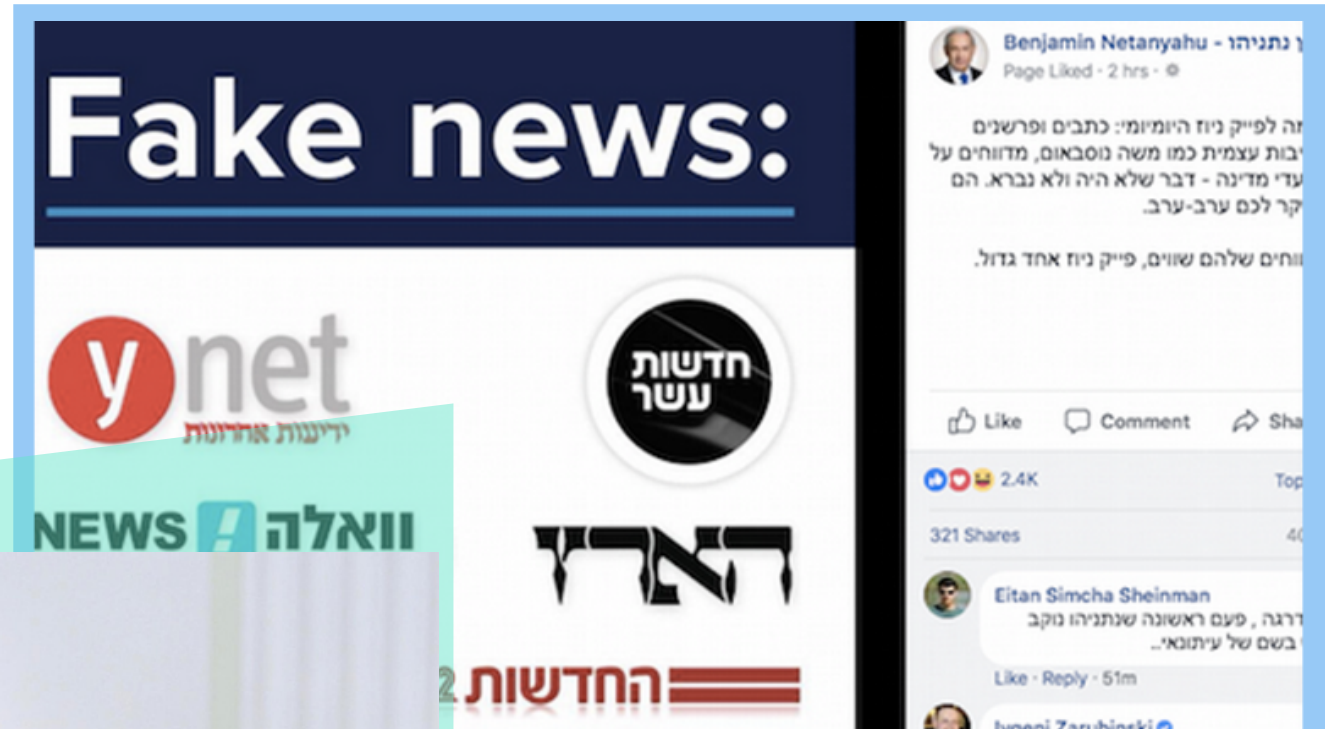


Photo: Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority, has railed against the idea of the Arab Spring as something manufactured to discredit Arab autocrats (Source: [Kremlin.ru](http://Kremlin.ru)).

Photo: The Facebook page of Israeli Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu calling critical news outlets 'fake news'

06



Some politicians use it to discredit perceived rivals. Here are some examples from Israel & Palestine.





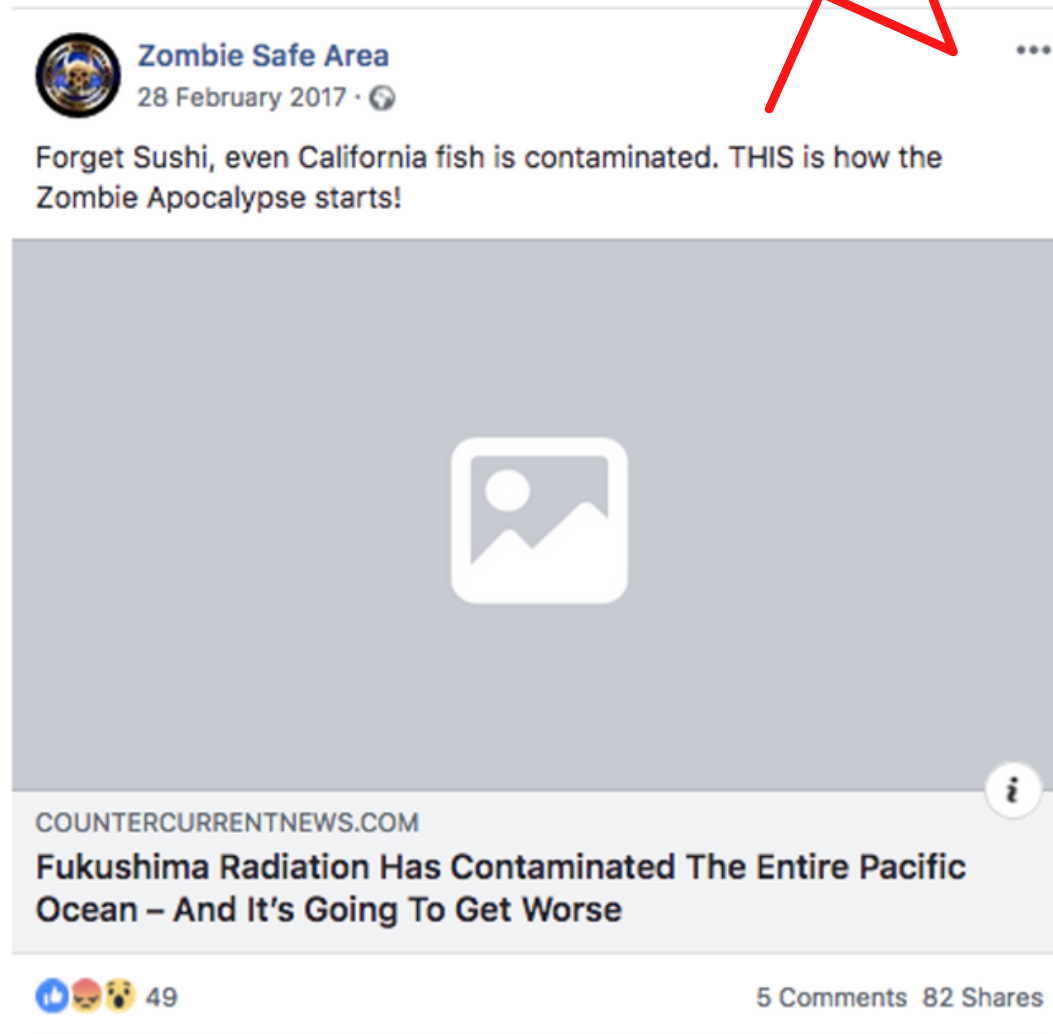
# CHECKING FAKE NEWS

07

Now we're going to go through some practical steps to check the details of a story and determine genuine stories from fake ones.

Take a look at this story, with its alarmist headline.

- Note the 'THIS' in all-caps - is this normal for reliable news stories?
- What else strikes you as problematic about this article?
- Would you click on or share this article? If so, why?





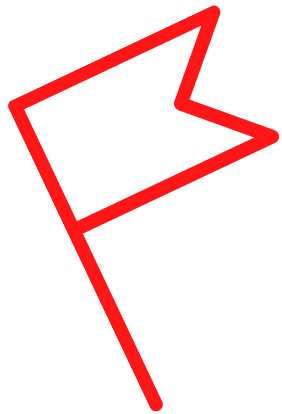


# CHECKING FAKE NEWS

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There are a number of steps to take when checking on the validity of an article.

Although this website no longer exists, if you had clicked on the Facebook link on the previous page you would arrive at this 'alternative news' site:



**Fukushima Radiation Has  
Contaminated The Entire Pacific  
Ocean – And It's Going To Get Worse**

The website had no 'about' section - so you couldn't verify any details about who wrote or published the story. This is a red flag!

You can check the page on the Media Bias/Factcheck resource:  
<https://mediabiasfactcheck.com/counter-current-news/>



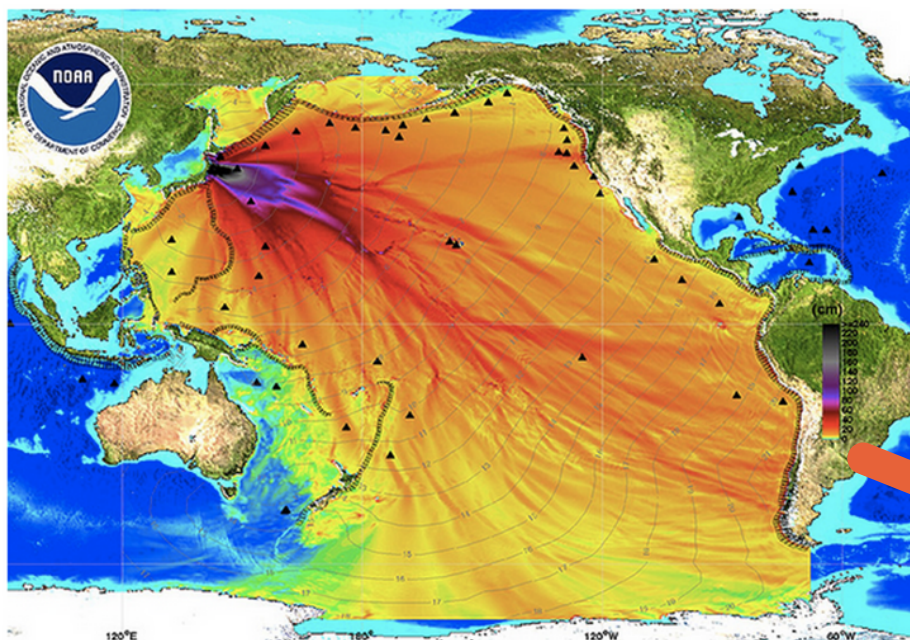




# REVERSE IMAGE SEARCH

09

One of the most useful tools in your fact-checking toolkit is the 'Reverse Image Search' (RIS). The article contained the image below, claiming to show radiation across the Pacific:



Credit – NOAA

But if you launch a RIS on Google Images the 2nd result is this article from [Snopes.com](https://snopes.com), a popular & reliable factchecking website. It reveals the image shows the wave height of the tsunami that followed the earthquake. So, it's a tsunami map, not a radiation map.


Other RIS tools are available from [Bing](#), [RevEye](#) & [TinEye](#)





# FACT CHECKING ISRAEL-PALESTINE

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We can find examples of the kinds of misinformation, fake news and biased sources for the conflict in Israel-Palestine. We'll use examples from  :

## Were Palestinian Martyrs Caught on Video Faking Their Deaths?

A video of a 2013 protest in Egypt is often shared with erroneous claims about false flag attacks and people faking their deaths.

### CLAIM

Palestinians were caught faking the deaths of several martyrs when one of the 'corpses' was filmed moving.

### RATING

Here, SNOPEs has used RIS, internet archives and good old-fashioned research to determine the origin of this false story. You can read their full report [here](#).



**FALSE**

Have you seen examples of false stories circulating during the COVID-19 pandemic?





# FAKE NEWS OR SOMETHING ELSE?

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Here is a more complicated example:

## Did Gaza Preschoolers Perform a Mock Execution of an Israeli Soldier?

An alarming video appears to be authentic, but critics say it is being used to cast Palestinians in a negative light.

By Bethania Palma

6 June 2018



This story is important – as is its source, MEMRI. A Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit, MEMRI publishes stories on the conflict, usually finding videos and interviews to translate from Arabic and other languages into English. Its critics accuse the organization of cherry-picking content that casts Israel's adversaries in a negative light. Its defenders would argue it shines a light on Arabic language news Western publications might shy away from.

Can facts be used to further a biased agenda?







# FAKE NEWS OR SOMETHING ELSE?

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Society in both Israel & Palestine is, unfortunately, increasingly militarised.



Khaled Elgindy, fellow for the Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings Institution, said: "One of the unfortunate realities of conflict and occupation is you get societies that tend to be very militarized. That's true of Palestinian society and of Israeli society... While this content is something you do see in societies that are in conflict, MEMRI only shows certain Palestinian media — the most extreme and inflammatory cases".

You can find examples of the militarisation of children from Israeli society as well, as the *Forward* article here shows.



Can you find some stories from Arab & Israeli media guilty of focusing only on the extreme stories of the 'other'?





# SOCIAL MEDIA & FAKE NEWS

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And finally, this is a great example of why you should be wary of the risks of fake news on social media:

 **Elisabeth Tainsh**  
@ElisabethTainsh Follow

@BowenBBC is this a piece of propaganda being put out via facebook then?



This fake story sometimes circulates on social media. It suggests that the BBC pulled Jeremy Bowen from covering Gaza because of 'Israeli pressure'. Bowen himself was quick to head off this story, but it still emerges periodically.

 **Jeremy Bowen** ✓  
@BowenBBC Follow

It's fake news. Someone has used BBC logo as part of a deception. The BBC has supported my reporting consistently and well for more than 30 years. It did not pull me out of Gaza against my will - or anywhere else for that matter.

This fake story relies on the antisemitic trope about Jewish - or sometimes Israeli - control of the media. Check out this resource from the Antisemitism Policy Trust for more: <https://bit.ly/2I4UnR4>





# REFLECTION - WHAT CAN WE DO?

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Here are some things to remember:

- **Clickbait:** look out for warning signs like ALL CAPS. This should set off your alarm bells.
- **Background:** when you visit a new website, check its 'About' page. If it doesn't exist you can check it with a 'Whois' lookup.
- **Images:** Tools like Reverse Image Search are some of the most powerful fact-checking in your arsenal - use them!
- **Beyond Google** - Websites like Snopes & Full Fact are really valuable for checking a stories veracity.
- **Provenance** - Finally, its worth considering a stories context and who is writing it. Be concious of WHY a story is being told. Think about who is doing the telling.



Remember, the majority of Palestinians and Israelis just want to live a stable and normal life. (Photo: Mahmoud Abu Salama)

And remember to separate out facts from opinions!







✂ CUT OUT AND TAPE NEAR YOUR COMPUTER OR TV

This  
handy  
guide from  
the  
podcast  
On The  
Media has  
loads of  
great  
advice!

## BREAKING NEWS CONSUMER'S HANDBOOK

### FAKE NEWS EDITION

1. Big red flags for fake news: ALL CAPS, or obviously photoshopped pics.
2. A glut of pop-ups and banner ads? Good sign the story is pure clickbait.
3. Check the domain! Fake sites often add “.co” to trusted brands to steal their luster. (Think: “abcnews.com.co”)
4. If you land on an unknown site, check its “About” page. Then, Google it with the word “fake” and see what comes up.
5. If a story offers links, follow them. (Garbage leads to worse garbage.) No links, quotes, or references? Another telltale sign.
6. Verify an unlikely story by finding a reputable outlet reporting the same thing.
7. Check the date. Social media often resurrects outdated stories.
8. Read past headlines. Often they bear no resemblance to what lies beneath.
9. Photos may be misidentified and dated. Use a reverse image search engine like TinEye to see where an image *really* comes from.
10. Gut check. If a story makes you angry, it's probably designed that way.
11. Finally, if you're not sure it's true, don't share it! *Don't. Share. It.*

ON **THE MEDIA**

ONTHEMEDIA.ORG







# WHAT NOW?

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- Play this iReporter game from the BBC where you assess news on its accuracy before reporting it!



- Take a short fact-checking online course:



- Discuss this with your teacher, friends or family!



@ItMakesSNS



@SolutionNotSides



@SolutionNotSides