Teacher's Guide

iCivics

NEWSFEED DEFENDERS EXTENSION PACK

Time Needed: Approx. 3 class periods

Materials/Equipment:
- Microsoft PowerPoint
- Access to iCivics.org for game play
- Interactive white board *(optional but ideal)*
- Teaching bundle PowerPoint presentation
- Student worksheets

Copy Instructions:
Student Activities *(2 pages; class set)*
Assessment *(1 page; class set)*

Learning Objectives. Students will be able to:
- Identify markers of verification, transparency, accountability, and independence in news stories
- Define and identify problematic news items, and other news-related types of misinformation
- Explain a variety of strategies to verify images and information
- Evaluate text for bias based on word choices and framing methods
- Use third party information to judge credibility of a source
- Evaluate the benefits and challenges of digital news and social media to a democratic society

STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS

Preparation

Download the PowerPoint presentation. It contains all the activities for the teaching bundle.

Photocopy and distribute the paper version of the student activities if you want students to have them. (You can teach the bundle without paper if you wish.)

1. Starter Activities

Display the slide for Activity A: Pros & Cons

Ask students to brainstorm their ideas on the paper handout, then **call on** students to write their ideas on the board.

Save a copy of the slide with the students' ideas if you are using an interactive whiteboard.

Review the list by looking at the slide for Activity B: Making the Most of It and asking students to write and share their ideas on how to mitigate the downsides of SM news consumption.

Display the slide for Activity C: What Makes News… News? Ask students to offer the kind of rules they would apply to something that might declare itself news.

Review the next set of slides and discuss each rule, and ask students to note the most important one to watch out for, and note it on the paper handout. Then call for students to share.

2. Game

Direct students to iCivics.org and have them **play the game** *NewsFeed Defenders* Alternatively, you can try having the class play in pairs or as a group using your interactive whiteboard.

3. Mini-Lesson

Display the slides for Activity D: But wait, there's more!

Allow students to take turns reading through the text on each slide as you progress. Stop and clarify language or questions as needed.

Ask students to briefly discuss the threats each of these pose to consumers of news. If using the worksheets, as students to select one threat and sketch a PSA that informs the public on how to protect themselves.

4. Follow-Up Activity

Display the slides for Activity E: Digging Deeper

Call on students answer the questions for each post and to help brainstorm other elements of the post to investigate. They may also record their answers in the worksheet version of the activity.

5. Assessment

Work through the Mini Quiz slides, pausing to discuss and review with each slide.

Distribute and assign the paper version of the assessment if you wish.

NewsFeed Defenders

Name:

A. Pros and Cons Relying on Social Media for news and information has its benefits and drawbacks. Brainstorm the positives and negatives in the space below.

B. How to make the most of Social Media news consumption. Pick two drawbacks from your list and suggest ways that you might address these?

C. What makes news... news? Read each of the following elements of high-quality journalism and pick the one you think is the most important. Explain why.

Accuracy. News stories should provide accurate and verifiable information. Sources should be credited and sited.

Transparency. Content must clearly communicate its purpose, especially when it's not a news article. Ex: opinion pieces, advertisements, sponsored content.

Trustworthiness. It's important to know the source of what you read. Make sure the source is legitimate, whether a network or expert.

Impartiality. News stories should not show bias in the coverage of an event or topic. If there are multiple sides to a story, they should be provided.

Which is most important to you? Why?
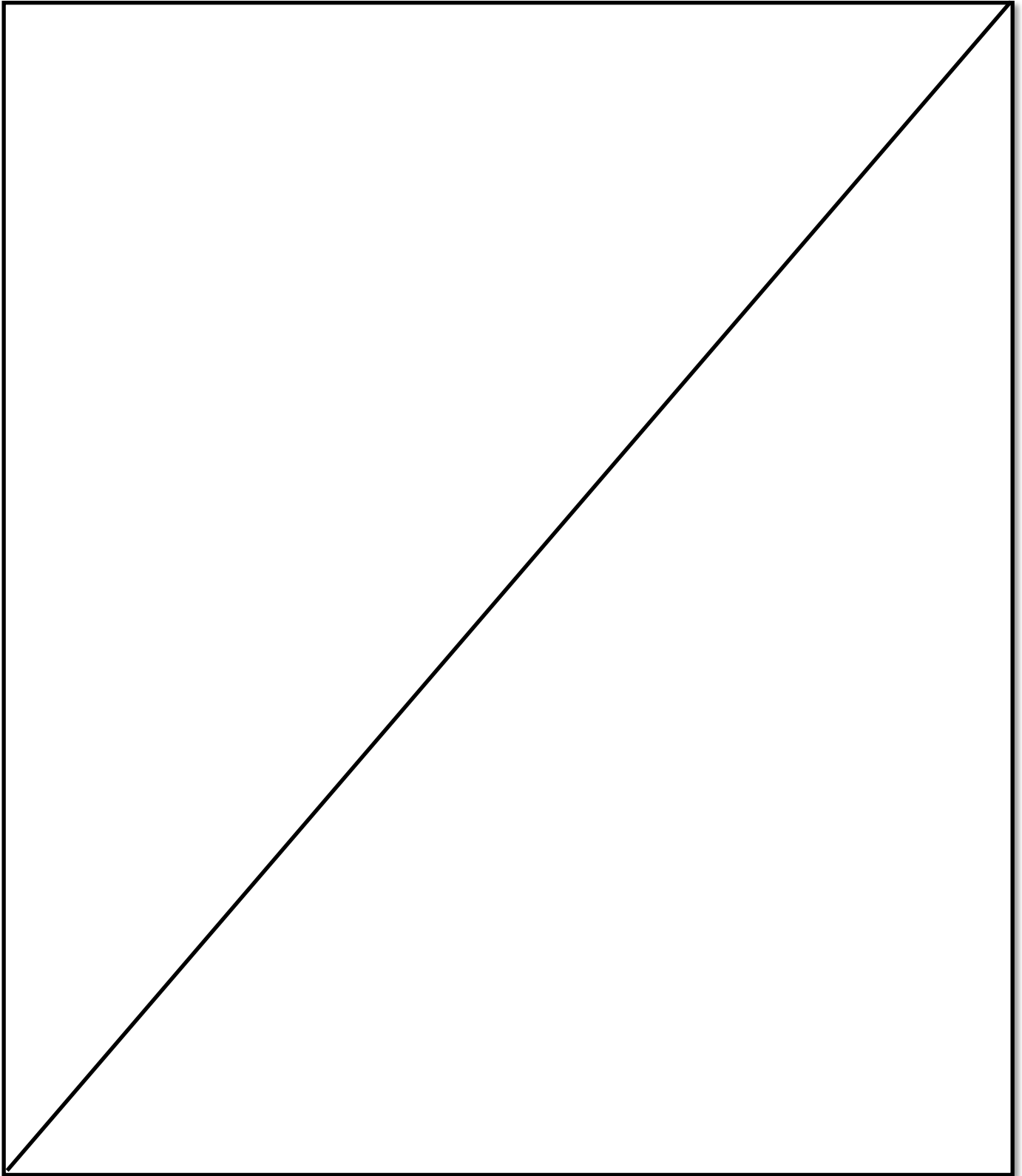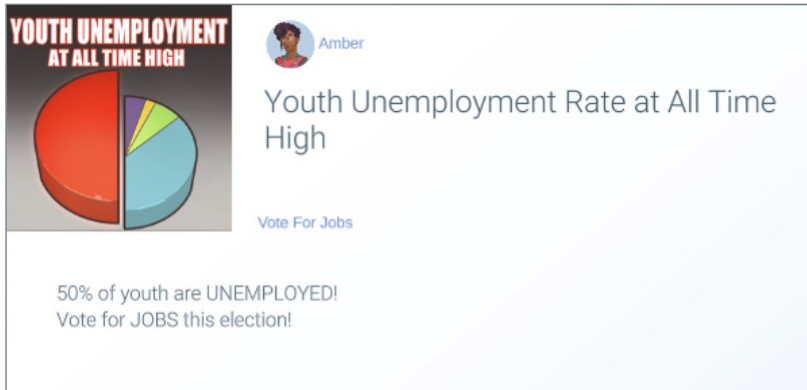
NewsFeed Defenders

D. But wait, there's more… Sketch a PSA (Public Service Announcement) poster warning people about bots and site mirroring. Be sure to include tips to avoid these deceptive practices.

NewsFeed Defenders

E. Digging Deeper Read the two problematic items below and answer the questions to create a plan for further investigation.

This is a deceptive infographic post. What looks or seems "off" about it that might make you want to dig deeper? List all of the things you can think of below:

1. What would you need to know about this post before you felt you could confirm that it was legitimate news?

2. How would you go about answering the questions you've posed?

3. What could be at risk if people believe and spread this false information?

This is a deceptive post that looks like a helpful warning. What looks or seems "off" about it that might make you want to dig deeper? List all of the things you can think of below:

1. What would you need to know about this post before you felt you could confirm that it was legitimate news?

2. How would you go about answering the questions you've posed?

3. What could be at risk if people believe and spread this false information?

NewsFeed Defenders Mini-Quiz

Name: _____

A. Covering all the Bases . Match each of the four rules of journalism to which aspects of an article, story, or social media post it impacts. You may have more than one answer for a rule.

<u>Elements of a story</u>

_____ 1. The source of the information (*within* a story, like a cited report or interview)

_____ 2. The source of a story (the publisher, network, or website)

_____ 3. The author of the story (who wrote it)

_____ 4. The subject of the story (what is the story about, how is it covered)

<u>The Rules</u>

A - Accuracy

B - Transparency

C - Trustworthiness

D - Impartiality

B. Multiple Choice. Select the best answer for each question.

___ 5. Mirrored news sites deceive readers by creating content that is false and...

   a. taking over the original site for an advertisement.

   b. turning every website into a webcam.

   c. presenting it on a fake version of a credible website.

   d. increasing the traffic for the original site.

___ 6. Internet bots can sway public opinion by:

   a. Inflating the impact of a social media post through faked likes, retweets, etc.

   b. Creating and blasting biased content to inflame people's opinions on an issue

   c. Creating fake popularity and reputations of people who by the bot traffic

   d. All of the above

C. True or False? Select the best answer for each question. Write *true* or *false* in the space

_____ 7. Everything you read online is either 100% false or 100% real. It's easy to spot.

_____ 8. There are no credible sources on the internet. It's impossible to trust what you read.

_____ 9. It is difficult to create deceptive content on the internet and share it.

10. Select one false statement and rewrite it, correcting the mistake below.

D. Now What? Based on what you have learned from playing NewsFeed Defenders, create a 3- to 5-step plan for checking out a post on social media for the next time you encounter something rotten.

NewsFeed Defenders

** TEACHER GUIDE **

A. Pros and Cons Relying on Social Media for news and information has its benefits and drawbacks. Brainstorm the positives and negatives in the space below.

Student responses might include:

- Easy to access
- Easy to share
- More likely to be about things you care about / follow on SM already
- etc.

Student responses might include:

- Not all of it is actual news
- Comments are awful, trolls
- Rumors and lies can spread rapidly
- You may not see a full picture

B. How to make the most of Social Media news consumption. Pick two drawbacks from your list and suggest ways that you might address these?

Student responses will vary. Check for strong connection between problem and solution.

C. What makes news... news? Read each of the following elements of high-quality journalism and pick the one you think is the most important. Explain why.

Accuracy. News stories should provide accurate and verifiable information. Sources should be credited and sited.

Transparency. Content must clearly communicate it's purpose, especially when it's not a news article. Ex- opinion pieces, advertisements, sponsored content.

Trustworthiness. It's important to know the source of what you read. Make sure the source is legitimate, whether a network or expert.
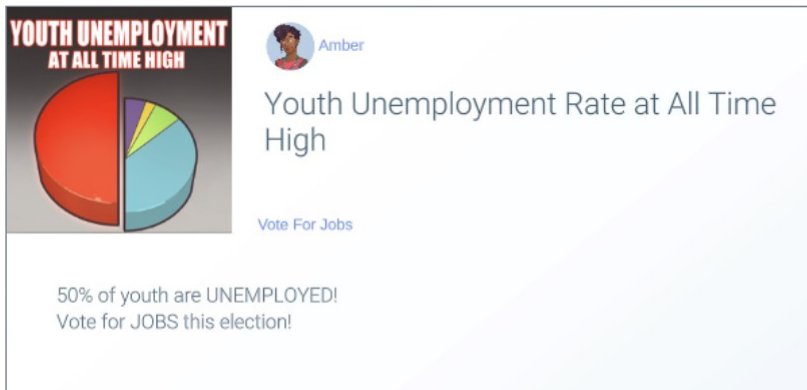
Impartiality. News stories should not show bias in the coverage of an event or topic. If there are multiple sides to a story, they should be provided.

Which is most important to you? Why?

Student responses will vary. Check for clear reasoning for choice.

NewsFeed Defenders

E. Digging Deeper Read the two problematic items below and answer the questions to create a plan for further investigation.

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AT ALL TIME HIGH

Amber

Youth Unemployment Rate at All Time High

Vote For Jobs

50% of youth are UNEMPLOYED! Vote for JOBS this election!

This is a deceptive infographic post. What looks or seems "off" about it that might make you want to dig deeper? List all of the things you can think of below:

Student responses might include:

- *Doesn't seem like a correct stat*
- *Who are they counting as "youth"*
- *Not much content*
- *etc.*

1. What would you need to know about this post before you felt you could confirm that it was legitimate news?

   Student responses will vary. Review the rules again if they are confused about what "legitimate news" means.

2. How would you go about answering the questions you've posed?

   Student responses will vary.

3. What could be at risk if people believe and spread this false information?

   Student responses will vary. Prompt with how this might impact voting decisions, conversations about the economy, etc.

Mention that a stat like this is manipulating data. Even if we could determine what the post means by "youth", not all "youth" are likely looking for work due to school, extracurriculars, etc.

VOTE HERE

Amber

Before You Vote, Read This

America Winning

Police will be checking for outstanding warrants and unpaid parking tickets at polling places on election day.

This is a deceptive post that looks like a helpful warning. What looks or seems "off" about it that might make you want to dig deeper? List all of the things you can think of below:

Student responses might include:

- *Doesn't sound legal*
- *May have heard of other voter suppression tactics like this*
- *Source seems odd*

1. What would you need to know about this post before you felt you could confirm that it was legitimate news?

   Student responses will vary. Review the rules again if they are confused about what "legitimate news" means.

2. How would you go about answering the questions you've posed?

   Student responses will vary.

This post is based on real voter suppression tactics in recent elections.

3. What could be at risk if people believe and spread this false information?

   People may not go out and exercise their right to vote. This also casts the police as a threat to democracy.

NewsFeed Defenders Mini-Quiz ** TEACHER GUIDE **

A. Covering all the Bases . Match each of the four rules of journalism to which aspects of an article, story, or social media post it impacts. You may have more than one answer for a rule.

<u>Elements of a story</u>

<u>A, C, D</u> 1. The source of the information *within* a story (cited report or interview)

<u>B, C</u> 2. The source of a story (the publisher, network, or website)

<u>A, B, C, D</u> 3. The author of the story (who wrote it)

<u>B, D</u> 4. The subject of the story (what is the story about, how is it covered)

<u>The Rules</u>

A - Accuracy

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B. Multiple Choice. Select the best answer for each question.

<u>C</u> 5. Mirrored news sites deceive readers by creating content that is false and...

   a. taking over the original site for an advertisement.

   b. turning every website into a webcam.

   c. presenting it on a fake version of a credible website.

   d. increasing the traffic for the original site.

<u>D</u> 6. Internet bots can sway public opinion by:

   a. Inflating the impact of a social media post through faked likes, retweets, etc.

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   c. Creating fake popularity and reputations of people who by the bot traffic

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C. True or False? Select the best answer for each question. Write *true* or *false* in the space

<u>False</u> 7. Everything you read online is either 100% false or 100% real. It's easy to spot.

<u>False</u> 8. There are no credible sources on the internet. It's impossible to trust what you read.

<u>True</u> 9. It is easy to create deceptive content on the internet and share it.

10. Select one false statement and rewrite it, correcting the mistake below.

<p style="text-align:center;color:red">Student responses will vary.</p>

D. Now What? Based on what you have learned from playing NewsFeed Defenders, create a 3- to 5-step plan for checking out a post on social media for the next time you encounter something rotten.

<p style="text-align:center;color:red">Student responses will vary.</p>

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Here are some additional links from FactCheck.org and Annenberg Classroom:

How-To's

Not sure how to navigate through the wilderness of internet "news"? Check out these step-by-steps:

• **Flag Fake News on Facebook**: Facebook users can help by reporting stories in their news feeds that they suspect are fake. We'll show you how to do that using a story that we've already debunked as an example.

https://www.factcheck.org/2017/07/flag-fake-news-facebook/?utm_source=icivics

• **Spot Fake News**: Even though false news is more sophisticated than ever, it's easy to figure out what's real and what's imaginary. Just arm yourself with some critical thinking and fact-checking tools of the trade.

(video) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AkwWcHekMdo

(article) https://www.factcheck.org/2016/11/how-to-spot-fake-news/?utm_source=icivics
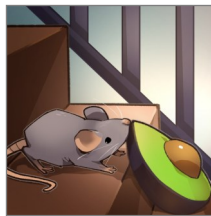
Lists and Guides

Want to dig deeper? These links can help lead you to even more quality resources.

• **Misinformation Directory**: We've put together a list of websites that have posted deceptive content. We hope it will serve as a reference for readers who may come across unfamiliar websites.

https://www.factcheck.org/2017/07/websites-post-fake-satirical-stories/?utm_source=icivics

• **Critical Thinking Resources from Annenberg Classroom**: Check out this broad collection of organizations and websites that can serve as resources for research on a number of policy issues including civil rights, health care, immigration, gun issues and more.

http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/all-critical-thinking-resources?utm_source=icivics

• **Glossary:** Run across a word or a term unfamiliar to you? This glossary offers referenced descriptions of everything from accountability to zeitgeist.

http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/terms?utm_source=icivics