



Fake News, Media Literacy, & Critical Consuming

Kristen Dembroski, Ph.D.

FAKE NEWS INVASION



The New York Times defined "fake news" on the Internet as fictitious articles deliberately fabricated to deceive readers, generally with the goal of profiting through clickbait.

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Key Terms

Fake News

- Purpose: Mislead, spread misinformation
- False info or propaganda published under the guise of authentic news
- Sensationalist, extreme
- Fuels passions and prejudices
- May provoke violence



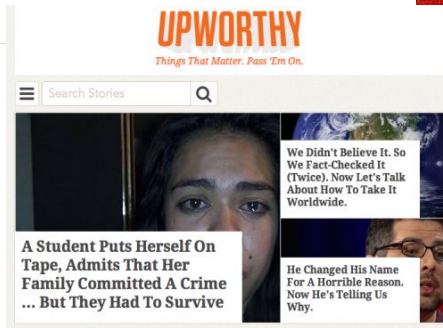
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Key Terms

Clickbait

- Exaggerated, scintillating, or fabricated headlines
- Photographs taken from other stories
- Click = \$\$



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Key Terms

Satire News

- Purpose: Parody / Entertain
- Mimics mainstream news
- Entirely fictional
- Can be commentary on real news events

"The Onion" "Faking News"
"National Report"



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Key Terms

Native Advertising

- "Sponsored Content"
- Revenue source for news sites
- Promotes product in guise of a news story



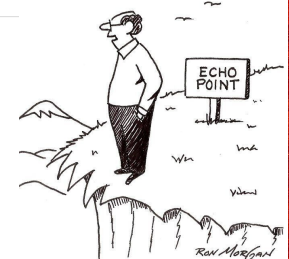
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Key Terms

Echo Chamber / Confirmation Bias

- Algorithms create our newsfeed
- Feed us what we 'like', and hide what we don't
- This will increase our engagement time and the platform's revenue



"Thanks. Great political discussion."

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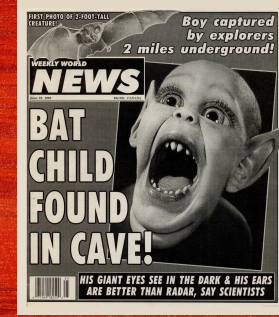
Key Terms

Other Terms to Consider

- **Extreme bias** - rely on propaganda, opinions distorted as facts, decontextualized information
- **Conspiracy theory** - kooky, unproven theories (e.g. vaccines as mind control)
- **Rumor mill** - propagates unverified claims, gossip
- **Junk science** - promotes pseudoscience and dubious claims
- **Hate news** - promotes 'isms, phobias, and discrimination

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“Fake News” used to be easy(ier) to spot, and a lot harder to disseminate



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In today’s digital world, we are all citizen journalists and researchers.



Social Media has made it easy to click, share, like, and “go viral.”

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Why does Fake News even exist?



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PANTS ON FIRE!
POLITIFACT TRUTH-D-METER™

Distorted
Sensationalized
Exaggerated
Twisted
One-sided
Selective
Bent
Objectionable

Fake
Hoax
Bogus
Propaganda
Counterfeit
False
Phony
Sham
Spurious
Fraudulent
Invented

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What is going on in this photograph?

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What is going on in this photograph?

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Media Manipulation

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History

Fake News is as old as the printed word (1439)

- Sea monsters
- Witches
- Slave uprisings
- Native Americans 'scalping' colonists
- Yellow Journalism (Gilded Age)
- "Remember the Maine!" Spanish American War
- Political smear campaigns

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History

Today's code of 'Journalistic Ethics'

truthfulness, accuracy, objectivity, impartiality, fairness, public accountability

First Amendment vs. Libel

Overall: we expect integrity, but cannot rely on it.

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Crisis

- Why is fake news so dangerous?
 - Threatens public confidence in
 - Media
 - Political figures
 - Democracy
 - Reality
 - Flames prejudices and fears
 - Can incite violence

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Impact on Education

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“Overall, young people’s ability to reason about the information on the internet can be summed up in one word: *bleak*.”

- Stanford History Education Group

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Stanford Study

Goal: Measure student digital literacy skills

- Identify advertisements
- Distinguish news article vs. advertisement
- Distinguish news article vs. opinion column
- Distinguish fake vs verified social media accounts
- Rate strength of evidence
- Verify a claim via research
- Evaluate trustworthiness of a photograph, website, tweet, and video

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“At present, we worry that democracy is threatened by the ease at which disinformation about civic issues is allowed to spread and flourish.”

- Stanford History Education Group

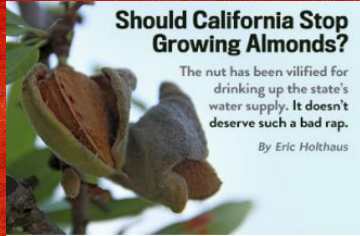
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Task - Discern Advertisement vs. News

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Is this an advertisement?
Why/not?



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1 Task - Evaluate Evidence

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Is this strong evidence about the conditions near Fukushima Power Plant? Explain your reasoning.

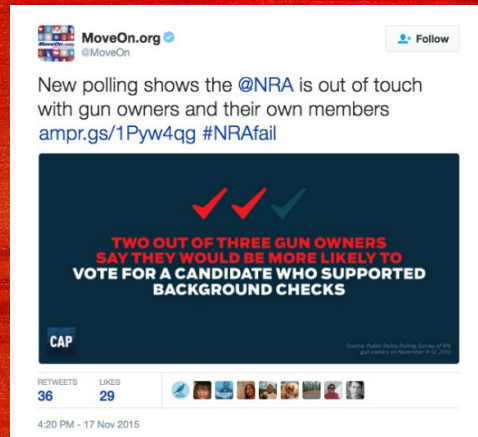


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1 Task - Evaluate Claims on Social Media

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Is this tweet a useful source of information?



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Conclusions & Implications

- Students lack digital vocabulary (i.e. “sponsored content”)
- Students believe photographs lend credibility to an article
- Students lack understanding of how political agenda can influence content
- Students may not be aware of or investigate political affiliations
- Students struggle to navigate social media content

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Spotting “Fake News”

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Spotting “Fake News”

- John Spencer’s 5 Cs of Critical Consuming:
 - Context
 - Credibility
 - Construction
 - Corroboration
 - Compare

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Spotting “Fake News”

CONTEXT

Check the publication date / location

- Is it recent?
- Is it relevant?
- Have things changed since then? New info?



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Spotting “Fake News”

CONTEXT

Scan the entire website / page at once. Read “nonlinearly”

- Check out the text features you know should be there (title, author, url, graphics, advertisements?)
- What do you notice? What stands out?

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CREDIBILITY

The most trusted news sources, according to mixed ideological groups (conservatives and liberals).

Pew Research Study, 2014



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CREDIBILITY

- Popularity does not equal credibility.
- Retractions and corrections - reputable sources are willing to make them.
- Consider expertise - blogs can be credible if the author is an expert in the field

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CREDIBILITY

Look at the url and site

Ex: www.abcnews.go.com vs. www.abcnews.com.co

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← Imposter

NEWS FASHION TECH VIDEO WORLD

WELCOME HOME Show HRs. HiMaps - See who is viewing your resume are looking

BREAKING: Capitol Hill Shooter Identified as Right Wing Extremist
4p Update - March 28, 2016

U.S. International Politics Lifestyle

Watch Live Shows

Trump says he won't attend White House Correspondents Dinner

TOP STORIES MY STORIES

Popstar has breaks at risk under GOP overhaul
Report source of money behind from Obama...
New DNC chief acknowledges party's elector...
New DNC chief faces a Trump-era reception
Health care, Supreme Court on Congress agenda
Win Shoppers In The New Wave Of United Commerce...
All To Live up
Nearing election after CBO's report on GOP law...
Father of dead Navy SEAL refused to meet Th...

Authentic →

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Spotting "Fake News"

Some sites admit they contain invented stories

NATIONAL REPORT
AMERICA'S #1 INDEPENDENT NEWS SOURCE

Ted Cruz Sarah Palin

FRONT PAGE POLITICS MEDIA WORLD BUSINESS ENTERTAINMENT RELIGION HEALTH SPORTS CRIME SCIENCE/TECH

ADVERTISE WITH NR FAN MAIL MEDIA INQUIRIES CONTRIBUTE DISCLAIMER

Disclaimer

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Some sites do not report authors - Check for contact info

Inquiries Newsletter Privacy Policy

AMERICAN NEWS

Michelle Obama Just Got The Worst News Of Her Life... It's All Over Now

by American News 6 hours ago





Spotting "Fake News"

You should be able to contact and investigate the author

Google search results for "Steph Solis" showing approximately 38,200 results. The USA Today website snippet shows a profile for Steph Solis with a red arrow pointing to a contact icon.



Spotting "Fake News"

Consider the advertising

- Too much?
- Inappropriate?
- Pop-ups?
- Embedded links?

Newslo website screenshot showing excessive and inappropriate advertising, including a large banner for 'STOPS ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION' and a 'LEARN MORE' button.



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Check it out

- Snopes.com
- RealorSatire.com
- Factcheck.org
- Politifact.org
- Google!



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Spotting "Fake News"

Check out <http://bit.ly/2IJTrIG>

False, Misleading, Clickbait-y, and Satirical "News" Sources

url	type	2nd type	3rd type	Link active?
100percentfedup.com	bias			
21stcenturywire.com	conspiracy			
24newsflash.com	fake			
365susanews.com	bias	conspiracy		
4therevolutionarywar.wordpress.com	bias	conspiracy		
70news.wordpress.com	fake			
82.221.129.208	conspiracy	fake		
aanirfan.blogspot.co.uk	unreliable			
abcnews.com.co	fake			
abcnews.go.co	fake			
abdanger.net	conspiracy			
abovetopsecret.com	conspiracy			
abriluno.com	satire	rumor		
aceflashman.wordpress.com	satire	fake		



Spotting "Fake News"

Check out <http://fakenewswatch.com/>

FAKE NEWS WATCH

Last updated: 01/18/2016

Search this website...

FAKE/HOAX NEWS WEBSITES

Fake/Hoax News sites are satire sites that are not funny. They are an attempt to play on gullible people who do not check sources and will just pass the news on as if it were really true. Below is the list of known Fake/Hoax News Websites:

- [AmericanNews.com](#)

SATIRE WEBSITES

Satire websites are sites that make fun of the news. The stories are typically over the top and meant to be funny. The most famous satire site is The Onion. Below is the list of satire websites:

- [TheOnion.com](#)
- [AmplifyingGlass.com](#)
- [Duffteblog.com](#)

CLICKBAIT WEBSITES

Clickbait websites are sites that take bits of true stories but insinuate and make up other details to sew fear. Most of these are conspiratorial in nature and are very unreliable.

Below are a list of these websites:

- [21stCenturyWire.com](#)
- [ActivistPost.com](#)
- [BeforeItsNews.com](#)



Spotting "Fake News"



CONSTRUCTION

Consider tone

- Are there any 'loaded' or emotional words?
- Is there a lot of extreme or inflammatory language?
- Are there lots of absolute words (always, never), superlatives (worst, best), or colorful adjectives (horrifying, phenomenal)?

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Spotting "Fake News"

CONSTRUCTION

Consider author bias. Ask yourself:

- Why did the author use that language? (Notice & Note)
- Does the author seem to have a strong opinion?
- Is the article balanced / neutral?

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Spotting "Fake News"

CONSTRUCTION

Consider the content



Opinion / Judgment
(may be based on evidence)

Speculation
(not based on evidence)



Verifiable fact
(can be cross-checked)

Inference
(based on evidence)

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CORROBORATION

Does this same information appear on other credible news sources?



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Spotting “Fake News”

CORROBORATION

Trust your “spidey sense”

- Does this seem right?
- Does this seem possible?
- Have you heard this anywhere else?



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COMPARE

- Read other news sources to get different perspectives.
- Get the big picture of what’s going on.



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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

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Spotting “Fake News”

(Harvard) Melissa Zimdar’s Tips for Spotting Fake News

- Cross check with known/reputable websites
- Check ‘About Us” to learn more about the site/source
- ALL CAPS is a bad sign
- Did the story make you really angry? Read another viewpoint.

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Spotting “Fake News”

(Harvard) Melissa Zimdar’s Tips for Spotting Fake News

- Consider domain name (.com.co and .wordpress should trigger your skepticism)
- Do a **source analysis** - is there a link to a study? Outside research? Are officials cited?

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Solutions for Education

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Solutions

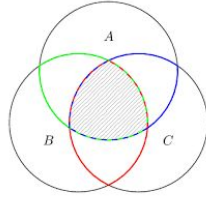
- Explicitly teach media definitions (e.g. sponsored content, bias)
- Study and discuss text features of digital news articles (footnotes, citations, by-lines, embedded links, etc.)
- Coach students in checking for authors, sources, citations, media bias

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Solutions

- Read the ENTIRE article. Clickbait grabs the reader by the title and first paragraph.
- Locate the **information intersection** - compare news stories from multiple and varied sources



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Solutions

Engage in regular discussions about the author's craft.

- Author's purpose
 - Explain
 - Describe
 - Inform
 - Entertain
 - Persuade
 - ***Combination
- Questioning the Author (Beck)
- Discussion "About the Text" (Fountas & Pinnell)

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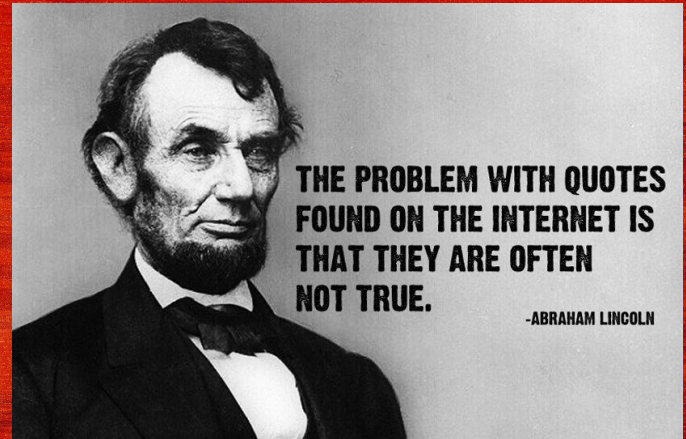


Solutions

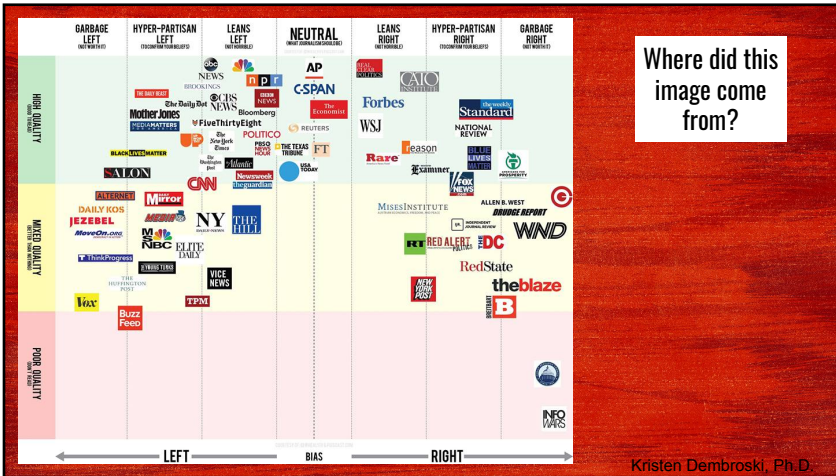
- Teach students to be skeptical "fact checkers"
- Investigate content
 - Google search exact quotes "___"
 - Reverse image search



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Where did this image come from?

Imgur
Reddit
Pinterest
Twitter

No reputable news sites. No sources cited.

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Free learning tools on media literacy and our First Amendment freedoms.

Newseum ED provides “free quality online resources to cultivate the skills to authenticate, analyze and evaluate information from a variety of sources and to provide historical context to current events.”

E - Evidence
S - Source
C - Context
A - Audience
P - Purpose
E - Execution



Solutions



- **Stanford History Education Group's online "Read Like a Historian" curriculum**
 - Historical Inquiry
 - Multiple perspectives on an event/topic
 - Sourcing, Contextualizing, Corroborating, Close Reading
 - U.S. and World History - can augment your current curriculum

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Solutions



- **Teach students how to research online - Search terms matter!**
 - Narrow search to keywords only (not the entire question)
 - Avoid adjectives or loaded language
 - Keep search terms neutral and specific
 - Use academic language

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black people shooting cops

All Shopping Videos Images News More

About 1,510,000 results (0.55 seconds)

Aren't more white people than black people kill
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/.../arent-more-white-people-kill>
 Jul 11, 2016 - Doesn't the available data show more white America ... African Americans, however, account for 24 percent of those fat despite being just 13 percent of the U.S. population. ... U.S. police

5 Statistics You Need To Know About Cops Kill
www.dailywire.com/.../5-statistics-you-need-know-about-cops
 Jul 7, 2016 - Cops killed nearly twice as many whites as blacks in 2 "jumped the officer" and assaulted him, and the cop shot the ... A k nation was his intention all along.

More Than 250 Black People Were Killed By Poli
www.huffingtonpost.com/.../black-people-killed-by-police-am
 Jul 7, 2016 - But the majority of black people killed by police were black person to be fatally shot by police in 2016, based ...

This is how many people police have killed so fa
<https://thinkprogress.org/this-is-how-many-people-police-hav>
 Jul 5, 2016 - The Washington Post reports that 908 people have be Guardian's count, Native Americans and Black people ...

crime statistics by race

All News Images Videos Shopping More Settings Tools

About 5,660,000 results (0.65 seconds)

Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) - Race/ethnicity
<https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=922> ▾
 The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) collects information on victimization characteristics including race and ethnicity. Since 2003, two questions on ...

Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) - Violent Crime
<https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=31> ▾
 Violent crime includes murder, rape and sexual assault, robbery, and assault. ... 2007-2010 Examines violent victimization rates by victim's race and ethnicity ...

Race and crime in the United States - Wikipedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Race_and_crime_in_the_United_States ▾
 Jump to **Crime rate statistics** - According to the BJS non-Hispanic blacks accounted for 39.4% of the prison and jail population in 2009, while non-Hispanic whites were 34.2%, and Hispanics (of any race) 20.6%. The incarceration rate of black males was over six times higher than that of white males, with a rate of 4,749 per 100,000 US residents.
 Methodology - Crime rate statistics - Theories of causation - See also

Latest Crime Statistics Released -- FBI
<https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/latest-crime-statistics-released> ▾
 Sep 26, 2016 - The Crime in the United States, 2015 report reveals an increase in violent crime and a decrease in property crime when compared to 2014 ...



Solutions



Teach students how to select from search results

- Model, Think Aloud
- Practice with sample topics
- Practice offline
- Dissect search engine results - components, color, placement, order, advertisements, etc.

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Solutions

Newsela Fake News Text Set

- The history of fake news
- Facebook and Google responsibility
- Fact Checking

TEXT SETS



TEXT SET

6119

The Phenomenon Of Fake News

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Solutions



Newsela Comparing Multiple Sources Tasks

Investigate a topic and read at least 4 sources

Discuss:

- Tone, language
- Investigate the author / publisher
- Look for textual clues of the author's POV

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Solutions



Newsela Comparing Multiple Sources

- Topics to investigate:
 - Dakota Access Pipeline
 - Climate Change
 - Refugee Crisis / Immigration
 - Drone Laws
 - Social Media for Education
 - Body Cameras for Law Enforcement

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Dakota Access Pipeline Facts <https://dapipelinefacts.com/>

- * Who are the publishers or authors?
- * What are their purposes or goals?
- * Can you find examples of bias or loaded language?
- * Is this site credible? Useful?

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Stand with Standing Rock <https://standwithstandingrock.net/>

STAND WITH STANDING ROCK

Tumblr Facebook Map of Overtaken

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has vowed to continue its battle against the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the timing of the ruling helped prompt widespread calls for solidarity and support.

"This ruling puts 17 million people who rely on the Missouri River at serious risk," said Dave Archambault II, chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. "And, already, the Dakota Access Pipeline has led to the desecration of our sacred sites when the company bulldozed over the burials of our Lakota and Dakota ancestors. This is not the end of this fight. We will continue to explore all lawful options to protect our people, our water, our land, and our sacred places."

The original pipeline route crossed the Missouri River just north of Bismarck, the capital of North Dakota. The route was later shifted downstream, to the tribe's doorstep, out of concerns for the city's drinking water supply."

As *Native News Online* explains: "The 1,668-mile pipeline crosses through the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's ancestral lands and within a half mile of the reservation boundary. Construction crews have already destroyed and desecrated confirmed sacred and historic sites, including burials and cultural artifacts. The original pipeline route crossed the Missouri River just north of Bismarck, the capital of North Dakota. The route was later shifted downstream, to the tribe's doorstep, out of concerns for the city's drinking water supply."

- * Who are the publishers or authors?
- * What are their purposes or goals?
- * Can you find examples of bias or loaded language?
- * Is this site credible? Useful?

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Reflection / Follow-up:

- About what do the websites disagree?
- Do the websites agree on anything?
- What do you still wonder? What else can you research?
- Extension: Repeat these questions with a mainstream media post on the topic.
- Can you locate any 'neutral' or unbiased news sources on this topic?
- What did you learn from this experience?

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Thanks!

Any questions?

You can find me at

- www.kristendembroski.com
- kristendembroski@gmail.com



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