



ASAP

A Systemic APProach to social media
and pre-adolescents through thinking

ASAP EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME
LEARNING UNIT

AUTHENTICITY & AUTHORITY

Unmasking misinformation



Co-funded by
the European Union

AUTHENTICITY & AUTHORITY: Unmasking misinformation

LEARNING UNIT

Erasmus+ Programme

Key Action 2 - Cooperation Partnerships in School Education

ASAP - A Systemic Approach to social media and pre-adolescents through thinking skills education

Grant Agreement No. 2022-1-IT02-KA220-SCH-000090043

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R3.2.1 ASAP Educational Programme Handbook

August 2025



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

The ASAP project is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union under the Grant Agreement No. 2022-1-IT02-KA220-SCH-000090043. The support of the European Commission and of the Italian National Agency INDIRE to produce this publication does not constitute an endorsement of its content, which reflects the views of the authors only. The European Commission and the Italian National Agency INDIRE shall not be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained herein.

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Learning Unit

Authenticity & Authority: Unmasking misinformation

FOCUS OF THIS UNIT

Introduction

In today's digital age, preadolescents, parents, and educators are exposed to an overwhelming amount of information through various online platforms. This Learning Unit focuses on the critical evaluation of information, emphasising the importance of authenticity, authority, and reliable sources. The unit aims to equip preadolescents (as well as parents and educators) with the skills to assess the credibility of online information, and to help parents and educators guide them in navigating potential pitfalls such as fake news, disinformation, and misleading content on social media. Authenticity, authority, and reliable sources are not only crucial for individual decision-making but also for maintaining trust, cohesion, and informed participation within broader communities. By promoting these values, we help build a more resilient and fact-based digital ecosystem. The goal is to foster critical thinking and media literacy, ensuring that children can differentiate between accurate information and misleading sources while promoting a healthy, informed relationship with digital media.

Key Competences

Key Competences* (which the Unit aims to contribute to)	
General	Specific
PERSONAL: Self-regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awareness of personal responsibility in evaluating and sharing online content. Recognising the impact of spreading misinformation on oneself and others.• Ability to critically reflect on one's own actions when consuming and sharing digital information. Understanding the role of self-discipline in fact-checking and verifying sources.
SOCIAL: Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding how to engage responsibly with digital content and conversations, particularly when sharing information within a community (on and offline).• Developing the skill to recognise and share information that appears reliable and practising respectful dialogue when discussing differing viewpoints, with growing awareness of the impact of misinformation or disinformation.

LEARNING TO LEARN: Growth mindset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning to reflect on feedback, recognize mistakes (such as believing misinformation).
LEARNING TO LEARN: Critical thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing awareness of potential biases and manipulative content that can shape public opinion. Beginning to identify signs of credibility and reliability in information, particularly on social media and digital platforms.
DIGITAL: Media literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning to understand basic methods for analysing digital media, including recognising indicators of trustworthy sources and gaining awareness of the role of authority in journalism and information sharing.

**Defined according to the LifeComp and DigComp 2.2 Frameworks*

Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes	
Knowledge	Skills and Abilities
Understanding the concept of authenticity, authority, and reliable sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to identify trustworthy sources and match them to information needs Ability to distinguish reliable sources from unreliable ones Ability to discuss and critically evaluate source authenticity and reliability
Knowledge of fact-checking practices specific to social media and online media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to verify the credibility of social media and online information. Ability to assess a news content structure for credibility. Identifying red flags of misinformation
Recognising the "information ecosystem" and the different types of information (facts, opinions, propaganda, entertainment, advertising)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to categorise and evaluate information based on type and purpose and their influence. Comparing information across sources to ensure accuracy and balance
Awareness of how daily information shapes personal opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to reflect on information's role in shaping personal decisions and viewpoints

Work plan

Topic 1 – Reliability of sources		
Phase 1.a (Knowledge building and skills development)	<p>Activity 1.a.1 – Looking for the expert</p> <p>Objective: to help participants define the concepts of authenticity, authority, and reliable sources. Participants will practise associating the most appropriate source with the information or news they are seeking.</p>	45 min
	<p>Activity 1.a.2 – Source verification - True or false?</p> <p>Objective: to help participants understand the importance of source reliability and authority in information. It teaches them to distinguish between trustworthy and less reliable sources.</p>	45 min
	<p>Activity 1.a.3 - Debate</p> <p>Objective: to encourage critical thinking and discussion about source reliability and the role of authenticity and authority in the information we consume.</p>	45 min
	<p>Activity 1.a.4 Social media fact-checking</p> <p>Objective: to familiarise participants with fact-checking in the context of social media, helping them understand how to verify the accuracy of information and recognize misinformation.</p>	45 min
Topic 2 – Information: from facts to fake		
Phase 2.a (Knowledge building)	<p>Activity 2.a.1 – Understanding different types of information</p> <p>Objective: to explore the different types of information we encounter daily (facts, opinions, propaganda, advertising, entertainment) and discuss their purpose and use.</p>	45 min
	<p>Activity 2.a.2 – Information ecosystems: where we find information</p> <p>Objective: to help participants identify the main "information ecosystems" (traditional media, social media, blogs, online</p>	45 min

	encyclopaedias, academic articles, etc.) and understand how each influences the perception of information.	
	<p>Activity 2.a.3 – How information shapes our views</p> <p>Objective: examine how the information (and misinformation) we consume daily shapes our opinions and decisions.</p>	45 min
Phase 2.b (Skills development)	<p>Activity 2.b.1 – Information comparison: digging deeper</p> <p>Objective: teach participants how to compare information from different sources to assess the completeness and consistency of what they read.</p>	45 min
	<p>Activity 2.b.2 – The anatomy of a news story: real or fake?</p> <p>Objective: teach participants how a news story is structured and provide them with tools to identify whether a news article is real or fake.</p>	45 min
	<p>Activity 2.b.3 – Role-playing: the fact-checker vs the fake news creator</p> <p>Objective: put fact-checking and critical analysis skills into practice through a debate where participants assume the roles of fact-checker and fake news creator.</p>	45 min

Final products

Digital Fact-Checking Portfolio

Each participant creates a portfolio showcasing examples of fact-checking exercises they completed. This could include screenshots, links and summaries of articles, posts, or news stories they verified, along with notes on the tools and steps used to confirm or debunk information.

Source Reliability Guide

Participants collaborate to create a guide or booklet titled "How to recognize reliable sources." This guide would list characteristics of reliable sources, signs of fake news, and practical tips on verifying information. It could be shared with peers, parents, and teachers as a community resource.

Public awareness poster campaign

Participants design posters focused on promoting critical thinking in online information consumption. The posters could have slogans like "Think before you share" or "Check your sources" and feature tips for evaluating the authenticity and reliability of online content. These posters could be displayed in schools or shared on social media.

Personal Reflection Journal

Each participant maintains a journal reflecting on their journey through the unit. They document specific times they encountered questionable information, how they applied the skills they learned to assess it, and any insights they gained on their own media habits.

Evaluation

Objective:

Assess improvements in kids' ability to distinguish true from false online information.

Methods and tools:

Exercise: "True or False? Web verification". Before the unit, provide a mix of web articles/posts (some true, some false) for kids to mark as "true" or "false" and justify their decision. After the unit, provide a new set of similar articles/posts for re-evaluation, applying the verification skills learned, and explaining their choices in detail. Discussing a few items in plenary to model effective verification steps and to note and clarify recurring misconceptions is recommended.

Timing:

Two suggested administrations: before and after the Learning Unit, with optional follow-ups to monitor skill retention.

Roles:

Kids complete the task and explain choices; educators run the exercise and collect the responses.

Application contexts

The activities in this Learning Unit are designed to be flexible and adaptable in various contexts and settings, depending on the needs and resources available. Here's how the activities can be applied in different educational and community environments:

Classroom setting

Activities can be conducted as a complete unit or as individual sessions integrated into existing media literacy, social studies or technology classes. This allows kids to progressively build their critical thinking and digital literacy skills.

Specific activities, like Source Verification - True or False? and Social Media Fact-Checking, can be used as standalone workshops to help kids practise source evaluation and fact-checking independently.

Parent and community workshops

These activities can be adapted for workshops aimed at parents or broader community members. Sessions could focus on practical exercises, such as How Information Shapes Our Views, to help participants understand the impact of media on opinions and decision-making.

Parents, in particular, can benefit from activities like Information Ecosystems, which provide insights into where young people are encountering information and how they can guide their children in navigating these sources responsibly.

School or Community Libraries

Libraries can host information literacy sessions using these activities to support independent learning. For instance, Looking for the Expert could be adapted into a guided research activity where participants use library resources to evaluate the credibility of information.

Libraries can also create ongoing, drop-in workshops, inviting community members to practise fact-checking with guidance, helping them stay informed in a digital world.

Each activity is designed to function as a standalone session, adaptable to participants of various ages and knowledge levels. *Information comparison* or *how Information shapes our views* can be tailored to suit different audiences, from pre-teens to adults, by adjusting the complexity of examples and exercises.

Links with other LUs

- **Onlife:** applies authenticity and authority to digital identity, online sources, and platform dynamics.
- **Communication:** connects authentic self-expression with respectful dialogue and argumentation.
- **Role Models:** invites kids to examine figures of reference and authority, comparing values and coherence.
- **Power of Questions:** strengthens questioning strategies to assess credibility and support authentic judgement.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Introduction to information sources

In a world where information is easily accessible, the ability to distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources is a crucial skill. Information sources can be numerous: from newspapers, magazines, and blogs to social media posts, government websites, and scientific articles. However, not all sources are equal, and the quality of the information they provide can vary drastically. Understanding the characteristics of a source and evaluating its reliability is the first step toward conscious information consumption.

A source can be defined as the origin of information. It can be a specific author, organisation, institution, or online platform. The source tells us who created the information and helps us evaluate the context in which it was produced. Sources can be primary, secondary, or tertiary:

- Primary sources: Represent the most direct form of information, such as original documents, interviews, data collected through experiments or observations.
- Secondary sources: Interpret, analyse, or synthesise primary sources. Examples include academic articles that discuss previous research or textbooks explaining historical events.
- Tertiary sources: Summarise information from primary and secondary sources, like encyclopaedias.

What makes a source reliable?

Reliability means that a source can be considered trustworthy. To judge the reliability of a source, several factors need to be considered:

- Who wrote or published the information? An author or organisation with specific expertise or a background in the field can be considered authoritative. For example, a university professor writing about biology has greater authority than a blogger without academic credentials on the same topic.
- Are the facts presented supported by evidence, data, or verifiable studies? Reliable sources provide clear and accessible references that can be verified by others.
- Is the information presented neutrally, or does it appear distorted by personal bias or specific interests? A source that shows evident biases or is highly partisan may not be reliable.
- Is the information up to date? In many fields, like science and technology, information can quickly become outdated. More recent sources are often more reliable, especially in fast-evolving sectors.

Authenticity and authority of sources

The authenticity of a source refers to its originality and integrity. An authentic source is unaltered or unmanipulated, and the information it provides can be verified against primary sources or original data. Authenticity is crucial when recognizing historical documents, direct testimonies, or scientific studies that have not been corrupted over time or by media distortion.

Authority refers to the reputation of the source or author producing the information. Established authority is built on long-term experience, specialised education, or a reputation for quality

contributions to public discourse. For example, journalists from recognized outlets like *The New York Times* or *The Guardian* generally have more authority than unaffiliated bloggers.

Understanding how media functions

Media is the main avenue through which we receive information. Understanding how media functions is essential to decipher the messages they convey and to recognize potential distortions or manipulations. Media can be divided into three major categories:

- Traditional media - newspapers, radio, and television. These media operate with a gatekeeping system, where editors and journalists select which news to publish according to editorial criteria of relevance, reliability, and public interest.
- Digital media - this includes websites, blogs, and social media. With the democratisation of information on the internet, anyone can become a content producer, making it more difficult for the public to distinguish between accurate information and misinformation.
- Social media - platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, where information circulates rapidly and without filters. Virality often takes precedence over verification, and emotional, polarizing, or captivating content is more likely to be shared.

The spread of misinformation and fake news

Misinformation refers to the spread of false or misleading information, whether intentional or not. In recent years, the phenomenon of fake news has become increasingly relevant, particularly with the proliferation of digital platforms and social media. Fake news can take different forms:

- Deliberately false articles - created to spread falsehoods and deceive the public.
- Political disinformation - designed to manipulate public opinion on sensitive issues or influence elections.
- Exaggerated or sensational news - distorting facts to attract clicks or views (clickbait).

Fake news spreads easily because of its ability to provoke strong emotions like anger, fear, or surprise. This phenomenon exploits the so-called echo chamber effect, where people tend to share information that confirms their pre-existing beliefs.

The role of critical thinking in evaluating information

Critical thinking is the ability to analyse and evaluate information reflectively and objectively. In a world full of diverse and sometimes contradictory sources, critical thinking allows for evaluating the quality of information and making informed decisions. The critical thinking process is based on:

- Questions, asking "Who wrote this? Why? What sources support this claim?" helps identify potential biases and omissions.
- Evaluation of evidence - information is credible if it is supported by data, studies, or recognized experts. Sources that provide few details or vague information are often less reliable.
- Recognizing biases - all content producers, including journalists and scholars, have some degree of bias. Being aware of one's own and others' biases helps contextualise and evaluate information more objectively.

The importance of fact-checking

Fact-checking is the process of verifying information to determine whether it is true, false, or misleading. Fact-checking tools include:

- Verification of original sources: Searching for the primary source from which the information originates.
- Use of fact-checking platforms: There are numerous websites dedicated to verifying facts, such as Snopes, FactCheck.org, and Politifact.
- Cross-checking with reliable sources: Consulting other recognized and independent sources that confirm the information.

Fact-checking has become a key element of media literacy, especially in combating the spread of fake news. Fact-checking organisations are essential in maintaining the public information sphere accurate and transparent.

HOW THE UNIT WORKS

Topic 1: Reliability of sources

In the digital era, where information is abundant and widely accessible, distinguishing between reliable and unreliable sources is crucial. Understanding the concept of source reliability helps individuals make informed decisions, avoid misinformation, and contribute positively to online communities. This topic introduces participants to the fundamental criteria for evaluating sources, focusing on authenticity, authority, and accuracy. It equips them with tools and techniques to identify trustworthy information and recognize the characteristics of credible sources.

What will the participants learn?

- Define source reliability: understand what makes a source trustworthy and its impact on public perception.
- Assess authenticity and authority: evaluate credibility based on the source's origin, author expertise, and organisational affiliations.
- Identify accuracy and objectivity: recognize signs of factual accuracy and distinguish objective information from biased content.
- Consider timeliness: appreciate the importance of current information, especially in evolving fields.
- Use Verification Tools: Gain familiarity with fact-checking resources and methods for identifying red flags.

Learning outcomes

Knowledge:

- Understanding the importance of reliable sources.
- Recognising the difference between authoritative and non-authoritative information.
- Identifying tools and methods for fact-checking.

Skills and abilities:

- Ability to critically evaluate the reliability of different sources.
- Ability to apply fact-checking techniques in real-world scenarios, especially on social media and digital media.

Space configuration

Ideally, the space should allow for practical exercises in pairs and small groups without interference. Ideally, participants should sit in a circle or semi-circle for discussions to encourage interaction and exchange of ideas.

Methods and pedagogical techniques used

- Pre-comprehension and explanation
- Pair work and group discussion

- Role-play (debate)
- Whole-group discussion

Tools

- Computers or tablets with internet access
- Blackboard or flipchart
- PPT presentation (optional)
- Problem scenarios for verification exercises
- Access to fact-checking tools (e.g., Snopes, FactCheck.org)

Overview of the activities

Activity 1.a.1 – Finding the expert

Kids practice identifying credible experts in various fields. Through discussion and group work, they reflect on what makes someone a trustworthy source and learn how to recognize expertise versus opinion or personal promotion online.

Activity 1.a.2 – Source verification - True or false?

Kids explore how to verify the credibility of information sources. By evaluating different examples of online content, they learn basic strategies for checking authenticity, cross-referencing facts, and distinguishing reliable information from misinformation.

Activity 1.a.3 – Debate

Through a structured debate, kids argue for or against the reliability of different information sources. The activity strengthens critical thinking, public speaking, and evidence-based reasoning, helping kids understand the importance of source evaluation in forming opinions.

Activity 1.a.4 – Social media fact-checking

Kids analyse real or simulated social media posts to practice quick fact-checking skills. They learn how to assess the credibility of information shared on social platforms and become more critical consumers of viral content.

Detailed step-by-step instructions for the activities are provided in Activity Plan in the Annex.

Topic 2: Critical thinking and information literacy

The aim of the proposed activities in phase 1.a is primarily to enhance the participants' critical thinking and information literacy skills, focusing on the ability to evaluate the credibility of information and recognize misinformation. These activities aim to build fundamental knowledge about the structure of information and the differences between reliable and unreliable sources, while also developing practical skills in analysing and fact-checking news stories.

Critical thinking in this context involves evaluating the validity of information, recognizing biases, and understanding how misinformation can influence opinions. The proposed activities are designed to develop skills in comparing information (Activity 2.b.1), evaluating news structures (Activity 2.b.2), and fact-checking (Activity 2.b.3).

What will the participants learn?

- Difference between reliable and unreliable sources of information.
- The anatomy of a news article: headline, lead, body, quotes, sources, conclusion.
- Common red flags of fake news (sensationalist headlines, lack of credible sources, etc.).
- Fact-checking methods and tools.
- The role of critical thinking in identifying misinformation and fake news.

Learning outcomes

- Knowledge:
 - To understand how a news article is structured and what makes it credible.
 - To identify common techniques used to create and spread fake news.
- Skills and Abilities:
 - Ability to critically evaluate the credibility of news articles.
 - Ability to recognise red flags in fake news stories.
 - Ability to use fact-checking tools and methods to verify information.

Space Configuration

Ideally, there should be enough space for the participants to work in pairs or small groups without interference, especially during the practical exercises. For the discussion and reflection sections, participants should sit in a circle or semi-circle to encourage open interaction and the sharing of experiences and insights.

Methods and Pedagogical Techniques

The methods used in this phase will include:

- Introduction to the structure of a news article and the signs of misinformation.
- Pair work and small group discussions - Participants will work in pairs or small groups to analyse articles and compare information.
- Role-playing - One activity will involve role-playing, where participants assume the roles of fake news creators and fact-checkers, engaging in a debate.
- Whole-group discussions - Participants will share their findings and insights with the entire group.

Tools

- Blackboard or flipchart: To present the key concepts, such as the anatomy of a news article and red flags for fake news.

- PPT presentation with instructions: Optional, to outline the activities and provide key points for discussion.
- Fact-checking worksheet: A pre-made worksheet for comparing information across multiple sources (Activity 2.b.1).
- News article analysis checklist: A checklist for participants to evaluate the credibility of articles (Activity 2.b.2).
- Problem scenarios for role-playing activity (Attachment 1): For the fact-checker vs. fake news creator role-playing activity (Activity 2.b.3), where participants create or debunk news stories.

Overview of the activities

Activity 2.a.1 – Understanding Different Types of Information

Kids learn to distinguish between different types of information, such as news, opinion, entertainment, advertising, and propaganda. By analysing examples, they reflect on how the purpose and presentation of information affect its credibility.

Activity 2.a.2 – Information Ecosystems: where we find information

Kids explore the different sources and channels through which information spreads today. They map the modern information ecosystem, discussing the role of social media, traditional media, influencers, and peer networks in shaping what information we receive.

Activity 2.a.3 – How information shapes our views

Through group discussions and personal reflection, kids explore how the information they consume influences their opinions, emotions, and decisions. The activity promotes media awareness and critical analysis of daily information intake.

Activity 2.b.1 – Information comparison: digging deeper

Kids compare different versions of the same news story or event. By examining differences in language, framing, and emphasis, they develop critical reading skills and learn how to identify bias, slant, or manipulation in information presentation.

Activity 2.b.2 – The anatomy of a news story: real or fake?

Kids analyse the typical structure of a news story and learn to recognize signs of reliability or manipulation. Through hands-on work, they identify key elements such as headlines, sources, tone, and evidence, building stronger news literacy.

Activity 2.b.3 – Role-playing: the fact-checker vs the fake news creator

In a dynamic role-playing game, kids take on the roles of fact-checkers and fake news creators. By trying to create convincing fake content and spotting it, they deepen their understanding of misinformation techniques and strengthen their verification skills.

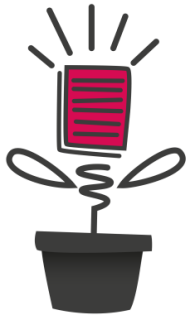
Detailed step-by-step instructions for the activities are provided in Activity Plan in the Annex.



ACTIVITY PLANS & WORKSHEETS



Activity 1.a.1 – FINDING THE EXPERT



Objective

- To introduce participants to the concepts of authenticity, authority, and reliable sources.
- To help participants practice identifying appropriate sources of information for specific questions or news topics.
- To promote critical thinking in evaluating the reliability and authority of information sources.

Preparation

- Arrange chairs in a semicircle for group discussions and presentations.
- Create breakout areas for small group activities.
- A whiteboard or flip chart to summarize key concepts and group findings.
- Printed and cut out question (Column A) and source (Column B) of the Worksheet.
- Markers or pens for group activities.
- Familiarize yourself with key talking points about source authenticity and authority.

Step-by-step instructions

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

- Explain the purpose of the activity: to learn how to evaluate information sources and match appropriate sources to specific types of questions or news.
- Define key terms:
 - **Authenticity:** Information is original and unaltered.
 - **Authority:** The source or author has expertise or recognized credentials.
 - **Reliable sources:** Provide accurate, unbiased, and well-supported information.
- Ask students:

- “How do you decide if a source is trustworthy?”
- “What makes an expert reliable?”

2. Group activity: Finding the expert (15 minutes)

1. Divide participants into small groups of 3-5 people.
2. Provide each group with a set of questions and sources. Mix them up before distributing to students.
3. Ask students to match each question with the most appropriate source and explain their reasoning.
4. Encourage participants to discuss why they selected specific sources for each question.
5. Prompt them to consider factors like authority, authenticity, and bias.

3. Group presentation (10 minutes)

- Each group presents their matched sources, explaining their reasoning.
- Highlight any differences in group opinions and facilitate a brief discussion.
- Provide feedback on group choices, emphasizing best practices for identifying reliable sources.



Concluding the activity (10 minutes)



1. Recap of the key learnings

Summarize the main takeaways:

- Reliable sources have authority, authenticity, and provide accurate, well-supported information.
- Matching questions to the right sources helps ensure credible answers.
- Critical thinking is essential for evaluating the reliability of information.

2. Personal reflection

Ask students to individually reflect on these questions

- How do I usually decide if a source is reliable?
- What can I do to improve my ability to identify trustworthy sources?

3. Group sharing

Invite a few participants to share their thoughts about:

- A source they trust and why.
- How this activity might change how they evaluate information in the future.

4. Reinforce the takeaway

End with an inspiring statement (on a projector or board):

"Reliable information builds trust and empowers us to make better decisions. Try to identify and rely on credible sources, so you contribute to a more informed and authentic world."



Optional next steps

Expert interviews at home

Encourage students to interview a family member or friend who has expertise in a topic of their choice. They should ask questions about how that person gained their knowledge and how they verify information in their field.

Learning Unit: Authenticity & Authority

Activity 1a1: Finding the expert

Worksheet (to be printed and cut)

Where would you look for an answer on the following questions?

Questions	Sources
Who won the most recent Nobel Peace Prize?	Nobel Prize official website or reputable news outlets like BBC or The Guardian.
Is drinking coffee every day good for your health?	Medical journals, health organization websites like WHO.
What is the current unemployment rate in our country?	Government labor statistics or reputable economic think tanks.
How do plants absorb carbon dioxide?	Biology textbooks, scientific journals, or educational platforms like Khan Academy.
What are the causes of global warming?	Environmental organization reports or NASA's climate change website.
Which foods are best for boosting your immune system?	Nutritionist recommendations or reputable health websites like Harvard Health.
Who was the first person to walk on the moon, and when did it happen?	NASA's official website, encyclopedias, or historical archives.
What are the symptoms of the flu, and how is it different from a cold?	National Institute of Health, WHO, or trusted medical articles.
How is artificial intelligence being used in education today?	Educational technology research papers, academic studies, or trusted tech websites like EdTech Magazine.
What are the main principles of democracy?	Political science textbooks, government education sites, or encyclopedias like Britannica.



Activity 1.a.2 – SOURCE VERIFICATION: TRUE OR FALSE?



Objective

- To teach students the importance of verifying the reliability and authority of information sources.
- To develop students' critical thinking and fact-checking skills by distinguishing between trustworthy and less reliable sources.
- To build awareness of how misinformation can mislead and affect decision-making.

Preparation

- Arrange tables for small group work, ensuring enough space for collaboration.
- Create a central area for presentations and discussions.
- A set of prepared statements (mix of true and false) on various topics (science, history, current events, etc.).
- Access to devices (computers, tablets, or smartphones) with internet access for online fact-checking.
- A fact-checking worksheet for recording findings (optional).
- Pre-select and verify a set of true and false statements. Ensure the sources of correct information are reliable.
- Prepare a list of suggested online tools and websites for fact-checking (e.g., Snopes, FactCheck.org, Politifact – this can vary among EU countries – choose the most appropriate ones).

Step-by-step instructions

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

- Explain that misinformation and unreliable sources can lead to false beliefs and poor decisions.

- Highlight the importance of fact-checking and cross-referencing information before trusting or sharing it.
 - Provide a brief explanation of verification: checking whether information is accurate, reliable, and supported by evidence.
 - Ask students:
 - "Have you ever believed something you later found out wasn't true? How did that happen?"
 - "What tools or strategies do you already use to check if something is true?"
-

2. Practical exercise – fact-checking (20 minutes)

Step 1: Divide students into small groups (3-5 students each).

Step 2: Provide each group with a set of 5 prepared statements. See the Worksheet 1.

Step 3: Groups use devices to verify each statement. They should:

- Search for the original source of the information.
- Check multiple sources to confirm accuracy.
- Evaluate the reliability of the sources (Is it credible? Does it cite evidence?).
- Record findings on a Worksheet 2:
 - **Statement**
 - **True or False?**
 - **Source(s) used**
 - **Why this source is reliable (or not).**



3. Group Analysis (10 minutes)

Each group presents their matched sources, explaining their reasoning.

- Each group presents their analysis of 1-2 statements, explaining:
 - Whether the statement was true or false.
 - Which sources they used and why they found them reliable or unreliable.
 - Provide feedback on group findings, emphasizing:
 - The importance of cross-referencing.
 - How to spot red flags in unreliable sources (e.g., lack of citations, sensationalism).
-

Concluding the activity (10 minutes)



1. Recap of the key learnings

Summarize the main takeaways:

- Fact-checking is essential for identifying true and false information.
- Reliable sources are authoritative, authentic, and provide evidence for their claims.
- Cross-referencing multiple sources ensures accuracy and builds trust in the information.

2. Personal reflection

Ask students to reflect on these questions:

- How do I decide if information is accurate or not?
- What will I do differently when consuming information in the future?

3. Group sharing

Invite a few students to share their thoughts about:

- A surprising fact they learned during the activity.
- How this exercise changed their approach to verifying information.

4. Reinforce the takeaway

End with an inspiring statement (on a projector or board):

"Before you trust or share information, take a moment to verify it. Fact-checking is a powerful tool to protect yourself and others from misinformation."



Optional next steps

Family Fact-Checking Challenge

- Encourage students to repeat this activity at home with their parents.
- Choose 3-5 statements (either from the activity or create their own).
- Work with their parents to verify whether the statements are true or false using reliable sources.

Learning Unit: Authenticity & Authority

Activity 1.a.2: Source verification

Worksheet 1 (to be printed and cut)

Cut the sheet - 1 section for 1 group of students

Group 1

1. The Great Wall of China is visible from space.
2. Water boils at 100°C at sea level.
3. The heart of a blue whale is the size of a small car.
4. Humans have more bones at birth than as adults.
5. Lightning never strikes the same place twice.

Group 2

1. The Amazon rainforest produces 20% of the world's oxygen.
2. Bananas are berries, but strawberries are not.
3. Napoleon Bonaparte was extremely short, standing only 150 cm.
4. Diamonds are formed from coal.
5. Venus is the hottest planet in our solar system.

Group 3

1. Dogs can only see in black and white.
2. Honey never spoils and can last for thousands of years.
3. There are more stars in the universe than grains of sand on Earth.
4. Humans share 98% of their DNA with chimpanzees.
5. Polar bears use snow as sunscreen.

Group 4

1. The human brain uses 100% of its capacity at all times.
2. Tomatoes were once thought to be poisonous in Europe.
3. Penguins can fly for short distances.
4. The Eiffel Tower can grow taller in the summer.
5. Sharks must constantly swim to stay alive.

Group 5

1. Mount Everest is the tallest mountain in the world.
2. Peanuts are not nuts; they are legumes.
3. Goldfish only have a memory of three seconds.
4. The Moon is slowly moving away from Earth.
5. A day on Venus is shorter than a year on Venus.

Learning Unit: Authenticity & Authority

Activity 1.a.2: Source verification

Worksheet 2 (to be printed)

Fill for each statement:

Statement 1

True or false?

Source(s) used:

Why this source is reliable (or not)

Statement 2

True or false?

Source(s) used:

Why this source is reliable (or not)

Statement 3

True or false?

Source(s) used:

Why this source is reliable (or not)

Statement 4

True or false?

Source(s) used:

Why this source is reliable (or not)

Statement 5

True or false?

Source(s) used:

Why this source is reliable (or not)



Learning Unit: Authenticity & Authority

Activity 1.a.2: Source verification

Worksheet 3: Correct answers (for the activity facilitator)

Group 1

1. The Great Wall of China is visible from space. (False)
2. Water boils at 100°C at sea level. (True)
3. The heart of a blue whale is the size of a small car. (True)
4. Humans have more bones at birth than as adults. (True)
5. Lightning never strikes the same place twice. (False)

Group 2

1. The Amazon rainforest produces 20% of the world's oxygen. (False – around 9-16% in reality)
2. Bananas are berries, but strawberries are not. (True)
3. Napoleon Bonaparte was extremely short, standing only 150cm. (False – he was about 170cm, average for his time)
4. Diamonds are formed from coal. (False – they form from carbon under high pressure, but not coal)
5. Venus is the hottest planet in our solar system. (True)

Group 3

1. Dogs can only see in black and white. (False – they see limited colors, like blue and yellow)
2. Honey never spoils and can last for thousands of years. (True)
3. There are more stars in the universe than grains of sand on Earth. (True)
4. Humans share 98% of their DNA with chimpanzees. (True)
5. Polar bears use snow as sunscreen. (False)

Group 4

1. The human brain uses 100% of its capacity at all times. (False – only specific regions are active at any given time)
2. Tomatoes were once thought to be poisonous in Europe. (True)
3. Penguins can fly for short distances. (False)
4. The Eiffel Tower can grow taller in the summer. (True – metal expands in heat)
5. Sharks must constantly swim to stay alive. (False – some can rest on the ocean floor and breathe)

Group 5

1. Mount Everest is the tallest mountain in the world. (True – measured above sea level)
2. Peanuts are not nuts; they are legumes. (True)
3. Goldfish only have a memory of three seconds. (False – they can remember for months)
4. The Moon is slowly moving away from Earth. (True – about 3.8 cm per year)
5. A day on Venus is shorter than a year on Venus. (False – a day is longer due to slow rotation)



Activity 1.a.3 – DEBATE



Objective

- To encourage critical thinking about source reliability, authenticity, and authority in the information we consume.
- To develop students' argumentation and discussion skills.
- To explore differing perspectives on trusting information sources and the balance between reliance on authority and critical evaluation.

Preparation

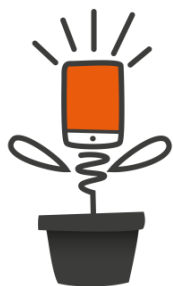
- Arrange chairs in two groups facing each other for a debate-style setup.
- Provide a central space for the moderator (trainer) to guide the discussion.
- Debate prompt cards or slides with discussion topics.
- A whiteboard or flip chart for listing key arguments presented during the debate.
- Optional: a timer to manage speaking time.
- Prepare the debate motion: *"We should fully trust information from reputable sources like news outlets and government websites."*
- Divide students into two teams:
 - **Team A:** Argues in favor of trusting reputable sources.
 - **Team B:** Argues for caution and critical evaluation, even for well-established sources.
- Prepare 2-3 examples to help students understand the debate context (e.g., media mistakes, fake news from unreliable sources):



Misleading election content on TikTok:

Example: In the lead-up to recent elections, TikTok users in key battleground areas were shown AI-generated videos featuring political leaders making statements they never actually made. These misleading videos spread false information about party positions and policies. ([BBC](#))

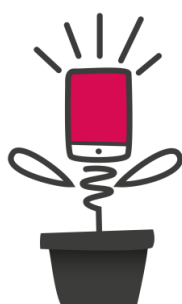
Purpose: Demonstrates how easily misinformation can spread on popular platforms like TikTok, which are widely used by younger audiences.



False claims after tragic events:

Example: Following the tragic stabbing of an 11-year-old boy named Mateo in Mocejón, Spain, false rumors spread on social media claiming the suspect was of North African origin or an unaccompanied minor. These claims were debunked by authorities, but not before causing significant public outrage. ([theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com))

Purpose: Highlights how misinformation can quickly arise after tragic events, leading to misplaced anger and prejudice.



Misleading social media post: fake animal sightings

Example: In 2019, a viral tweet claimed a photo of a "giant wolf spotted in Slovakia" showed a new dangerous species in Europe. The image turned out to be heavily edited. ([Instagram](https://www.instagram.com))

Purpose: Illustrates how social media posts, even with photos, can be misleading and why checking the source or using reverse image searches is essential.

Step-by-step instructions

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

- Explain the goal of the debate: to critically examine the reliability of sources, the role of authenticity and authority, and the importance of critical thinking.
- Present the debate motion: *"We should fully trust information from reputable sources like news outlets and government websites."*
- Assign students to **Team A** (in favor) and **Team B** (against). Ensure teams have roughly equal numbers.
- If students are unsure about their position, remind them that they are debating the motion, not necessarily their personal views.
- Allow each team 5 minutes to brainstorm arguments, examples, and evidence to support their stance. They may use examples from previous activities or personal experience.

2. Conduct the debate (25 minutes)

Opening statements (5 minutes)

- Each team presents their opening argument:

- Team A (in favor): Emphasizes the value of authority, expertise, and trust in reputable sources.
- Team B (against): Highlights the risks of misinformation, bias, and the importance of questioning even reputable sources.

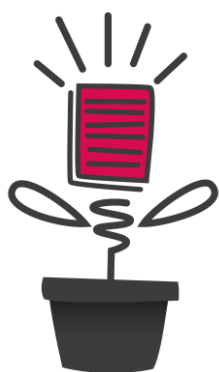
Open debate (15 minutes):

- Teams alternate presenting points and counterpoints.
- Encourage students to use examples, real-life cases, and logical reasoning to support their arguments.
- Allow teams to ask questions or challenge the opposing side.
- Act as a moderator to ensure fair turns, respectful discussion, and adherence to the motion.

Closing statements (5 minutes):

- Each team summarizes their key arguments, addressing points raised during the debate.

Concluding the activity (10 minutes)



1. Recap of the key learnings

Summarize the main takeaways:

- Reputable sources are often reliable but can still contain errors, biases, or outdated information.
- Critical thinking and questioning ensure we approach information thoughtfully and responsibly.
- Healthy skepticism helps us avoid being misled by misinformation, even from well-known sources.

2. Personal reflection

Ask students to reflect on these questions:

- What is one thing I learned from the debate that surprised me?
- How can I apply critical thinking to the information I consume daily?
- If suitable, present the local fact-checking web-sites. (In the Czech Republic: [Demagog](#), [Hoax.cz](#), [Na pravou míru](#).)

3. Group sharing

Invite students to share:

- An example of when they trusted a source that turned out to be unreliable.
- How this activity has changed their approach to evaluating information.

4. Reinforce the takeaway

End the activity with an inspiring statement (display it on a projector or whiteboard if possible):
"While reputable sources can guide us with expertise and authority, critical thinking ensures we stay vigilant and informed. Always remember: trust, but verify—because questioning leads to understanding and deeper knowledge."



Optional next steps

Encourage students to:

- Choose a news article or online post at home, analyze it with their family or friends, and discuss whether the source is trustworthy.
- Share their findings in the next session.



Discussion topics

1. "The Role of Authority in Trusting Information"
 - Should we always trust experts and institutions like government websites or major news outlets?
 - What risks come with over-reliance on authority?
2. "Misinformation on Social Media"
 - Why is social media such a common source of false information?
 - How can users identify misleading content or fake news?
3. "Bias in Media and Reporting"
 - How can personal or institutional bias affect the reliability of information?
 - Should we trust a source that has a history of being biased but factually correct?
4. "The Role of Critical Thinking"
 - How does critical thinking help us navigate conflicting information?
 - Can questioning everything make us too skeptical to trust anything?
5. "Balancing Speed and Accuracy"
 - Is it more important to get information quickly or to ensure it is accurate?
 - How can reputable sources balance speed and reliability?
6. "Real-Life Misinformation Cases"
 - What lessons can we learn from instances where misinformation caused harm?
 - How could better fact-checking have prevented these situations?
7. "The Importance of Cross-Referencing"
 - How does cross-referencing multiple sources improve our understanding of an issue?
 - What are the challenges of cross-referencing in the age of fast information?



Activity 1.a.4 - SOCIAL MEDIA FACT-CHECKING



Objective

- To familiarize students with fact-checking techniques in the context of social media.
- To develop students' ability to verify the accuracy of information and recognize misinformation.
- To raise awareness of how misinformation spreads on social media and its potential impacts.

Preparation

Space configuration

- Arrange seating for small group collaboration (3-5 students per group).
- Set up a screen or whiteboard for demonstration and discussion.

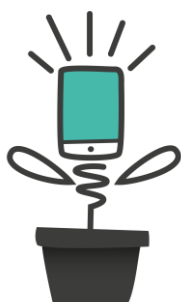
Materials

- Access to devices with internet (computers, tablets, or smartphones) for fact-checking.
- Screenshots or examples of social media posts (some true, some false) for analysis.
- Fact-checking tools list (e.g. in English language: [Snopes](#), [FactCheck.org](#), or [Google reverse image search tool](#)). Find your local fact-checking tools for your local context and language.
- A worksheet for groups to record their findings.

Teacher/facilitator preparation

- Prepare several social media posts in advance (text, images, or videos) that are either real or misleading. Examples:

1. Unverified claims



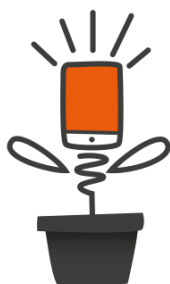
Example: "Chocolate Milk Comes from Brown Cows"

Description: A widely circulated myth suggests that chocolate milk comes directly from brown cows.

Purpose: Demonstrates how easily unverified claims can spread and be believed without questioning.

[Link to the explanatory article on CNN.](#) (trustworthy source)

2. Sensational headlines



Example: *"Shark Found in the Thames River!"*

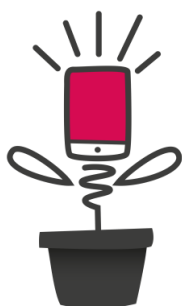
Description: A headline exaggerating the presence of a shark in the Thames, when in reality, it was a small, harmless species.

Purpose: Highlights how headlines can be sensationalized to attract readers, even if the actual story is less dramatic.

[Link to the sensational YouTube video.](#)

[Link to the debunking online article in English.](#)

3. Clickbait content



Example: *"King Charles not his real father: Prince Harry opens up on rumour!"*

Description: A headline designed to pique curiosity without providing specific information.

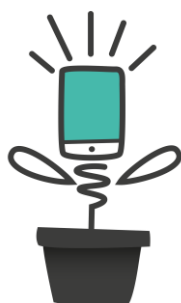
Purpose: Shows how clickbait uses vague yet intriguing headlines to lure readers into clicking, often leading to underwhelming content.

[Link to the online article in English.](#)

["Debunking" video on Facebook in English.](#)

[Click-bite examples.](#)

4. Reliable, well-sourced posts



Example: *"Hubble traces hidden history of the Andromeda Galaxy"*

Description: A post from the European Space Agency detailing the largest photomosaic of the Andromeda galaxy.

Purpose: The article highlights the groundbreaking discoveries and detailed imaging of the Andromeda Galaxy made possible by the NASA/ESA Hubble Space Telescope.

[Viral video on Facebook.](#)

[The European Space Agency web.](#)

- Verify the accuracy of each post and prepare notes on the true source or debunking evidence.
-

Step-by-step instructions

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

- Explain the growing importance of fact-checking on social media due to the speed at which information spreads.
 - Highlight the risks of misinformation, such as its potential to influence decisions or provoke emotional reactions.
 - Define Key Terms:
 - **Misinformation:** False or misleading information shared unintentionally.
 - **Disinformation:** False information spread deliberately to deceive.
 - **Fact-checking:** The process of verifying the truthfulness of information.
 - Ask students:
 - "Have you ever seen a social media post that you later found out wasn't true?"
 - "What do you usually do if you're unsure whether a post is true or false?"
 - Show students the prepared examples and help them understand what to look for when fact-checking.
-

2. Practical exercise (20 minutes)

Step 1: Form groups

- Divide students into four small groups.

Step 2: Distribute social media posts

- Give each group one social media post to analyze. See the Worksheet1:
 - [Conversations between Neil deGrasse Tyson and Paul Meurice about aliens.](#)
 - [A post with an AI generated image of Elon Musk.](#)
 - [Instagram post with existing species of frogs.](#)
 - [A post of the polydactyl cat that appears to be fake, but is not.](#)

Step 3: Fact-check posts

- **Groups work together to:**
 - Discuss whether the post appears reliable. Look for red flags, such as sensational language, lack of citations, or emotional appeal.

- Check the profile or website associated with the post. Is it credible? Do they have a history of reliable reporting?
- Use fact-checking tools or search engines to confirm or debunk the claims.
- If the post contains an image, use tools like Google Reverse Image Search to find its original context.

Step 4: Record findings

- **Groups complete Worksheet 2:**
 - Post content (summarized).
 - Their findings (true or false).
 - Sources used to verify the post.
 - Reasons for their conclusions.



3. Group review (10 minutes)

- Each group presents one analyzed post to the class, explaining:
 - Their conclusion (true or false).
 - The evidence they found and the tools they used.
 - Why they trust or distrust the source.
- Provide feedback on group conclusions and highlight effective fact-checking strategies.

Concluding the activity (10 minutes)



1. Recap of the key learnings

Summarize the main takeaways:

- Misinformation spreads easily on social media but can often be identified with proper tools and techniques.
- Reliable sources cite evidence, avoid sensationalism, and are transparent about their information.
- Fact-checking tools, such as reverse image searches and fact-checking websites, are essential for verifying content.

2. Personal reflection

Ask students to reflect on these questions:

- What are the most common red flags of misinformation on social media?
- How can I apply the fact-checking skills I learned today to my social media habits?

3. Group sharing

Invite a few students to share:

- A time they believed or shared a post that later turned out to be false.
- A useful tool or strategy they discovered during the activity.

4. Reinforce the takeaway

End with an inspiring statement (on a projector or board):

"Think before you click, and verify before you share."



Optional next steps

Encourage students to practice fact-checking at home:

- Ask them to pick one social media post they encounter in the next few days, analyze it, and verify its authenticity using the tools they learned.
- They can share their findings in the next session or with their family.

Learning Unit: Authenticity & Authority
Activity 1a4 - Social Media Fact Checking
Worksheet (to be printed)



Post content (summarized).

Your findings (true or false).

Sources used to verify the post.

Reasons for your conclusions.



This material has been developed within the Erasmus+ project ASAP - A Systemic Approach to social media and pre-adolescents through thinking skills education



Co-funded by
the European Union



Activity 2.a.1 - UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENT TYPES OF INFORMATION



Objective

- To help students explore the different types of information encountered daily (facts, opinions, propaganda, advertising, entertainment).
- To develop students' ability to recognize and categorize different types of information.
- To build awareness of how information can influence emotions and decisions.

Preparation

- Arrange tables for small group work (3-5 students per group).
- Set up a space for collective discussion (semi-circle or rows facing the board).
- Printable Worksheet 1: "Types of Information Sorting Table" (one per group).
- Set of sample information snippets (printed or digital) representing different types (facts, opinions, propaganda, advertising, entertainment).
- Whiteboard or flipchart for group presentations and note-taking.
- Markers or pens.
- Prepare approximately 10–15 short examples (headlines, advertisements, social media posts, news snippets - in your language) that can be cut and distributed to students. Fill the Worksheet with the description of these snippets.
- Prepare an introductory slide or poster with definitions of the five types of information.

Step-by-step instructions

1. Introduction (10 minutes)

- **Explain the objective** of the activity: "Today we will learn to recognize the *types* of information we see every day and how they can influence our emotions and decisions."
 - **Define** the five types of information:
 - **Facts:** Verifiable and objective information.
 - **Opinions:** Personal interpretations or beliefs.
 - **Propaganda:** Biased information aimed at influencing opinions, often politically motivated.
 - **Advertising:** Content meant to promote or sell products, services, or ideas.
 - **Entertainment:** Information designed to amuse, entertain, or engage without necessarily being factual.
 - **Ask a warm-up question:**
"Have you ever read something online that made you feel very excited or angry? What kind of information was it?"
-

2. Practical Exercise – Sorting Types of Information (25 minutes)

Step 1: Group setup

- Divide students into small groups (3–5 participants per group).
- Distribute Worksheet 1 and a set of sample snippets to each group.

Step 2: Group work (15 minutes)

- Each group will:
 - **Read each snippet** carefully.
 - **Categorize** the snippet into one of the five types of information using the sorting table on Worksheet 1.
 - **Discuss briefly:**
 - *What made you classify it this way?*
 - *What emotions does it evoke (e.g., trust, anger, curiosity, amusement)?*
- Encourage students to think about **context** and **purpose**: "What is the creator of this information trying to achieve?"

Step 3: Group presentations (10 minutes)

- Each group chooses **one example** to present:
 - State the **type** of information.
 - Explain their **reasoning** for the classification.
 - Share the **emotion** it triggered.
-

3. Reflection and Discussion (10 minutes)

- Facilitate a discussion with the following prompts:
 - "Which type of information was the hardest to recognize? Why?"
 - "How does emotional language influence the way we perceive information?"
 - "How might recognizing the type of information help us make better decisions online?"
- Summarize the key learning points:
 - Different types of information influence us differently.
 - Being able to recognize them helps protect us from manipulation.

Concluding the activity



1. Recap of key learnings

- Information has different purposes: to inform, persuade, sell, or entertain.
- Recognizing the type of information is essential for critical thinking and emotional awareness.
- Emotions often play a role in how we react to different types of content.

2. Personal reflection

Ask students to individually reflect (in writing or orally):

- "Next time you read a post or article online, what will you ask yourself before trusting it?"

3. Group sharing

Invite a few students to share:

- One thing they will do differently when encountering new information.

4. Reinforce the takeaway

Display this message on the board/projector:

"Knowing what kind of information you are reading gives you the power to decide how to react to it."



Optional next steps

Create a Media Diary

Ask students to track the types of information they encounter over a week and note how it made them feel.

Learning Unit: Authenticity & Authority

Activity 2.a.1: Understanding different types of information

Worksheet (to be printed) - Types of Information - Sorting Table

SNIPPET (SHORT DESCRIPTION)	FACT	OPINION	PROPAGANDA	ENTER- TAINMENT	ADVERTISING	EMOTION TRIGGERED

Five types of information

Facts: Verifiable and objective information.

Opinions: Personal interpretations or beliefs.

Propaganda: Biased information aimed at influencing opinions, often politically motivated.

Advertising: Content meant to promote or sell products, services, or ideas.

Entertainment: Information designed to amuse, entertain, or engage without necessarily being factual.

**Knowing what kind of
information you are reading
gives you the power to decide
how to react to it.**



Activity 2.a.2 - INFORMATION ECOSYSTEMS: WHERE WE FIND INFORMATION



Objective

- To help students identify the main "information ecosystems" (traditional media, digital media, formal academic sources, social media, blogs, etc.).
- To develop students' understanding of how different ecosystems influence the way information is presented and perceived.
- To raise awareness of how different sources shape credibility, trust, and perception.

Preparation

- Tables arranged for small group collaboration (3–5 students per group).
 - Wall space or a board for posting group-created concept maps.
 - Printable Worksheet 1: "Information Ecosystem Map" (one per group).
 - Large sheets of paper and markers for drawing concept maps.
 - A slide or poster summarizing examples of different ecosystems.
 - (Optional) Printed examples of news articles, social media posts, blog excerpts, academic articles.
 - **Prepare** a few simple visuals showing examples of different types of ecosystems: (e.g., Twitter post, TV news screenshot, Wikipedia article, blog post, online government site).
-

Step-by-step instructions

1. Introduction (10 minutes)

- **Explain the objective:** "Today we will learn about the different 'ecosystems' where we find information and how each one influences what we read, believe, and share."
 - **Define information ecosystems:**
 - **Traditional media:** TV, newspapers, radio.
 - **Digital media:** Blogs, YouTube, social media posts.
 - **Formal sources:** Academic articles, encyclopaedias, government reports.
 - **Give examples:**
Show students a few sample screenshots or printed examples.
 - **Warm-up discussion question:**
"Where do you usually get your information? Social media? News websites? Books?"
-

2. Practical Exercise – Creating an Information Ecosystem Map (25 minutes)

Step 1: Group setup

- Divide students into small groups (3–5 participants per group).
- Hand out a large blank sheet of paper to each group.

Step 2: Group work (15 minutes)

- Display the task on the screen.
- Each group will:
 - List all the different *places* they use to find information.
 - Categorize each source into one of three major ecosystems:
 - Traditional media
 - Digital media
 - Formal/academic sources
 - Reflect on how they **feel** about each ecosystem (trust, skepticism, confusion, etc.).
- Groups will **draw a concept map**:
 - At the center: "Information Ecosystem."
 - Branches for Traditional Media, Digital Media, Formal Sources.
 - Under each branch, add the sources they use (e.g., Instagram → Digital Media; CNN → Traditional Media).
 - Add emoticons or keywords showing how they feel about each one (e.g., 📺 for trust, ⚡ for quick news, ? for skepticism).

Step 3: Group presentations (10 minutes)

- Each group briefly presents their concept map:
 - Explain one or two sources they trust most and why.
 - Mention one ecosystem they feel is less reliable and why.
-

3. Reflection and Discussion (10 minutes)

- Lead a reflection using these questions:
 - "Which ecosystem do you rely on the most? Why?"
 - "What are the strengths and weaknesses of traditional media versus digital media?"
 - "How might depending only on one ecosystem influence our opinions?"
 - "Have you ever cross-checked a piece of information between different ecosystems? What happened?"
 - Summarize the key learning points:
 - Different ecosystems offer different types of information and reliability.
 - Trust should be based on evaluating credibility, not just familiarity.
 - Exposure to diverse ecosystems reduces bias and misinformation risks.
-

Concluding the activity

1. Recap of key learnings

- We live in multiple information ecosystems.
- Different ecosystems offer different strengths and weaknesses.
- Understanding where information comes from helps us judge its reliability.

2. Personal reflection

Ask students individually:

- "Which ecosystem do you think you should explore more to get a broader view of information?"

3. Group sharing

Invite a few students to share one change they could make in their information habits after today's session.

4. Reinforce the takeaway

Display this message:

"Information is everywhere, but critical thinking is your compass."

Optional next steps

Home assignment

Students pick a news story and follow it across three ecosystems (e.g., TV news, social media post, and an academic article) and note differences in presentation.



Draw Your Information Ecosystem Map

- Write "Information Ecosystem" in the centre of your sheet.
- Draw three branches for:
 1. Traditional Media
 2. Digital Media
 3. Formal Sources.
- Under each branch, add the sources you use (e.g., Instagram → Digital Media; CNN → Traditional Media).
- Add emoticons or keywords showing how you feel about each one (e.g., 📖 for trust, ⚡ for quick news, ? for skepticism).

**Information is everywhere,
but critical thinking
is your compass.**





Activity 2.a.3 - HOW INFORMATION SHAPES OUR VIEWS



Objective

- To help students reflect on how the information (and misinformation) they consume daily shapes their opinions and decisions.
- To build awareness of emotional influence and media bias.
- To develop skills for critical evaluation of personal information habits.

Preparation

- Tables for small group work (3–5 students per group).
- Open space for class discussion and reflections (circle or semi-circle seating preferred).
- Printable Worksheet 1: "Information Reflection Sheet" (one per participant or group).
- Flipchart or whiteboard to collect group insights.
- Prepare several short case studies showing how information shaped public views (e.g., climate change narratives, election misinformation, celebrity gossip stories) – 1 case study per each group of students.
- Prepare prompts for guided reflection.

Step-by-step instructions

1. Introduction (10 minutes)

- **Explain the objective:** "Today we'll reflect on how the information we read, watch, and share can shape what we believe and how we make decisions."
- **Key ideas to introduce:**
 - Information can trigger strong emotional reactions (anger, fear, pride).
 - Biased or incomplete information can change our opinions without us realizing it.

- **Warm-up question:**
"Can you think of a time when something you read or heard changed your opinion about something important?"
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2. Practical Exercise – Exploring Media Influence (25 minutes)

Step 1: Group setup

- Divide students into small groups (3–5 participants).
- Hand out a case study and Worksheet 1 to each group.

Step 2: Group work (15 minutes)

- Each group will:
 - **Read their assigned case study** (real-world media narrative).
 - **Analyze the framing** of the information:
 - Is the information emotional? Neutral? Sensationalist?
 - Is it complete or missing important perspectives?
 - **Discuss:**
 - How might this information shape someone's view on the topic?
 - What emotions does the information trigger?
 - How could different sources report the same story differently?
 - **Fill out Worksheet 1** based on their findings.

Step 3: Group presentations (10 minutes)

- Each group briefly presents:
 - How the information was framed.
 - Potential emotional impact on readers.
 - How it could influence public opinions or decisions.
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3. Reflection and Discussion (10 minutes)

- Facilitate a reflection using these questions:
 - "Did you notice any emotional triggers in your case study?"
 - "How does emotional information affect our ability to think critically?"
 - "Can you trust your first emotional reaction to information? Why or why not?"
 - "Have you ever changed your mind after learning new information that challenged your initial view?"
- Summarize key learning points:

- Information often aims to evoke emotions.
- Emotional responses can cloud critical thinking.
- It's important to recognize how information influences us to make more informed, conscious decisions.

Concluding the activity



1. Recap of key learnings

- Media narratives can strongly influence personal opinions and decisions.
- Emotions are often used to make information more persuasive.
- Being aware of these influences helps build stronger critical thinking skills.

2. Personal reflection

Ask students individually:

- "Next time you feel a strong emotion when reading something online, what will you do before sharing or reacting?"

3. Group sharing

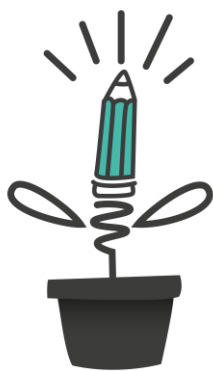
Invite a few students to share:

- One insight they had about how media shapes their views.

4. Reinforce the takeaway

Display this message:

"Strong emotions can open our hearts, but critical thinking keeps our minds clear."



Optional next steps

Media Self-Awareness Diary

Ask students to track their emotional reactions to information over a few days and reflect on how it influenced their behavior or opinions.

Learning Unit: Authenticity & Authority
Activity 2a3 - How information shapes our views
Worksheet



Use this sheet to reflect on how information is presented and how it influences emotions and opinions.

Guiding questions	Notes
What was the information about? Where did it come from?	
What emotions did it trigger (anger, sadness, hope, excitement)?	
Was the information complete, biased, or emotional? How could you tell?	
How could this information shape someone's views or decisions?	



Activity 2.b.1 - INFORMATION COMPARISON: DIGGING DEEPER



Objective

- To develop students' ability to compare different information sources critically.
- To help students identify discrepancies, omissions, or biases between different reports on the same topic.
- To strengthen critical thinking and encourage source cross-checking habits.

Preparation

- Tables arranged for small group collaboration (3–5 students per group).
- A board or projector for summarizing findings.
- Printable Worksheet 1: "Information Comparison Chart" (one per group).
- Markers or pens.
- **Select** a few simple, non-divisive topics where differences in framing are noticeable (e.g., coverage of a sporting event, environmental news, or a new technological invention). Fill the titles and short description in the worksheet for students.
- Ensure articles differ slightly in tone, details, or emphasis (some emotional, some neutral, some sensational).

Step-by-step instructions

1. Introduction (10 minutes)

- **Explain the objective:** "Today we will see how different sources can report on the same topic in different ways — and why it's important to compare them critically."
- **Key ideas to introduce:**
 - No two sources report exactly the same way.

- Differences may reveal bias, incomplete information, or particular points of view.
 - **Warm-up question:**
"Have you ever heard two different versions of the same story? How did you decide which one to believe?"
-

2. Practical Exercise – Comparing Sources (25 minutes)

Step 1: Group setup

- Divide students into small groups (3–5 participants).
- Distribute sets of articles/posts and Worksheet 1.

Step 2: Group work (15 minutes)

- Each group will:
 - Read their 2–3 articles/posts about the same topic.
 - Use Worksheet 1 to:
 - Identify and summarize key points from each source.
 - Compare tone, facts, missing information, emotional language, and visuals.
 - Discuss:
 - Are the main facts the same?
 - What is emphasized or left out?
 - How does the tone (emotional vs. neutral) differ?
 - Would the reader feel differently depending on which article they read?
- Encourage students to note specific words, phrases, or images that shaped their impressions.

Step 3: Group presentations (10 minutes)

- Each group briefly presents:
 - Main differences they observed.
 - How these differences might shape readers' opinions.
-

3. Reflection and Discussion (10 minutes)

- Lead a reflection using these questions:
 - "Why do you think the sources presented the same topic differently?"
 - "How do emotions or missing facts change the way we understand an event?"
 - "What can we do to get a more complete and accurate picture of a topic?"
- Summarize key learning points:

- Always compare multiple sources, especially on important topics.
- Emotional or biased language can influence our perception without us realizing it.
- Critical readers always look beyond the first source.

Concluding the activity



1. Recap of key learnings

- Information is rarely completely objective — different sources frame information differently.
- Comparing sources reveals a more complete picture.
- Critical comparison builds independent, informed thinking.

2. Personal reflection

Ask students individually:

- "What is one thing you will pay closer attention to when reading news or posts in the future?"

3. Group sharing

Invite a few students to share:

- An example of a surprising difference they noticed between the sources.

4. Reinforce the takeaway

Display this message:

"One story. Many versions. Seek them all to find the truth."



Optional next steps

Home assignment

Students find two articles on the same current event from two different media outlets and write a short reflection on differences they noticed.

Learning Unit: Authenticity & Authority
Activity 2b1 - Information comparison
Worksheet - Comparing Sources on the Same Topic



Compare the articles/posts carefully. Fill in the table based on what you find. Be ready to discuss your findings.

Guiding questions	Main facts	Tone (emotional/neutral)	Missing info or bias	How it makes you feel
Source 1				
Source 2				
Source 3				
Source 4				



This material has been developed within the Erasmus+ project ASAP - A Systemic Approach to social media and pre-adolescents through thinking skills education



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

**One story.
Many versions.
Seek them all to find the truth.**





Activity 2.b.2 - THE ANATOMY OF A NEWS STORY



Objective

- To help students analyze the structure of news stories.
- To teach students how to spot red flags that indicate fake news or unreliable reporting.
- To develop critical reading and evaluation skills for news content.

Preparation

- Tables arranged for pairs or small groups (2–4 students).
- A board or screen for highlighting real examples of fake news red flags.
- Printable Worksheet 1: "News Story Checklist" (one per student or group).
- Markers or pens.
- Prepare 6–8 short news stories/headlines: mix of real and fake (can be slightly adapted versions of real online examples). Fill the titles of the news stories in the worksheet for students.
- Prepare a slide/poster with typical **red flags** of fake news:
 - Sensationalist headlines
 - Lack of author or credible source
 - Emotional or exaggerated language
 - Poor grammar and spelling
 - No supporting evidence
 - "Clickbait" tactics (overpromising, shocking claims)

Step-by-step instructions

1. Introduction (10 minutes)

- **Explain the objective:** "Today we'll learn how real news stories are structured and how to recognize when a news story might be fake."
 - **Key ideas to introduce:**
 - Real news stories have key components: headline, byline (author name), credible sources, facts with evidence, balanced perspective.
 - Fake news often tries to trick readers by mimicking the format of real news but using misleading or false information.
 - **Warm-up question:**
"Have you ever seen a news story that sounded suspicious? What made you doubt it?"
-

2. Practical Exercise – Spotting Red Flags (25 minutes)

Step 1: Group setup

- Divide students into small groups (2–4 participants).
- Distribute sets of news stories and Worksheet 1.

Step 2: Group work (15 minutes)

- Each group will:
 - Read 2–3 short news stories/headlines.
 - Use Worksheet 1 to:
 - Analyze each story using the checklist*
 - Mark any red flags they spot.
 - Decide: *Real*, *Fake*, or *Suspicious* (needs more checking).
- Encourage groups to discuss:
 - What red flags raised suspicion?
 - Which news stories felt trustworthy? Why?



Step 3: Group presentations (10 minutes)

- Each group chooses one story to present:
 - State whether they classified it as real, fake, or suspicious.
 - List the red flags they found (or explain why there were none).
-

3. Reflection and Discussion (10 minutes)

- Lead a reflection using these questions:

- "Which red flags were most common in fake or suspicious stories?"
 - "Why do you think fake news often uses emotional or shocking language?"
 - "How can you double-check a suspicious news story before believing it?"
 - Summarize key learning points:
 - Fake news often looks real — attention to details is essential.
 - Recognizing red flags helps prevent spreading misinformation.
 - Always verify before trusting or sharing information.
-

Concluding the activity

1. Recap of key learnings

- Real news is supported by evidence, credible sources, and professional writing.
- Fake news often uses emotional appeal, shocking claims, and lacks evidence.
- Learning to spot red flags makes us more responsible media consumers.

2. Personal reflection

Ask students individually:

- "What is one red flag you will watch for from now on when reading news online?"

3. Group sharing

Invite a few students to share:

- An example of a news story they found suspicious in their own experience.

4. Reinforce the takeaway

Display this message:

"Not all news is true — learn to spot the clues."



Optional next steps

Home assignment

Students choose one suspicious headline they find online during the week and research whether it's true or false.

Learning Unit: Authenticity & Authority
Activity 2b2 - Anatomy of a news story
Worksheet



Check the boxes for any red flags you notice. Summarize your conclusion: Real, Fake, or Suspicious.

Red flags	News story 1	News story 2	News story 3
Sensationalist or shocking headline			
No author or unknown source			
Emotional or exaggerated language			
Poor grammar or spelling mistakes			
No supporting evidence or citations			
Clickbait tactics ("You won't believe what happened next!")			
Story confirmed by other reliable sources			
Final decision: Real? Fake? Suspicious? (Need more checking?)			

Red Flags of Fake News

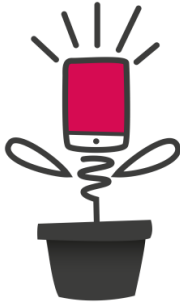
- **Sensationalist headlines**
- **Lack of author or credible source**
- **Emotional or exaggerated language**
- **Poor grammar and spelling**
- **No supporting evidence**
- **"Clickbait" tactics (overpromising, shocking claims)**

**Not all news is true
— learn to spot the clues.**





Activity 2.b.3 - THE FACT-CHECKER VS THE FAKE NEWS CREATOR



Objective

- To deepen understanding of how fake news is created and spread.
- To develop fact-checking skills through practical experience.
- To encourage students to think critically about both producing and verifying information.

Preparation

- Open space or tables arranged for small group collaboration (3–5 students per group).
- A designated space for short group presentations.
- Access to basic fact-checking tools (optional: simple access to Google Search or printed resources).
- Markers, pens, and paper for creating fake news posts.
- Prepare a simple example of a fake news post (visual or text) to show how misinformation can look convincing.
- Prepare prompts for each team: simple news topics they can distort slightly (e.g., "New Planet Discovered," "New Health Drink Goes Viral," "Unbelievable Animal Rescue").

Step-by-step instructions

1. Introduction (10 minutes)

- **Explain the objective:** "Today, you'll become both fake news creators and fact-checkers. This will help you see how easy it is to manipulate information — and how important fact-checking is."
- **Key ideas to introduce:**
 - Fake news creators often mix truth with lies to make stories seem believable.

- Fact-checkers need to spot subtle signs of misinformation.
 - **Warm-up question:**
"Why do you think people create and share fake news?"
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2. Practical Exercise – Fake News Battle (25 minutes)

Step 1: Divide students into two roles

- **Half the groups** will become **Fake News Creators**.
- **Half the groups** will become **Fact-Checkers**.
- Distribute an empty sheet of paper to all groups.

Step 2: Fake News Creators (10 minutes)

- Each creator group will:
 - Pick a topic (or receive one).
 - Create a **fake news post**: a short article, social media post, or headline.
 - Use **emotional, exaggerated language, missing context, or made-up facts** to make it persuasive.
 - (Encourage creativity but remind the students to stay school-appropriate.)

Step 3: Fact-Checkers (10 minutes)

- Each fact-checker group receives one fake news post created by another group.
- Their task is to:
 - Analyze the post using fact-checking strategies (what sounds suspicious? any red flags?).
 - Identify at least three problems (lack of evidence, exaggerated claims, unreliable sources, etc.).
 - Fill in the Fact-Checking part of Worksheet 1.

Step 4: Short presentations (5 minutes)

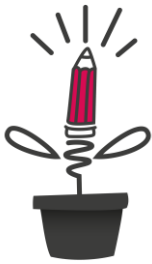
- Each fact-checker group presents their findings:
 - Which clues helped them recognize the post was fake?
 - How would they verify the information if needed?
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3. Reflection and Discussion (10 minutes)

- Lead a reflection using these questions:
 - "Was it easier to create fake news or to fact-check it?"
 - "What tricks did fake news creators use to make their stories seem believable?"

- "How can you protect yourself from falling for fake news?"
 - Summarize key learning points:
 - Fake news often looks real but has hidden clues.
 - Fact-checking requires careful reading and cross-referencing.
 - Awareness and skepticism are powerful defenses.
-

Concluding the activity



1. Recap of key learnings

- Creating fake news is easy — recognizing it requires critical skills.
- Always look for signs of manipulation, missing evidence, and exaggerated emotions.
- Never share information before verifying it.

2. Personal reflection

Ask students individually:

- "What will you do differently next time you read or see something shocking online?"

3. Group sharing

Invite a few students to share:

- A trick they learned today that could help them spot fake news faster.
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Optional next steps

Creative task

Students design a short poster or meme encouraging people to fact-check before sharing news.



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