



## DEVELOPING ONLINE CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

Critical thinking is an important skill to develop as it can help you separate real news from 'fake news' or trustworthy information from untrustworthy information online. 'Fake news' is false information that has been made up, and created to look like trustworthy news reports.

One way to identify fake news and misinformation online is to critically think about the accuracy of the content and the motives behind why it was written.

The questions below encourage critical thinking and can be asked about anything you see, read and hear online.

- **Who** wrote the information?
- **What** is it about?
- **Where** does the information come from?
- **When** was it written and last updated?
- **Why** was the information written?
- **How** do I feel about it or find out more?

## Instructions

1. Use the article below

a. [sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/08/170808145524.htm](http://sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/08/170808145524.htm)

2. Prior to reading the article you have been given, rate how trustworthy the information seems (please circle one).

**NOT TRUSTWORTHY**

**UNSURE**

**TRUSTWORTHY**

3. Read the article.

4. Fill in the checklist on the next page. For each statement, please select 'yes', 'no', or 'don't know' based on the information in the article.

5. Score the amount of 'yes' answers (out of 12) that your article received. Refer to the Scoring Key in the checklist to check the trustworthiness level of your article.

6. Compare your rating of the article to your initial impressions (in Step 1). Did your initial impressions match the rating the article received after your critical analysis?

# Worksheet for Critical Thinking Lesson Plan 1

**ARTICLE TITLE:** .....

## WHO - Who wrote this article?

- |   |     |            |    |
|---|-----|------------|----|
| • The author is qualified on the topic of the article<br><small>(An author may be qualified if they have a university degree or experience relevant to the article topic)</small> | Yes | Don't know | No |
| • The author has included a bibliography  | Yes | Don't know | No |

## WHAT - What is this article about?

### What makes this article trustworthy or untrustworthy?

- |   |     |            |    |
|---|-----|------------|----|
| • This article provides links to research to back up its argument             | Yes | Don't know | No |
| • This article has a balanced opinion and presents both sides of the argument | Yes | Don't know | No |

## WHERE - Where does this information come from?

### What website/organisation is it from?

- |   |     |            |    |
|---|-----|------------|----|
| • This article is from a reliable person/organisation <small>(e.g. newspaper, university, etc.)</small> | Yes | Don't know | No |
| • This article is from a reliable website <small>(such as one ending in .gov or .edu)</small>           | Yes | Don't know | No |

## WHEN - When was this article written? When was this article last updated?

- |   |     |            |    |
|---|-----|------------|----|
| • This article provides dates of when it was published/updated    | Yes | Don't know | No |
| • This article is recent <small>(within the last 2 years)</small> | Yes | Don't know | No |

## WHY - Why was this article written?

### Why is this article more or less trustworthy than others?

- |  |     |            |    |
|--|-----|------------|----|
| • The author's primary motive is to inform the reader<br><small>(rather than influence or sell the reader something)</small> | Yes | Don't know | No |
| • This article encourages debate and allows me to make up my own mind  | Yes | Don't know | No |

## HOW - How do I feel about this article? How can I find out more?

- |  |     |            |    |
|--|-----|------------|----|
| • The article is written in a way that is easy to understand<br><small>(rather than confusing and emotive)</small> | Yes | Don't know | No |
| • I could find more research on the claims in this article   | Yes | Don't know | No |

**TOTALS:**    **Yes:** .....    **Don't know:** .....    **No:** .....

## SCORING KEY

A score of 9 or more 'yes' answers = more likely to be trustworthy

A score of 4 - 8 'yes' answers = more information is needed to determine trustworthiness

A score of 3 or less 'yes' answers = likely to be untrustworthy