

## Lesson plan: Spot misinformation in "pink slime" journalism — presenter notes

[Lesson summary](#)

[Lesson slide deck](#)

[Student handout](#)

### ACTIVATOR

(SLIDE 1) -----THINK - PAIR - SHARE (5 Minutes)

K - W - L Activity

- What do you **K**now About "pink slime"?
- What do you **W**ant to Know About "pink slime"?
- What did you **L**earn About "pink slime"?

**K - W - L Activity:** What did I **Know**, **Want** to know, and **Learn** about "**Pink Slime**"?

Know	Want to know	Learn

(SLIDE 1) -----Presenter Notes

- Ask students to fill out the first two columns of the K-W-L chart.
- Discuss their answers.
- Then either ask students to do an online search for information about "pink slime" or provide background reading for them to take notes in the "What did you learn"
- Some options for background reading
  - ["ABC News Called it Pink Slime. Now USDA Says it Can Be Labeled Ground Beef"](#)
  - [Hundreds of 'pink slime' local news outlets are distributing algorithmic stories and conservative talking points](#)
- Discuss what students learned

(SLIDE 2) -----KEY VOCABULARY (5 Minutes)

#### Key Vocabulary

Term	Definition
1. Pink slime journalism	
2. Reading laterally	
3. Reading upstream	

(SLIDE 2) -----Presenter Notes

Explain that the term "Pink Slime" is used to describe news websites that try to appear legitimate but are funded by biased or partisan groups to provide a skewed perspective of news

*favorable to that organization's agenda. Preview the key vocabulary as students fill out their handouts:*

- Pink slime journalism —
  - From one of the background reading articles you would point out that although the websites pretend to be “local news” the stories are often written by poorly-paid non-professionals overseas.
- Reading laterally — Search to see what other credible sources are saying about the claim
  - **If you are comfortable with it you can use the CRAAP acronym.** you are checking for currency, relevancy, authority, accuracy, and purpose (CRAAP method)
- Reading upstream — the practice of finding the original source of a claim, so you're not basing your information on someone else's interpretation.

(SLIDE 3) -----MEDIAWISE FACT CHECK ABOUT THIS POST

- *Watch this video produced by the Mediawise Teen Fact-Checking team and take notes on your student handout*
  - What red-flags helped the MediaWise Teen Fact-Checker identify the website as “pink slime journalism”?
  - What fact-checking techniques were used by the TFCN?

(SLIDE 3) -----Presenter Notes

- *Watch this video produced by the Mediawise Teen Fact-Checking team and take notes on your student handout*
  - Why are these types of websites called “pink slime journalism”?
  - What red flags signaled the West Cook News is a “pink lime journalism” website?
    - No sources/evidence provided for the information
    - Politifact labeled it as misleading and had contradictory evidence
    - A statement from the school district contradicted the claim directly
  - What fact-checking techniques were used by the TFCN?
    - Lateral Reading
    - Read the “About” Page
    - Search to see if credible Fact-Checking sites have information
    - Reading upstream

(Slide 4) DISCUSSION OR EXIT OUT THE DOOR

**“What’s the Big Idea?” Discussion questions**

- How is the phrase “Pink Slime” an appropriate way to describe websites that pose as legitimate news outlets?
- What might be the West Cook News bias or political point of view in posting this story?

(SLIDE 4) -----Presenter Notes

- How is the phrase “Pink Slime” an appropriate way to describe websites that pose as legitimate news outlets?
  - The stories have no real evidence (no real meat)
  - The stories are not written by professionals

- The stories are repackaged to look like real news when they are not.
- What might be the West Cook News agenda or political point of view in posting this story?
  - Conservative political view
  - Erode public trust or support for public schools

(Slide 5) EXTENSION AND REFINING ACTIVITY

### Extension and Refining Activity

- Choose a Pink Slime News Organization in your state from this map:  
<https://iffy.news/pink-slime-fake-local-news/#map>
- Choose a news story from the site and use the techniques to check if it is a “Pink Slime” article or legitimate news. Fill out the table below and prepare to present your findings to the class.

(SLIDE 5) -----Presenter Notes

- Students can work independently, in small groups, or complete this exercise as homework or as a ticket out the door. You could schedule presentations for the next class period.

### Additional Resources

- MediaWise [“Is This Legit?”](#) Series
- [How To Combat Political Misinformation](#) from PBS NewsHour Student Reporting Labs
- [Fact-Checking Lesson](#) for Student Journalists
- [Misinformation Overload](#) Interviews from PBS NewsHour Student Reporting Labs
- [StoryMaker Media Literacy Learning](#)
- [Reuters Media Literacy Contest](#)
- PBS NewsHour Classroom's [Journalism in Action](#)