

Media Literacy: Flex Your Fact-Checking Muscles - Read Laterally

Note: If your teacher is not using Google Classroom, you will need to make a copy of this hyperdoc and then share it with your teacher.



“Truthiness - a quality characterizing a ‘truth’ that a person making an argument or assertion claims to know intuitively ‘from the gut’ or because it ‘feels right’ without regard to evidence, logic, intellectual examination, or facts.” Stephen Colbert

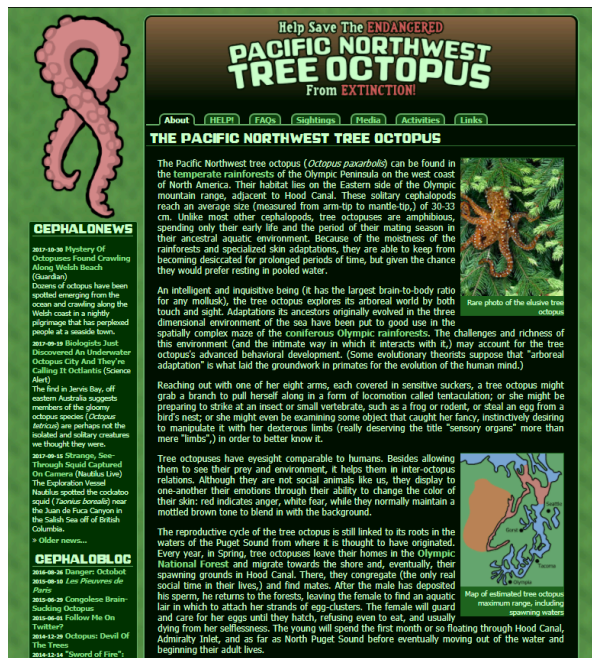
“The Internet is just a world passing notes around a classroom.” Jon Stewart

“... web reading is a bit more like teleportation. Even after following a source upstream, you arrive at a page and site and author that are often all unknown to you.” Common Sense Education



Engage - Truth vs. Truthiness

Visit (or revisit) the [Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus](#) website. Then visit [Bearing Arms: The Amazing World of the Octopus](#). How do you know when online information is true or false?



Bearing Arms: The Amazing World Of The Octopus

Here are some facts about octopuses:

- They're venomous
- They taste with their skin
- They use tools
- They can solve puzzles
- They can change color and texture



Turn to a partner and share your reaction to the above websites. Why were you skeptical or trusting of one or the other - or both?



Explore - Media Literacy Vocabulary

- Media Literacy: *"Media Literacy is a 21st century approach to education. It provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate, create and participate with messages in a variety of forms — from print to video to the Internet."*
- Center for Media Literacy
[Watch Media Literacy Explained video](#)
 - Fake News: *"Fake news is news, stories or hoaxes created to deliberately misinform or deceive readers."*
- WebWise
[Watch How to Spot Fake News video](#)
 - Confirmation Bias: *"Confirmation bias is the tendency to interpret new evidence as confirmation of one's existing beliefs or theories."*
- Oxford Dictionary
[Watch How Does "Fake" News Become News? video](#)
 - Lateral Readers: *"Lateral readers don't spend time on the page or site until they've first gotten their bearings by looking at what other sites and resources say about the source at which they are looking."*
- Web Literacy for Student Fact-Checkers - Mike Caulfield
[Check Yourself with Lateral Reading: John Green's 13-minute Crash Course](#)
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Apply - Start Flexing Your Fact-Checking Muscles

Now that you understand why it is important to step out of your “filter bubble,” increase your media literacy skills, and confront fake news, it’s time to flex your fact-checking muscles by reading laterally, an essential digital skill - just as important as *vertical reading* (starting at the top and reading down) or *close reading*.

This [Help Your Students Fact-Check the Web Like Professionals video](#) includes an explanation of lateral reading.



To check on the truth and accuracy of a source, before reading vertically, fact-checkers open tabs and practice the **ART** of reading laterally:

A - Author - Who is the site/article author - and is there a motive behind the message? What can you learn about the author? What biases might the author have? Is the author or website supported by an identifiable group, organization or company? Is the author an authoritative source on the topic? Or is it simply an opinion piece or satire?

R - Reliability - How recent is the site/article - when was it published or last updated? What do other fact-checking sites and social media giants (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) say about the author and his/her claim?

Fact-Checking Organizations:

- [Wikipedia](#) - A great resource for lateral reading. Wikipedia is often a fact-checkers first stop - and site for you to witness fact-checking in action.
- [Snopes](#) - One of the first online fact-checking websites.
- [PolitiFact](#) - A fact-checking website that rates the accuracy of claims by elected officials and others who speak up in American politics. Includes a Truth-o-meter.

- [FactCheck](#) - Site monitors the factual accuracy of political statements regardless of party affiliation.
- [All Sides](#) - Site provides multiple angles on the same story.
- [Politics: Fact Check](#) - NPR (National Public Radio) focuses on current politics.

Social Media Organizations:

- [Facebook](#) - Working to Stop Misinformation and False News
- [YouTube](#) - YouTube's new feature, "information cues," will help fight hoaxes by linking to Wikipedia articles for any conspiracy-related videos. Their goal is to fight misinformation through stories that offer a differing point of view.

T - Target - Who is the intended audience and why is the author targeting them? What does the author want his/her target to believe, take a stand against, support and/or purchase? How might the content (e.g., headline, photos, word choices, overall message) be changed to grab the attention of different targets/audiences?

[Download our ART Infographic](#)

Start your fact-checking workout by visiting each site listed in the table below. Begin your search by getting off the original website and opening new tabs to quickly determine credibility by researching the website's **Author**, **Reliability** and **Target** background information.

Check out the sample below to help guide you in recording your own **ART** findings for the remaining six sources.

Source	Author	Reliability	Target	Findings (True, Mostly True, False)
Frog Photobombs NASA Moon Probe Launch	Miriam Kramer, writes for Space.com Photo: NASA Wallops Flight Facility/Chris Perry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article from September 12, 2013. • Space.com launched in New York City on July 20, 1999 • Award Winning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not selling anything • Appeals to people interested in science and space exploration 	True

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNN posted article • NASA Instagram 		
Olympics Winner - First West African to Slide Head First				
Evan Longoria's Crazy Bare Hand Catch				
Apple Recalls Thousands of Earbuds that Unexpectedly Bloomed				
What Does a Sick Bear Really Need?				
All About Explorers				
Cat Named D-O-G Helps Train Service Dogs				



Extension - Invitation to Publish

Students-teaching-students is a powerful teaching model. We have included a video in the Explore section of a teacher talking to other teachers about fact-checking and lateral reading. We would love to replace this video with a student-created video, slideshow and/or infographic to show what lateral reading looks like from the perspective and experience of a student fact-checker. Go for it!

This space is reserved for YOU. Whether it is for a classroom assignment or a project beyond the school day, we would love to showcase your lateral reading skills. Please use this space to embed or link to your project. If you are ready to be showcased beyond the walls of your classroom, ask your teacher to contact us through the Teacher Guide for this lesson.

Additional media literacy resources you will want to check out:

Lateral Reading

[What Reading Laterally Means](#) - From Mike Caulfield

[Using Wikipedia: Crash Course Navigating Digital Information #5](#) - From John Green, author of *The Fault in Our Stars*, *Turtles All the Way Down* and more.

Deconstructing Images

[How to Do a Reverse Image Search](#) - From Common Sense Media

[Tineye](#) - Another great tool for doing a reverse image search

Evaluating Websites

[Evaluating Websites](#) - A comprehensive guide from Oregon Schools



Lesson by @GailDesler and Kathleen Watt (graphics also)

[Lesson Teacher Guide](#) | For more resources on Media Literacy, visit [EGUSD's Digital Citizenship Website](#)