Connect with us and keep up with news literacy topics

News Literacy Project

checkology®

www.newslit.org
www.checkology.org

On your social media

- /TheNewsLiteracyProject
- @NewsLitProject
- @NewsLitProject
- @NewsLitProject
- @NewsLitProject
- LinkedIn.com/company/
the-news-literacy-project

In your inbox

Get Smart About News

Subscribe at
www.newslit.org/subscribe

Connect with me:

- amiller@newslit.org
- @AlanMillerNLP

On your phone

informable

Is that a fact?
Podcast

Select a Mode

AD OR NOT
EVIDENCE OR NOT
NEWS OR OPINION
CHECKABLE OR NOT

MIX-UP
MODE

Learn more about the
News Literacy Project.

IS THAT A fact?

News
Literacy
Project

A future founded on facts

"News literacy is not only a civil right, **it is a human right.**
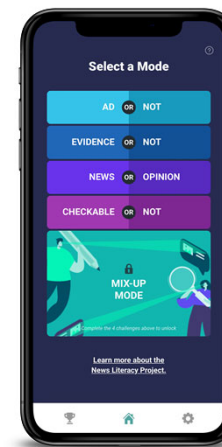Our democracy can't survive if Americans are unable to distinguish
facts, evidence and science from conspiracy, bluster and bombast."

–Patricia Hunt, social studies teacher, Wakefield High School, Arlington, Va.

"The truth and facts are under relentless attack. An informed and aware viewer or reader can be our most important ally in our pursuit of the truth."

— Lester Holt, anchor of *NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt* and *Dateline NBC*

Our Mission

The News Literacy Project, a nonpartisan national education nonprofit, provides programs and resources for educators and the public to teach, learn and share the abilities needed to be smart, active consumers of news and information and equal and engaged participants in a democracy.

Our Vision

News literacy is embedded in the American education experience, and people of all ages and backgrounds know how to identify credible news and other information, empowering them to have an equal opportunity to participate in the civic life of their communities and the country.

The Challenge

Today's information landscape is the most complex in human history, and the need for news literacy has never been greater.

In 2019, a **Stanford History Education Group** study — a follow-up to 2016 research — concluded that nearly all high school students surveyed did not consider the validity of a source, and over half could not correctly rate the strength of evidence. A **2019 Pew Research Center study** found that only a minority of adults could correctly differentiate between fact and opinion.

This lack of news literacy is a threat to democracy.

A free society cannot function without a well-informed public and a vigorous and independent free press.

Fully 96%
of high school students failed to challenge the credibility of an unreliable source.

(Stanford study)

Only 26%
of adults correctly classified all five factual statements presented to them.

(Pew study)

Over 50%
of high school students incorrectly classified evidence as "strong."

(Stanford study)

Only 35%
of adults correctly classified all five opinion statements presented to them.

(Pew study)

The Solution

Education is the most effective approach to combat the spread of misinformation. NLP is the nation's leading provider of news literacy education, and our efforts to fight misinformation reach a global audience. Our free resources, tools and easy-to-adopt tips help people of all ages become more news-literate.

We connect with young people as they are developing their information consumption and creation habits, giving today's students (who are tomorrow's voters and decision-makers) the tools to sort fact from fiction and discern fact-based, credible information.

In addition, amid strong and growing demand from the public, NLP offers its expertise, educational material and programs to people of all ages.

For Educators

Our free **Checkology® virtual classroom** empowers educators to teach middle and high school students how to identify credible information, seek out reliable sources, and know what to trust, what to dismiss and what to debunk. It also gives them an appreciation of the importance of the First Amendment and a free press. This browser-based e-learning platform is ideal for distance learning or homeschool settings.

NLP also offers...

→ **The Sift®** is a free newsletter — delivered weekly during the school year — that explores timely examples of misinformation, addresses media and press freedom topics and discusses social media trends and issues. It includes discussion prompts and activities for the classroom.

→ NLP's education team provides customized **in-person** and **web-based professional development**, training and support focusing on key news literacy topics. The team also can deliver keynotes on a variety of news literacy-related topics.

→ **NewsLitCamp®** gives educators the opportunity to connect with journalists in their communities for a full day of professional development. It features an introduction to news literacy, including journalism standards and practices. Educators also gain tools and materials to bring back to their classrooms.

→ The **educator resource library** on NLP's website includes free lesson plans, classroom activities, posters and infographics, quizzes, training materials and videos. (Coming in September)

→ In January 2021, NLP is launching the **news literacy educator network** to provide educators the opportunity to learn best practices from others in the field and to access exclusive resources, supports and incentives.

Our Goal

By 2022, we will build a community of 20,000 educators who, using our programs and resources, will teach news literacy skills to 3 million middle and high school students each year. We will also lead efforts to increase public awareness of news literacy and to equip people of all ages with the ability to discern fact from fiction.

checkology®

Checkology Metrics for FY21

During the 2019-2020 school year, after completing their Checkology lessons:

Nearly 9 in 10 students could correctly identify the five freedoms protected by the First Amendment.

Two-thirds of students could correctly identify the traits of quality journalism.

More than 2x the number of students could demonstrate an understanding of the watchdog role of the press.

More than 4 in 5 students said in a survey they intend to increase their civic participation.

For Everyone

→ We have customized a version of **Checkology** for the public.

→ Modeled on The Sift newsletter for educators, **Get Smart About News** is our free newsletter designed for the general public. It explores timely examples of misinformation, addresses media and press freedom topics and discusses social media trends and issues.

→ **Informable®**, our free mobile app, helps people of all ages practice four distinct news literacy skills using real-world examples in a game-like format.

→ *Is that a fact?*, our new podcast, builds and improves listeners' news literacy skills through informative conversations with experts working to combat misinformation.

→ The **For Everyone** section of our website offers free tools, tips, quizzes and shareable graphics for strengthening news literacy skills.

→ **Free webinars** help the public apply news literacy skills to current events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

→ Staff members are available for **keynotes, speeches and presentations** tailored to audience needs.

Global Education

We recognize that the demand for news literacy education is global. While we are primarily committed to meeting this challenge in the United States, we are also working to confront the issue internationally. Our targeted efforts include:

→ Sharing free resources, such as *Give Facts a Fighting Chance: A Global Playbook for Teaching News Literacy*, a comprehensive guide available to organizations around the world to develop and expand news literacy programs.

→ Speaking at gatherings seeking solutions to the misinformation crisis.

→ Consulting or partnering with like-minded organizations combating the misinformation challenge in their countries.

→ Licensing and assisting in the adaptation of digital assets in local markets.

News Literacy Project

Give facts a fighting chance.

Learn more

Founded in 2008, the News Literacy Project (NLP) is endorsed by dozens of leading news organizations and supported by funders of journalism, civics and education programs. All agree: News literacy is an essential life skill.

For more information, visit our website at **newslit.org** or contact us at **info@newslit.org**.

Want more? Subscribe to our newsletters at **newslit.org/subscribe** and support our work at **newslit.org/donate**.

Follow us at @NewsLitProject
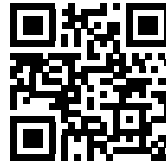
Scan to subscribe to our updates and newsletters!

How to know what to trust

FIRST

| 1. Be aware of your emotions. | 2. Pause. |

3. Decide if it is...

NEXT

USER-GENERATED CONTENT

AN UNFAMILIAR ORGANIZATION/SOURCE

A RECOGNIZED STANDARDS-BASED NEWS SOURCE

4. Take 60 seconds to...

USER-GENERATED CONTENT

Check the comments.
Has anyone provided evidence that the claim being made isn't true (or that it *is* true)?

Read the post carefully.
Does it cite reputable sources or actual evidence to support its claim? (Remember: Bad actors often try to pass off unrelated photos and video as "evidence" for their false claims.)

Search elsewhere for the claim.
Does it appear in other user-generated forums? Have other accounts shared identical posts? Have quality news outlets or fact-checking organizations written about this?

AN UNFAMILIAR ORGANIZATION/SOURCE

Check the comments.
Has anyone flagged this source or provided evidence that the claim being made isn't true (or that it *is* true)?

Turn the headline into a question, then search.
Copy the headline into a search bar, adding a question mark at the end. Have reputable news outlets or fact-checking organizations written about this?

Search for the name of the source.
Are there credible results that identify it as unreliable? Can you determine if it is a satirical or entertainment site? Is there evidence that it is a state-run news outlet?

A RECOGNIZED STANDARDS-BASED NEWS SOURCE

Check: News or something else?
Is this a straight news report or something else, such as an opinion piece? (Remember: Opinion journalism doesn't try to be unbiased.)

Look for obvious problems.
Is there anything in this report that seems "off" to you? Does it use loaded language, or contain other signs that it's unfair?

Look for other coverage.
Are other credible standards-based outlets reporting the same thing?

5. One more minute to...

Investigate the source.
Can you tell where this claim originated? If not, how reliable are other posts shared by this account? Does the account seem responsibly run, or is it devoted to amplifying divisive, inflammatory content?

Analyze the source.
Does the website include disclaimers that its content is not to be taken seriously? Do other items on the site look suspicious? Does the site contain original reporting, or simply commentary? Are there numerous grammatical and/or spelling errors?

Evaluate the reporting.
Are the people, documents and other sources cited in the report generally considered reliable? Have the details been clearly verified, or is the story still developing?

ON AN ONGOING BASIS

USER-GENERATED CONTENT

Follow fact-checkers.
Add fact-checking organizations (see several below) to your social media feeds to help you identify misinformation patterns.

Learn best practices.
Don't share memes or other posts if you're not sure that they are true; doing so only amplifies misinformation. Don't share links unless you have checked them out yourself.

Help others.
Question the legitimacy of suspicious posts from accounts you follow; provide links to fact checks in comments; talk to friends and family about their information habits.

AN UNFAMILIAR ORGANIZATION/SOURCE

Look for transparency.
Is this source up front about who owns and runs it? Does it correct errors? Does it request and publish letters to the editor? Is it clear who is creating articles or posts?

Take note of unreliable sources.
If an account repeatedly posts misleading or false information, avoid it.

A RECOGNIZED STANDARDS-BASED NEWS SOURCE

Learn the standards.
Quality journalism is guided by aspirational standards (for example, the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics) that can help you recognize good reporting.

Develop a critical eye.
Follow experts who frequently discuss journalism issues and critique news coverage.

6. Build savvy habits.

OVER TIME

Learn digital verification skills.
Use widely available free resources online to teach yourself how to do reverse image searches, use geolocation tools (like Google Street View), search for archived webpages and use critical observation skills to do your own fact-checking.

Help protect others.
False and misleading information seeks to exploit its audience. Warn others about sources that publish such content.

Dive into the field of journalism.
Seek out reputable journalism organizations, subscribe to industry newsletters, listen to journalism podcasts, and read books and articles about the ways that journalism is changing.

7. Deepen your expertise.

REMEMBER:

Guard your emotions.
Misinformation often seeks to exploit our most deeply held values and beliefs to generate outrage and anger. Don't fall for this trick.

Watch for false evidence and fabrications.
Purveyors of misinformation use a variety of tactics. The most common include presenting photos and videos out of context, making crude alterations to photos and documents, and fabricating quotes and social media posts for public figures.

RESOURCES

Visit the News Literacy Project's website, and follow NLP on Facebook and Twitter.

Subscribe to NLP's weekly email newsletter, The Sift®.

Download and play Informable, NLP's innovative mobile app, which tests news literacy skills in a gamelike format.

Check out reputable fact-checking organizations, such as PolitiFact, FactCheck.org, Snopes, Truth or Fiction, Lead Stories and AFP Fact Check.

Learn about organizations that train and support journalists, such as the Poynter Institute, First Draft, the News Leaders Association and the Society of Professional Journalists.