

# TELUS Wise®



Bring digital literacy education into your classroom.

## **Lesson plan: Don't believe everything on social media**

**Grades:** 9 - 12

**Duration:** 60 minutes

### Learning outcomes

Students will:

- Understand the prevalence of photoshopped images or edited videos on social media
- Learn a simple system that will help them to better identify misinformation and edited images/videos

### Preparation and materials

- Whiteboard and markers
- Computers with internet access (for students)
- Computer and projection screen with internet access and speakers
- Copies of the worksheet (1 per student)

### Prepare to watch the videos

- **Four ways to tell if something is true online**
- **House Hippo 2.0**
- **How these teen influencers faked their Coachella trip**

### Procedure

As a class, watch each video and capture class feedback from the following prompts, or have students complete the attached worksheet individually and discuss their feedback and findings as a class.

## Video 1 recap: Four ways to tell if something is true online

1. **Use fact checking tools** – Type keywords into a custom search engine like bit.ly/fact-check, or through individual fact checking sites like snopes.com or factscan.ca to see if they've debunked the story.
2. **Find the source** – Don't trust a headline or picture in a social post. Instead, click directly on the link shared to check whether or not the story or image came from a trusted source. If there isn't a link, type in keywords from the video into Google to find out where it originally came from.
3. **Verify the source** – How do you know if the content is coming from a reliable news outlet? Type the name of the source into Google or Wikipedia and read if: A) they're real, and; B) they have a good track record.
4. **Check other sources** – Open Google and click on the news tab. Do a search and see if other news outlets are writing about the same story, and if they're providing the same details.

## Video 2: House Hippo 2.0

1. How does the House Hippo video show how easy is it to be fooled in our digital world?

## Video 3: How these teen influencers faked their Coachella trip

1. Why do you think Byron and Anastasia were able to successfully convince their social media audiences that they were at Coachella, when in fact they were at home in London?
2. What role did Photoshop play in convincing Byron and Anastasia's audiences that they were at Coachella?
3. Can you think of any other examples of altered pictures or posts that you've come across on social media?
4. Do you think it's important to evaluate content you see on social media, and try to spot altered content? Why or why not?
5. Do you think there are situations where altering content is justified? Why or why not?

## Optional activity: Test your media literacy skills

Have students apply the MediaSmarts' four-step process and sharpen their media literacy skills by completing the following activity:

- Find two photos, videos, or news articles that you can verify are real, and one photo, video, or news article that you can tell has been manipulated.
- Consider the four-step process as you complete your search.
- Once you have completed the exercise, pair up with another student to share what you found. Be sure to provide evidence of how you came to your conclusions.

## Don't believe everything on social media

Sometimes it can be very difficult to tell what's real and what's not online, especially when it comes to social media. It's common for users to photoshop an image, fabricate details about an event, or otherwise manipulate a post in an effort to deceive others. Although some deceptive posts are easy to spot due to photoshop fails, inconsistencies, or obvious filter use, others can prove to be difficult when separating fact from fiction.

### It's important to recognize fact from fiction for several reasons, including the following:

- False imagery and narratives can spread quickly, leading to a greater proportion of people believing and endorsing news or images that have been manipulated
- Deceptive posts can result in the spread of rumours or gossip that have the potential to unfairly ruin someone's reputation
- Manipulated imagery can lead to body issues, a decrease in confidence, or unrealistic standards for yourself and others

### Video 1 recap: Four ways to tell if something is true online

1. **Use fact checking tools** – Type keywords into a custom search engine like [bit.ly/fact-check](https://bit.ly/fact-check), or through individual fact checking sites like [www.snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com) or [factscan.ca](http://factscan.ca) to see if they've debunked the story.
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4. **Check other sources** – Open Google and click on the news tab. Do a search and see if other news outlets are writing about the same story, and if they're providing the same details.

As you start to critically think about content on social media, answer the following questions about the House Hippo 2.0 and How these teen influencers faked their Coachella trip videos, using the four-step process above.

## **Video 2: House Hippo 2.0**

How does the House Hippo video show how easy is it to be fooled in our digital world?

## **Video 3: How these teen influencers faked their Coachella trip**

Why do you think Byron and Anastasia were able to successfully convince their social media audiences that they were in Coachella, when in fact they were at home in London?

What role did Photoshop play in convincing Byron and Anastasia's audiences that they were at Coachella?

Can you think of any other examples of altered pictures or posts that you've come across on social media?  
If so, describe below:

Do you think it's important to evaluate content you see on social media, and try to spot altered content? Why or why not?

Do you think there are situations where altering content is justified? Why or why not?

### **Optional activity: Test your media literacy skills**

Practise applying MediaSmarts' four-step process to tell if something is true or not online, and sharpen your media literacy skills by completing the following activity:

- Find two photos, videos, or news articles that you can verify are real and one photo, video, or news article that you can tell has been manipulated.
- Consider the four-step process as you complete your search.
- Once you have completed the exercise, pair up with another student to share what you found. Be sure to provide evidence of how you came to your conclusions.