

Free Press 101: Early Years:

ENSURING ACCURACY IN REPORTING

The following learning experiences will help students understand the role of accuracy in storytelling and reporting by focusing on examining and verifying sources.

GOALS OF THESE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Learners will actively demonstrate understanding of journalistic accuracy including:

- Understanding that not all information sources are truthful, and why.
- When, how and why to question information.

DEFINITIONS

Fact: A thing that is known and proven to be true.

Verify: To make sure something is true or accurate.

Source: Something or someone that provides information.

Believability: How likely something or someone is to be accurate and true.

DEEPER LEARNING: Fact-checking influencers and rumours

The skills developed here can be applied to help students examine their sources for information in their lives more generally.

- Ask students about information or rumours they've heard. Conduct the "truth sleuth" discussion to help them understand the believability of their sources. These sources might be things they've heard from adults, YouTube videos, online gaming, or anywhere else.
- Ask students to share their favourite influencers or channels. Conduct the "truth sleuth" discussion to assess the believability of the content and verify the information created by the influencer or channel.
- Encourage students to question and wonder about information they encounter, even without someone to discuss with.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 1: FACT OR FICTION

1.
 - Explain to students that people often must decide who is telling the truth and when to find out more.
 - Introduce the word "fact" to the learners: something that is known and can be proven.
 - Read each of the classmate examples below to the learners and ask them if they believe the statement could be true, and why. They should be able to provide reasons to doubt these statements, demonstrating ways they could verify the source.
 1. Mateo says he can talk to dogs. He explains that yesterday his neighbour's dog quizzed him on his spelling words.
 2. Sophie tells her friends that her backpack is magic. She says it gives her whatever she wants, but only when no one else is looking.
 3. Noah tells the class he once flew to school using a jetpack. It broke before he could get all the way here, which is why he has to take the bus now.
 4. Amira says she has a goldfish that can do math. It taps the glass with its' tail to give her the answers to her homework.
 - Ask the students: Why are some reasons people don't speak the truth? (on purpose or accidentally)
 - Explain to students that sometimes there are things that should be believed on apps, TV or on websites, and it's important to learn some skills for figuring out how to decide if someone or something should be believed.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 2: TRUTH SLEUTHS

2.
 - Using the **PowerPoint presentation here**, (pdf version **here**) ask learners to assess whether different sources are believable or not by asking
 1. Who is telling us this information?
 2. What do we know (or assume) about them?
 3. How could we find out more? What questions do we need to ask or things we need to see before we believe?
 4. How does this all affect whether we should believe this source or not?
 - For each slide, ask the students to decide whether the source is believable, not believable, or if they're unsure, by going through steps 1-4 directly above.
 - At the end of the slide show, have the students speculate on what most likely happened, based on their sources and discussion.
 - Reveal the true story by sharing **the article** with the students.
 - Explore applying these skills more broadly by using some of the "Deeper Learning" activities on the previous page.