

How to Identify Fake News in 10 Steps

Beware fake or misleading news.
Be skeptical. Ask Questions.
Verify.
It's up to you.



 Select "Yes" or "No" to the following questions.
The more thumbs-down icons you select, the more likely the news article is fake.

1. Do a Visual Assessment

Assess the overall design. Fake news sites often look amateurish, have lots of annoying ads, and use altered or stolen images.

Overall, does the news article and website seem high quality?



Yes



No

2. Identify the News Outlet

The Wall Street Journal and CNN are examples of news outlets. If you haven't heard of the news outlet, search online for more information.

Is the news outlet well known, well respected, and trustworthy?



Yes



No

3. Check the Web Domain

Many fake news URLs look odd or end with ".com.co" or ".lo" (e.g., abcnews.com.co) to mimic legitimate news sites.

Does the URL seem legitimate?



Yes



No

4. Check the "About Us" Section

Trustworthy news outlets usually include detailed background information, policy statements, and email contacts in the "About/About Us" section.

Does the site provide detailed background information and contacts?



Yes



No

5. Identify the Author

Fake news articles often don't include author names. If included, search the author's name online to see if he or she is well known and respected.

Does the article have a trusted author?



Yes



No

6. Identify the Central Message

Read the article carefully. Fake news articles often push one viewpoint, have an angry tone, or make outrageous claims.

Does the article seem fair, balanced, and reasonable?



Yes



No

7. Assess Spelling, Grammar, and Punctuation

If the article has misspelled words, words in ALL CAPS, poor grammar, or lots of "!!!!," it's probably unreliable.

Does the article have proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation?



Yes



No

8. Analyze Sources and Quotes

Consider the article's sources and who is quoted. Fake news articles often cite anonymous sources, unreliable sources, or no sources at all.

Does the article include and identify reliable sources?



Yes



No

9. Find Other Articles

Search the internet for more articles on the same topic. If you can't find any, chances are the story is fake.

Are there multiple articles by other news outlets on this topic?



Yes



No

10. Turn to Fact Checkers

FactCheck.org, Snopes.com, PolitiFact.com are widely trusted fact-checking websites.

Do the fact checkers say the news story is true?



Yes



No

 Based on your research, do you think the article is more likely to be true or false? Explain.