



Critical Questions for Spotting Fake News

Ask the following questions to check news stories for fake or misleading information. The more red flags you find in a story, the less you should trust the information.









Heading/Photo Check

1. Does the headline include ALL CAPS, excessive punctuation (!!), or sensational language? Yes  | No 
2. Does the lead image seem altered or out of place? Yes  | No 









URL/Domain Check

3. Is the URL recognizable, not ending in *.co* or some other strategic variation (i.e., *abcnews.com.co*)? Yes  | No 




Content Check

4. Do the details in the story confirm the headline's claim? Yes  | No 
5. Is anyone quoted in the story? Are the sources quoted qualified to speak on the topic? Yes  | No 
6. Is the language in the story inflammatory or completely one-sided? Yes  | No 
7. Do other news sources verify the information reported in the story? Yes  | No 

Source Check

8. Is the source of the story well known? Yes  | No 
9. Does the story include a byline? Yes  | No 
10. Does the source's Web site contain an "About Us" page? Does the "About Us" page share newsgathering credentials? Yes  | No 
11. If you discovered the story on a social site, are commenters saying it's false? Yes  | No 

Gut Check

12. Does something about the site seem suspicious (clickbait-y headlines, poor design, multiple stories attacking one person, etc.)? Yes  | No 
13. Does your gut say the story is false? Yes  | No 