What are some ways to verify online information?

In this document you’ll find:
- Teacher directions for this lesson.
- Editable student pages.
- An answer key for the student pages.

Teacher directions:
1. Distribute student copies of the viewing guide in this document (pages 2-8).
2. View the featured video and work through the viewing guide together.
3. Conclusion: Have students use their notes from this viewing guide to brainstorm a response to the essential lesson question. Then, discuss as a class. To extend this question further, have students develop their thoughts in several paragraphs or an essay.
News Goggles
What are some ways to verify online information?

Featured Video: “News Goggles: Seana Davis, Reuters.”

Directions:
1. Watch the featured video, using this viewing guide to take notes about how misinformation spreads online and what you can do to recognize and debunk it.
2. Explain some ways to verify online information.

Resource Connection Tip: Complete the MisinfoChallenge: Fact-checking 101 challenge in Checkology® to apply basic fact-checking skills to practice recognizing — and debunking! — misinformation.

PART A: Introduction

What does Seana Davis do in her work with the Reuters Fact Check team?

What pillars does Reuters use to decide what should be fact-checked?
Double-click on the boxes to fill in the blanks.
Why did people share an old video that showed a ferry dramatically rocking from side to side due to a storm in February 2020?

What are some first steps to take when you see clips online? Double-click on the boxes to fill in the blanks.

- Pause - before you share.
- Be aware if the post evokes blank.
- Check the blank for indications as to whether the clip could be old or out of context.
- Check the blank of the incident.
- Social media/search engine blank.

Why is it important to follow these steps?

Other important notes I want to remember from this section:
**PART C: Reverse image search**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Why might you want to complete a reverse image search?</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- To verify the authenticity of images</td>
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<tr>
<td>- To find similar images</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>What are some reverse image search engines you can use?</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Google Images</td>
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<tr>
<td>- TinEye</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Reverse Image Search Engine (RISE)</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>How do you complete a reverse image search on Google? Explain each step.</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Open Google Images.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Click on the image you want to search.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Enter the URL of the image in the Google search bar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Click on the search button.</td>
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<th><strong>How did Reuters prove the ferry clip was not recent and not pertinent to Storm Eunice?</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Reversing the image revealed a comment on Reddit from February 16, 2020, indicating the image was not recent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The comment also stated that the valet driver was taking a car for a joy ride, unrelated to Storm Eunice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How do you complete an advanced Google search? Explain each step by filling in the blanks and answering the questions.

**Step 1.** Type in different __________. What did Davis use when searching for the ferry image?

Notice how Davis used quotations to search for the specific words as well as the Boolean operator “AND” to search for more than one term.

**Step 2.** Click on __________ and narrow in your date range. Click on __________. Why did Davis want to search for a specific date range?

**Step 3.** Search __________ to see if anyone uploaded the same image and compare sources. What did Reuters find when looking for news coverage related to this clip?

Other information I want to remember about completing a reverse image search or completing an advanced Google search:
PART E: Taxonomy of misinformation

Why is false context common?

Takes an image, a quote or other piece of content and puts it into a new, false context to change its meaning.

Why is imposter content common?

Falsely uses a well-known name, brand or logo to fool people into believing that it is authentic content.

News Literacy Project
PART F: Debunking imposter content

How does Reuters prove that this social media post claiming to be from a legitimate news organization is false? **Double-click on the boxes to fill in the blanks.**

- Go to the alleged __________________.
- Check for __________________.
- Social media/search engine __________________.
- Check if __________________ covered the alleged event.
- Do a Twitter __________________.

What did Reuters do in its fact-check for the fake New Zealand Herald post that represented quality journalism and standards?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Principle #1</th>
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**Conclusion:** Explain some ways to verify information online.
Use evidence from all parts of this viewing guide.

**Challenge:** Complete [this reverse image exercise](#) developed by Sarah Thompson of the fact-checking organization Lead Stories. (Check your answers [here](#).)
For more practice vetting news sources, use our **infographic** and take our quiz to **test your source savvy**.
News Goggles
What are some ways to verify online information?

Featured Video: "News Goggles: Seana Davis, Reuters."

Directions:
1. Watch the featured video, using this viewing guide to take notes about how misinformation spreads online and what you can do to recognize and debunk it.
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Resource Connection Tip: Complete the MisinfoChallenge: Fact-checking 101 challenge in Checkology® to apply basic fact-checking skills to practice recognizing — and debunking! — misinformation.

PART A: Introduction

What does Seana Davis do in her work with the Reuters Fact Check team?
Seana monitors misinformation, looks at big news events and tries to weed out what is true and what is not. Seana Davis is a journalist on Reuters’ Fact Check team.

What pillars does Reuters use to decide what should be fact-checked?
Double-click on the boxes to fill in the blanks.
PART B: Miscaptioned videos

Why did people share an old video that showed a ferry dramatically rocking from side to side due to a storm in February 2020?
The recent weather during Storm Eunice matched what the video showed. Also, the video is dramatic and likely evoked an emotional reaction.

What are some first steps to take when you see clips online?
**Double-click on the boxes to fill in the blanks.**

- Take your time
- Be aware if the post evokes emotion
- Check the comments section for indications as to whether the clip could be old or out of context.
- Check the latest media reports of the incident.
- Reverse image search
- Social media/search engine advanced search

Why is it important to follow these steps?
Answers will vary but should focus on how reacting emotionally to viral content makes people more likely to share it without first verifying that it is authentic, which can contribute to the misinformation landscape.

Other important notes I want to remember from this section:
Answers will vary.
PART C: Reverse image search

Why might you want to complete a reverse image search?
A reverse image search can help tell you whether an image or video pertains to a particular news event or if it is being circulated out of context.

What are some reverse image search engines you can use?
You can use Google, Yandex and TinEye, among others.

How do you complete a reverse image search on Google? Explain each step.

Step 1. Google the words “Google image search.” Click on the camera icon next to the search bar.

Step 2. Upload an image to Google reverse image search and hit enter to see results matching the image.

How did Reuters prove the ferry clip was not recent and not pertinent to Storm Eunice?
Reuters did a reverse image search and found instances of the clip on Reddit and in news coverage from February 2020.
How do you complete an advanced Google search? Explain each step by filling in the blanks and answering the questions.

Step 1. Type in different **[keywords]**. What did Davis use when searching for the ferry image? “ferry” AND “port” AND “storm”

Notice how Davis used quotations to search for the specific words as well as the Boolean operator “AND” to search for more than one term.

Step 2. Click on **[Tools]** and narrow in your date range. Click on **[Custom range]**. Why did Davis want to search for a specific date range?

Davis was looking to see if news sources covered clips of the video around the time that it was posted to Reddit in February 2020.

Step 3. Search **[images]** to see if anyone uploaded the same image and compare sources. What did Reuters find when looking for news coverage related to this clip?

They found that The Mirror, BBC and other outlets had covered this video.

Other information I want to remember about completing a reverse image search or completing an advanced Google search:

Answers will vary. Some students might want to note that the first step in completing a reverse image search for a video is to take a screen capture from a still frame of the video. Often the first frame will be enough, but sometimes you might have to check others.
Why is false context common?
False context is common because it’s “so easy for it to happen.” It’s easy to lose the context of videos and other posts on social media. Oftentimes it’s an accident. Purveyors of misinformation can re-contextualize something, and people focused on an event simply mistake the false context for the event they’re focused on.

Why is imposter content common?
Imposter content is common because it’s easy to create and evokes strong emotions.
PART F: Debunking imposter content

How does Reuters prove that this social media post claiming to be from a legitimate news organization is false? **Double-click on the boxes to fill in the blanks.**

- Go to the alleged source
- Check for spelling or grammatical errors
- Social media/search engine advanced search
- Check if other media covered the alleged event
- Do a Twitter advanced search

What did Reuters do in its fact-check for the fake New Zealand Herald post that represented quality journalism and standards? Answers will vary but should mention that Reuters reached out directly to the New Zealand Herald as a source to confirm that the post was fake. Reuters also is a signatory of the IFCN, which has a code of principles (shown below).

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**Conclusion:** Explain some ways to verify information online. Use evidence from all parts of this viewing guide.

Answers will vary. Be sure students incorporate key ideas from various points in this viewing guide.

**Challenge:** Complete [this reverse image exercise](#) developed by Sarah Thompson of the fact-checking organization Lead Stories. (Check your answers [here](#).)
For more practice vetting news sources, use our infographic and take our quiz to test your source savvy.

Is it legit?

Five steps for vetting a news source

Many sources compete for attention online, including partisan blogs and bogus sites posing as legitimate news organizations. It can be tough to know what to trust. Follow these steps to cut through the noise and learn how to evaluate sources for signs of credibility — as well as for red flags that signal a source should be avoided.

1. Do a quick search
   - Conduct a simple search for information about a news source to evaluate its credibility. It’s important to look beyond social media. Go to a search engine and plug in the name of the website or publication. Do other legitimate sources, such as standards-based news organizations, list-checking websites, or public policy think tanks, list-checking websites, or public policy think tanks, or social media, mention the source in their research or coverage? If not, you may need to spend more time vetting. Look elsewhere for reliable information.

2. Look for standards
   - Reputable news organizations adhere to ethical guidelines and standards, including fairness, accuracy, and independence. Look for evidence that a source follows such standards. Does someone at the outlet have a history of writing on specific topics? Do they have any known conflicts of interest? Do you see evidence of source verification in their work? If so, then the outlet is likely a credible source.

3. Check for transparency
   - Quality news sources should be transparent, not only about their reporting practices (see Step 2), but also about their ownership and funding. Is it clear who owns and runs the website or publication? Is advertising labeled accurately? Can you tell who is writing and producing content? Is there a way to contact newsroom editors and reporters?

4. Examine how errors are handled
   - Credible news sources are accountable for mistakes and correct them. Do you see evidence that the source corrects or clarifies errors?

5. Assess news coverage
   - An important step in vetting sources is reaching out to credible news sources. Do any news outlets cover the same topics, or are they reporting on different angles or perspectives? Do they use similar or different sources of information? How do news articles from this source compare to coverage from other standards-based newsrooms on the same topic? Many people have strong opinions about news sources without evaluating them firsthand.

Tip: Take note of bylines (names) on news coverage. These bylines can help you confirm that this coverage was written or produced by professional journalists. Bylines are also a sign of transparency and accountability.

Beware of these trust busters!

- False or untrue content: Publishing a demonstrably false claim without correcting it
- Clickbait tactics: “Baiting” you with sensationalized language, misleading headlines, or headlines that are purposely vague to drive clicks
- Lack of balance: Consistently focusing on one angle or side of a legitimate debate or controversy, while ignoring or distorting other perspectives
- Manipulated images or videos: Tip: You can use a reverse image search tool (Google Images, TinEye and Yandex) (among other tools) to see if visuals have been manipulated or altered in some way.
- State-run or state-sponsored propaganda: Using government-controlled news organizations to further national agendas and influence public image
- Dangerous, offensive and malicious content: Could include discriminatory language, unverified pseudoscience, content that promotes violence or oppression, or coverage that — as the IFJ Code of Ethics states — panders to “professional curiosity”