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Dig Deeper

March. 6, 2023

EDUCATOR GUIDE KEY AND STUDENT PAGES FOR News Goggles How can I think like a fact-checker?

In this document you'll find:

- Teacher directions for this lesson.
- Editable student pages.
- An answer key for the student pages.

Teacher directions:

1. **Make sure each student has a copy of the [featured story](#). Students will need it as they work through the viewing guide.**
Note: Your students should read or skim the entire article first to get a general sense of what it's about before digging deeper into questions in the viewing guide.
2. **Distribute student copies of the viewing guide in this document (pages 2-6).**
3. **View the featured video and work through the viewing guide together.**
4. **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.



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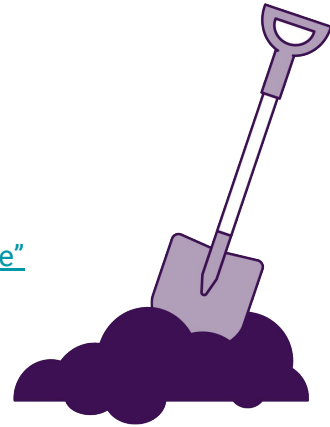
News Goggles How can I think like a fact-checker?

Featured Video: [“News Goggles: Karena Phan, The Associated Press.”](#)

Featured Text: [“Unnamed redwood tree mistaken as the world’s tallest tree”](#)
(Karena Phan, The Associated Press).

Directions:

1. Read the featured text.
2. Watch the featured video, using this viewing guide to take notes about Phan’s fact-checking process.
3. Discuss different ways to think like a fact-checker.



Resource Connection Tip: Use this [think sheet](#) to explain how to debunk viral falsehoods on [RumorGuard](#).

* **wire service:** news organizations that provide stories, photos and video to media outlets; historically, this information was sent via wires, or telegraph

PART A: Introduction to Karena Phan

What is Phan’s role at The Associated Press?

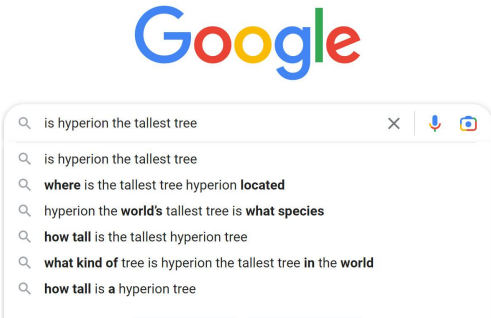
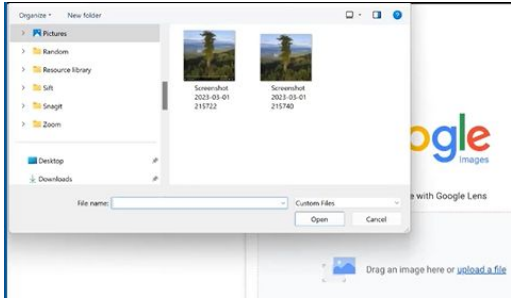
What is the Associated Press?

True or False? If false, rewrite the sentence to make it true.

One reason Phan decides to fact-check a story is because a lot of people are talking about it online.

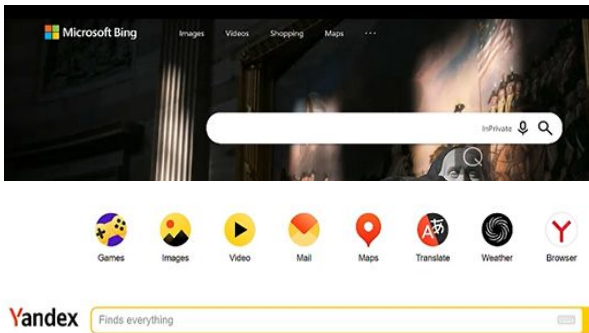
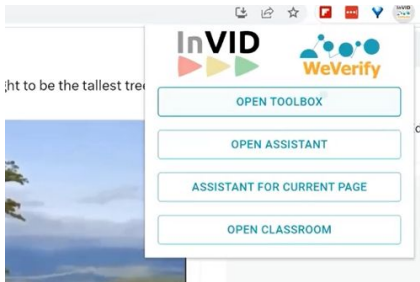
- * **engagement bait:** a tactic used to try to gain large followings on social media, often for the purpose of selling access to those followers
- * **false context:** takes an image, a quote or other piece of content and puts it into a new, false context to change its meaning

PART B: Fact-checking the world's tallest tree post

<p>What tipped Phan off that the video of Hyperion might not be accurate?</p>	
<p>Why is this tweet about the world’s tallest tree an example of “engagement bait”?</p>	
<p>Label the following tool/technique fact-checkers use to verify information. ⌵</p>	<p>How did or could Phan have used this tool or technique to fact-check the false tweet about Hyperion? ⌵</p>
	
	

Label the following tool/technique fact-checkers use to verify information. ⬇

How did or could Phan have used this tool or technique to fact-check the false tweet about Hyperion? ⬇



PART C: Reflecting on fact-checks

Why did Phan include hyperlinks in her story?

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THE FACTS: Social media users are sharing a video claiming it's Hyperion, which is a 380-foot (115-meter) coast redwood tree. The video shows a tree towering over a forest, as the camera slowly pans to the top.

"This is Hyperion, a California redwood thought to be the tallest tree in the world," reads a Twitter post sharing the video, which received more than 100,000 likes on Twitter as of Friday.

While Hyperion is considered the tallest tree, this video doesn't show it.

The image in the video was taken by photographer Michael Nichols for National Geographic. That smaller tree is located in Humboldt Redwoods State Park in California, whereas the Hyperion is located more than 70 miles away in a remote area of Redwood National Park.

The image was posted on National Geographic's Twitter account on April 27, and the caption reads, "The largest patch of old growth redwood forest remaining, Humboldt Redwoods State Park, California, USA." It was also featured in a National Geographic story about the effects of climate change on trees and forests. Nichols and National Geographic did not respond to requests for comment.

Hyperion is still considered the tallest tree in the world, according to Lucy Kerhoulas, an associate professor of forest physiology at California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt. Kerhoulas confirmed that the image being shared online captures the Humboldt Redwood State park, and that the tree it shows is not the Hyperion.

She explained that this tree is just an old redwood tree surrounded by a second-redwood forest, which is a forest that was logged and now has re-grown. Second-growth redwood forests can range from young to more mature, and young forests are typically less than 150 years old, Kerhoulas explained.

Robert Van Pelt, the tree consultant for the Guinness Book of World Records and an affiliate assistant professor at the University of Washington, told the AP that the Hyperion remains the tallest tree. Aerial Lidar scanning, a type of technology used for surveying and mapping, has not discovered any taller trees, Van Pelt said.

"Of course, trees grow," said Van Pelt who is also the author of "Forest Giants of the Pacific Coast," which chronicles the largest individual trees in western North America. "But currently it will be 10 years or more until any of these trees could catch the height of Hyperion, plus Hyperion itself is still growing."

Paul Ringgold, chief program officer for Save the Redwoods League, which is a non-profit organization aimed to protect redwoods, noted that Hyperion is surrounded by trees that are nearly as tall. It is not isolated like the one in the video.

"This was likely taken in Humboldt County, but it looks like a photo of one remaining ancient tree surrounded by a younger forest," Ringgold said.

According to the National Park Services, Hyperion is not on a trail and is located through dense vegetation which requires heavy 'bushwhacking' in order to reach the tree. Park officials have declared the remote area off-limits because of damage done by trampling visitors to the tree and surrounding forest. the AP reported last year.

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Why does it matter if people fall for seemingly harmless misinformation such as this video about the world's tallest tree?

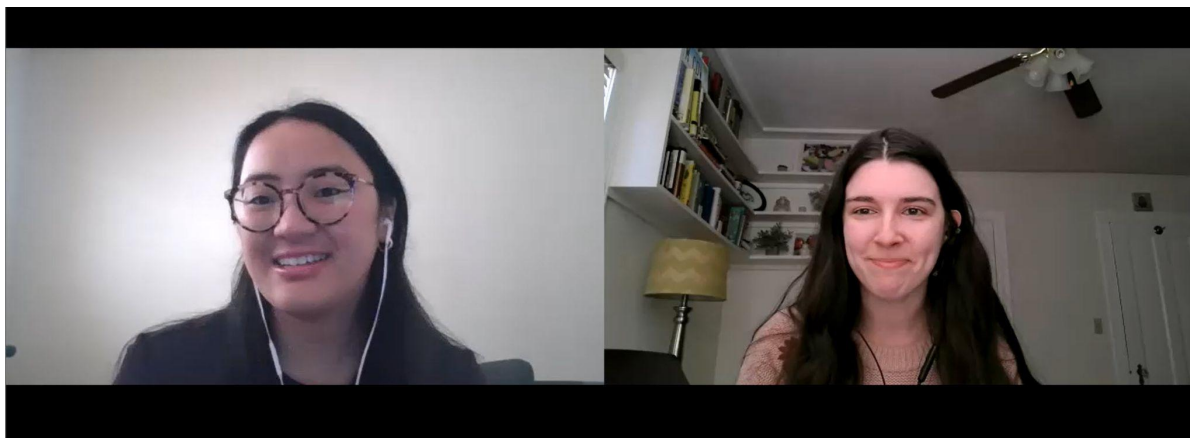
What are some final tips Phan gives for thinking like a fact-checker online?



Conclusion: How can you think like a fact-checker? Consider how this type of thinking would guard against being duped and spreading misinformation online. Use evidence from all parts of this viewing guide to support your answer.



Challenge: Using the tools from Part B, retrace Phan's steps in fact-checking the Hyperion tweet yourself. Try to use the same tools to fact-check another claim you find on social media.



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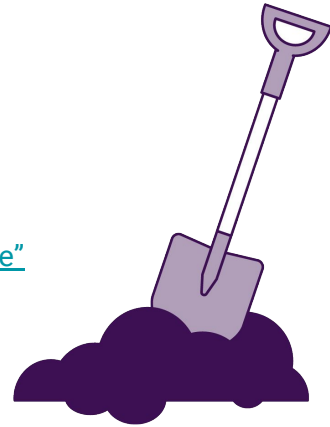
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Phan works on the news verification team to debunk false information that’s spreading online.

What is the Associated Press?

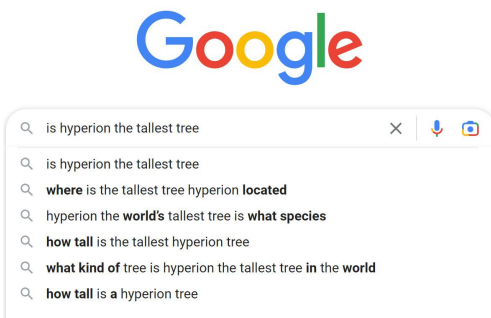
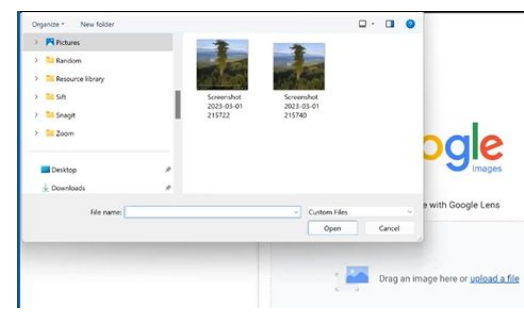
The Associated Press, or AP, is considered a wire service. It has reporters all around the world and provides stories, photos and videos that other news organizations can use. It is often at the center of breaking news and weighs in with language guidance around standards of how to cover it. (Though not noted in the video, AP also has photographers and videographers around the world, in addition to reporters.)

True or False? If false, rewrite the sentence to make it true.

One reason Phan decides to fact-check a story is because a lot of people are talking about it online.
True.

- * **engagement bait:** a tactic used to try to gain large followings on social media, often for the purpose of selling access to those followers
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PART B: Fact-checking the world's tallest tree post

<p>What tipped Phan off that the video of Hyperion might not be accurate? The video seemed too good to be true.</p>	
<p>Why is this tweet about the world's tallest tree an example of "engagement bait"? Engagement bait comes from accounts that show seemingly amazing things, including unbelievable videos or photos of nature. It also makes people feel an emotion very quickly. The tweet about Hyperion had a grain of truth. Because a real video was posted in a false context, the meaning became distorted: The facts were correct, but the post was inaccurate. This false context (along with doctored or fabricated images) is a common tactic of engagement bait.</p>	
<p>Label the following tool/technique fact-checkers use to verify information. ↓</p>	<p>How did or could Phan have used this tool or technique to fact-check the false tweet about Hyperion? ↓</p>
<p>Google search</p> 	<p>Phan Googled, "Is Hyperion the tallest tree in the world?"</p>
<p>Reverse image search</p> 	<p>Phan found the photo was from National Geographic.</p>

<p>Label the following tool/technique fact-checkers use to verify information. ↓</p>	<p>How did or could Phan have used this tool or technique to fact-check the false tweet about Hyperion? ↓</p>
<p>InVID (helps verify video details and data, such as the timestamp from when a video was taken)</p> 	<p>Phan has the InVID Chrome extension to investigate videos and could have used it to learn more about the video.</p>
<p>Other search engines</p> 	<p>Phan could have used Bing and Yandex to see what was written about the Hyperion claim on Twitter.</p>
<p>Other news outlets</p> 	<p>Phan could have checked if other news outlets covered this story.</p>
<p>Seek expert opinion</p> 	<p>Phan asked tree experts to comment on the image, and they told her it was not Hyperion.</p>

PART C: Reflecting on fact-checks

Why did Phan include hyperlinks in her story?

Including hyperlinks was a way for Phan to show her work on how she debunked different parts of the claim. For example, Phan linked to National Geographic so people wouldn't have to take her word that the image came from there. They could check it out themselves.

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The same tactic of false context is also used by bad actors involving more serious subjects, such as a video of American military vehicles being transported by rail in Kansas with people falsely claiming it was taken in Poland. False context is a common way falsehoods spread during breaking news events when not a lot of official information is available yet; misinformation can fill that gap.

What are some final tips Phan gives for thinking like a fact-checker online?

Always double-check your sources. If you see a post and it brings on a reaction, double-check it, Google search it. Have news literacy skills to determine what's credible and reliable.



Conclusion: How can you think like a fact-checker? Consider how this type of thinking would guard against being duped and spreading misinformation online. Use evidence from all parts of this viewing guide to support your answer.



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