# TED TALK LESSON

# HOW TO SEPARATE FACT AND FICTION ONLINE

# TEACHER'S NOTES

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Markham Nolan at TED Salon London Fall 2012
How to separate fact and fiction online

https://www.ted.com/talks/markham_nolan_how_to_separate_fact_and_fiction_online/up-next

| Vocab matching answers | Vocab gap-fill answers | Ted Talk video answers |
|---|---|---|
| 1. f | 1. audience | 1. He is a journalist. |
| 2. d | 2. post | 2. His first connection with the news media was in 1984, when the BBC had a one-day strike. |
| 3. a | 3. source | 3. He was 4 years old. |
| 4. b | 4. journalist | 4. Journalists interact in real time. The audience is helping journalists find the news. So it's a real-time thing. |
| 5. c | 5. rely on | 5. There are 72 more hours of video on YouTube every minute. |
| 6. h | 6. upheaval | 6. 58 photos are uploaded to Instagram a second. |
| 7. e | 7. credible | 7. Journalists had to deal with fakes, with old photos that were being reposted, with composite images that were merging photos from previous storms, and with images from films. |
| 8. g | 8. deluge | 8. He is an Italian academic. |
| 9. j | 9. composite | 9. They have algorithms that are smarter than ever before, and computers that are quicker than ever before. |
| 10. i | 10. update | 10. Truth is a value. Truth is emotional, it is fluid, and above all, it is human. |

# Warmer questions

- How can the public be confident about what they are seeing or hearing from online media?

- How is digital media changing our lives?

- Are hot celeb gossip and latest celebrity news considered as journalism at the moment?

- What effect has news online had on journalism?

# Reading section

## Fact or fiction?

In the past, the news was expected to be found in the next morning's newspaper. Now, the news is read on phones and other mobile devices anywhere and anytime. They are sent directly to hand-held devices in seconds, displaying breaking news that used to be published the next day. Trust has always been regarded as an important factor that influences individuals' relationship with the news.

Nevertheless, the boundless volume of information available online, along with the rise of new tools and services enabling interactivity around the news, may have radically changed this relationship. Online media can be classified into broadcast media, print media, outdoor media, and digital media. Broadcast media includes television, radio, films, and recorded music. Print media comprises printed physical media such as newspapers, books, pamphlets, comics, and magazines. Outdoor media consists of signs, billboards, and advertisements. Digital media includes Internet services like blogs, emails, websites, etc. It also includes mobile phone technology. Online or digital media enjoys a very notorious role in our daily lives. It keeps us informed and connected to the outside world. However, a means this big is sure to influence society greatly.
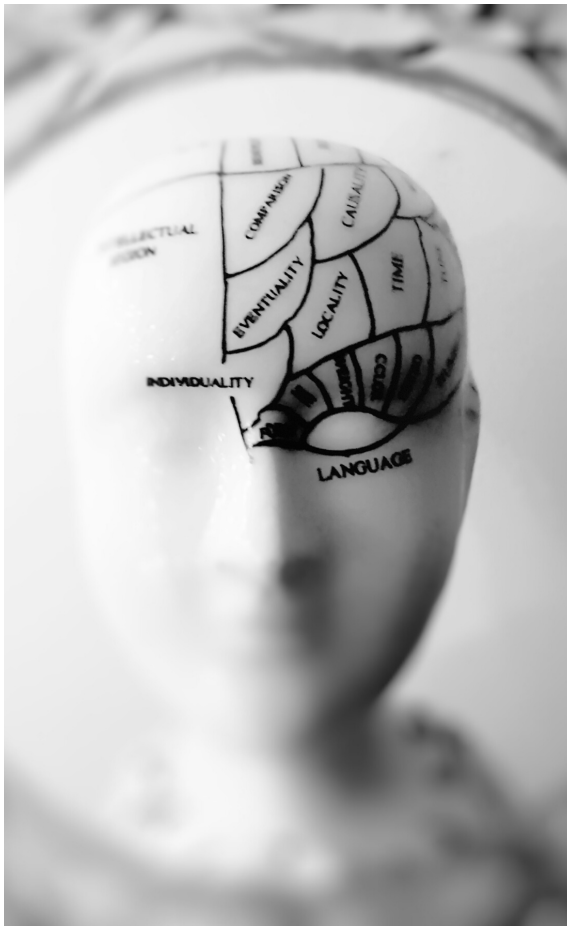
The influences can be either positive or negative depending on a number of aspects. Digital media is permanently on and has no volume control. There are innumerable channels freely available to everyone. Anyone can scream flagrant lies anytime from any place across the globe. Lies can be broadcasted in a systematic, structured and repeatable fashion to affect mass perception and opinion. About 3 billion people are connected to the Internet worldwide, and anything that appears on any media can be posted, blogged and tweeted. Should we be worried?

## Questions to consider

- Given the opportunity, what changes would you make to improve journalism?
- Has media become increasingly fragmented or has be become centralised

# Vocabulary matching

Using the words on the left match them to their real definitions.

1. Journalist

2. Upheaval

3. Audience

4. Rely on

5. Update

6. Post

7. Composite

8. Credible

9. Deluge

10. Source

a. The people giving or likely to give attention to something.

b. To depend on someone with full trust or confidence.

c. Give (someone) the latest information about something.

d. A violent or sudden change or disruption to something.

e. Combine (two or more images) to make a single picture, especially electronically.

f. A person who writes for newspapers, magazines, or news websites or prepares news to be broadcast.

g. Able to be believed; convincing.

h. Publish (a piece of writing, image, or another item of content) online, typically on a blog or social media website.

i. A book, person or document used to provide evidence in research.

j. A great quantity of something arriving at the same time.

# Vocabulary gap-fill

1. The _____ gave her a standing ovation for her performance.

2. I must _____ this letter; it's urgent.

3. Imagination is the _____ of creation.

4. A _____ managed to infiltrate the powerful drug cartel.

5. You can _____ on me for help.

6. It would cause a tremendous _____ to install a different computer system.

7. The plot is _____ but the characters lack individuality.

8. A _____ of manuscripts began to arrive in the post.

9. This _____ illustration was made by putting together a number of drawings.

10. I called the office to _____ them on the day's developments.

# Video section

By the end of this talk, there will be 864 more hours of video on YouTube and 2.5 million more photos on Facebook and Instagram. So how do we sort through the deluge? At the TEDSalon in London, Markham Nolan shares the investigative techniques he and his team use to verify information in real-time, to let you know if that Statue of Liberty image has been doctored or if that video leaked from Syria is legitimate.

https://www.ted.com/talks/markham_nolan_how_to_separate_fact_and_fiction_online/up-next



Markham Nolan | TEDSalon London Fall 2012
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Watch the video and then answer the questions below

1. What's the speaker's occupation?

2. When was the speaker's first connection to the news?

3. How old was he?

4. Who do journalists interact with now?

5. What happens every minute on YouTube?

6. How many photos are uploaded to Instagram a second?

7. What did journalists have to deal with during Hurricane Sandy?

8. Who is André Pannison?

9. What tools do journalists have now?

10. What is the speaker's definition of truth?

## The advantages of online news

1. It is cheap and widely spread. The wide reach offered by online news and has the ability to cover a global audience. It is perfectly possible to run effective and successful online news with little or no budget.

2. Internet news is constantly updated almost in real time. Thanks to the business communication of online media, businesses can reach potential consumers much faster and easier than ever before.

3 It can keep us connected. Online media is also used to educate people about the happenings of the world. Additionally, it also helps increase awareness about different governmental policies, business, culture, entertainment, sports, etc.

4. It can spread art and culture. Radio, Internet, television, music, and books are great sources of entertainment. On the internet, you can learn about the particularities of a culture far removed from your own. Moreover, lots of TV and radio shows devote themselves to exploring the world, offering us the chance to discover different life scenarios. 5. It can give voice to the voiceless. With some frequency, online media correspondents tell the stories of people in difficult situations allowing one person's ideas to go viral across the globe. Online news thus can raise an individual voice –that would otherwise have gone unnoticed.

## The disadvantages of online news

1. There are no quality standards. With physical newspapers, articles are traditionally proofread until the set time for publication. When publishing in the digital world, there is generally no set time for a story to be published. Also, there is a level of competition in relation to speed among newspapers. So, in order to be the first to publish breaking-news, some businesses are likely to risk accuracy. It is very common to find immediate stories containing incorrect information and spelling mistakes.

2. It can be used for disinformation. Anyone can write a blog, spread composite images, and create a rumour without proper analysis. Credibility is thus a noticeable issue that online newspapers face at the present.

3. A celebrity or a particular event may receive unnecessary importance, and thus set wrong ideals before youth, for example. A movie showing a celebrity engaging in narcotic addiction, for instance, may divert his/her young followers towards a wrong path.

4. Most online news is commonly prone to unnecessary sensationalism. Some online newspapers are in the business of entertainment rather than information, so that sensationalism is expected at the expense of truth if it increases readership. 5. Online news cannot be reached without proper Internet access. Also, the internet may not always be stable due to crashing or power loss.

# Task

How many more points can you think of that are related to the topic? Write your thoughts below and then discuss in your group.

# Extended discussion questions

1. What is the influence of online media on the psychosocial development of children?

2. Is digital media entertainment beneficial for youth?

3. Is there a decrease in the time spent on traditional news media since online news implementation?

4. Why do people read online news instead of printed news?

5. Will newspapers ever be completely replaced by online news?

6. Are people only skimming online newspapers' headlines?

7. Where would online media business be without advertising and marketing?

8. Does fake news on the internet travel faster than the truth?


# Potential debating topics

1. People seem to depend more on online "infotainment" and opinion shows than on serious pieces of writing.

2. Customer response to online media has been steadily positive.

3. Online news is not serious business. It is a breeding ground for blatant and systematic disinformation.

4. People, especially youth, have developed online media literacy and they make good choices about media use.

5. The effects of online media on youngsters' mental state are negative and harmful.

6. Media ownership leads to a great responsibility towards society, so the benefits of online media must not be seen uniquely in terms of speediness or profit.

7. Adults can reduce the negative effects of sensationalism of online media by keeping children away from viewing or listening to programmes that present harmful audio-visual content.

8. Online media is an important source of information that promotes positive, educational messages about history, culture, and music.

# DEBATING PLANS

## PREMIUM 30-PAGE DEBATING LESSONS ON DOZENS OF TOPICS

These lessons are extensive and includes a magazine-like introduction, a 2-page article, vocabulary section, grammar exercises, and images for discussion. To help students organize their debate, worksheets are included for appropriate language and pros and cons to get them started. In total these lesson plans offer 30 pages of activities and tasks for students.

### Environmental Crimes
**Debate Lesson Plan**
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**Contents**
• Teacher's notes
• Quotations, conversation questions
• Article
• Grammar practice
• Debate motion, pros and cons
• Images for class

Should natural features be given legal rights to protect them from pollution? This debate will target issues relating to how to legally protect the environment and criminalise pollution.

### Food Tax
**Debate Lesson Plan**
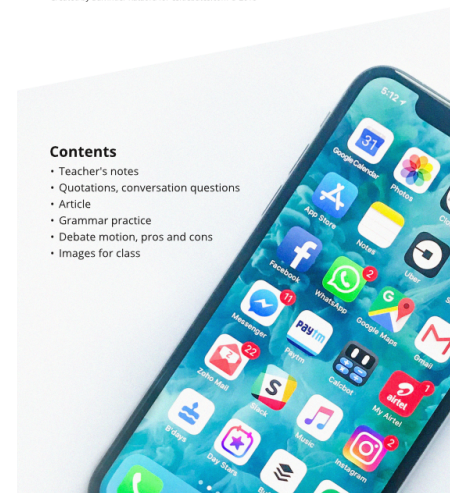Created by Balvinder Kataora for esldebates.com © 2018

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What are the best ways to tackle obesity? Some people advocate better food education, while others want to tax people to change their spending habits. Which is the most effective?

### Social Media
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People are becoming increasingly concerned about social media. Discuss the main issues and find out what your students think and why.