



**Grades
K-3**

Information Verification: Truth Online



**ROGERS
cybersecure
catalyst**



For younger kids, being able to tell the difference between what's true and what's false online can be difficult. The Internet connects many kids' devices, and allows them to chat and share pictures with family and friends near or far. However, the Internet is also a very big place – and it only grows larger every day; and anyone with access to a phone, computer or tablet can publish information online, whether it's true or not. This means that it's extremely important for kids to be able to spot both the truth and the lies online, even at an early age. If kids easily believe that lies found online are in fact true – these lies can have serious implications, such as making them feel scared or damaging their self-esteem.

It's often hard to pinpoint why people lie online. Often, the goal is to cause some sort of reaction, such as anger or excitement. Sometimes it's meant to change readers' beliefs about a certain topic, or to make money by selling a product or idea, or it originates from advertising companies. Alternatively, sometimes people simply make mistakes – authors, bloggers or journalists may have forgotten to check the facts, or honestly believed they had the correct information.

This resource contains information for parents/guardians to communicate with kids about how to spot false or misleading information online, and the questions kids need to ask, to help recognize it. Providing kids with the knowledge and tools to verify information will benefit them as they become increasingly more independent while online.



Types of online lies

A DEFINITION

Below are some common categories of misleading online content that kids may come across while browsing the Internet, watching their favourite shows on YouTube, or while playing games on a phone or tablet.

- **Misinformation:** Online content, usually in the form of articles or videos, that try to make kids think they are true or factual pieces of information, but are actually fake and meant to spread lies or cause a reaction.
- **Harmful Internet challenges:** A cultural phenomenon where Internet users record or take photos of themselves participating in a challenge, then share video/images online to inspire or dare others to repeat the challenge. Usually, these challenges encourage kids to do silly or funny things, like dance moves or try a super spicy hot sauce; however, sometimes these challenges can try to scare people or even get them to hurt themselves.
- **Fake online contests:** Contests can be very tempting, as they often promise some sort of reward, such as money or free items (e.g., gift cards, iPad, gaming system) for doing something as simple as answering a question or filling out a form. However, this can be a quick way for unknown people or companies to get kids' personal or private information.



Misinformation:

False or incorrect information that is shared with others, regardless of whether the intent was to mislead others or not.

Types of online lies

A DEFINITION

- **Misleading social media posts:** Online content, usually in the form of articles or videos, that try to make kids think they are true or factual pieces of information, but are actually fake and meant to spread lies or cause a reaction.



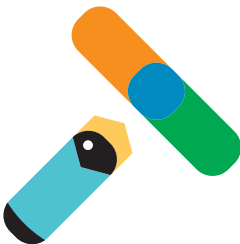
Search by image

Search Google with an image instead of text. Try dragging an image here.

Paste image URL

Upload an image

Search by image



TIP:

Not sure if a picture is real or if it's been edited? You can do a Google Reserve Image Search by dragging or uploading a photo into the Google Image search bar to see where the image appears online!



YouTube Kids or KidTube:

Versions of YouTube that provide kid-friendly videos, with curated selections of content, parental control features and filtering of videos deemed inappropriate viewing for children aged under 13.



RELEVANCE

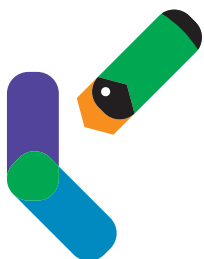
Social media offers kids the opportunity to do a lot of good things, including connecting with family and friends, raising money for people in need, and spreading positive messages. However, social media can be used for bad things as well, including spreading lies and rumours, and creating falsehoods that exaggerate people's lives and influence, which can make kids feel bad – and impact their self-esteem and self-image.

Online lies – where are they found?

Online lies, such as misinformation, Internet challenges, etc., can be found virtually anywhere or on any device when we connect to the Internet.

Most commonly, online lies appear on:

- **Websites:** Websites can host content, articles, pictures, videos, etc., containing lies or misleading information that's not true, without even knowing it! Unfortunately, not all website creators update or validate their content on a regular basis.
- **Social media:** As kids get older, they may begin to create more social media accounts. As more and more people use social media, the greater the chance for lies spread by posts, comments, or shared articles or content – along with an increased likelihood for negative impacts on users, and in greater numbers.



Online lies – where are they found?

- **Online games:** Gamers can say, message and share lies in online games.
- **Videos:** YouTube Kids and KidTube can spread misleading information; videos can be altered by other people, and fake videos can be very hard to spot. For example, a small part of a video can be clipped from the full version, posted and used to make people think the video is saying something that it's not.
- **Images:** Much like videos, pictures can be altered or "Photoshopped", and shared to spread lies or mislead people. For example, a picture can be changed to add people who weren't in the real image, remove people from the real image, or put people in places that they were not (e.g., a beach, a faraway country, a landmark, etc.).

Kids should never base their feelings about themselves, their personal lives or others, on information found on social media – as it's extremely easy to lie or mislead with false or fake content.



CALL TO ACTION

Truth or lie – how can you tell?

How can parents/guardians or kids know what misleading information is?

Encourage kids to ask the following questions about what they come across online:

- **Is this too good, or too bad, to be true?**
- **Does it say bad things about people or groups of people?**
- **Is it weird, scary or gross?**
- **Have kids heard it before from anywhere else? Have their friends talked about it?**
Is this just a rumour or is it an actual fact?
- **Can kids find it anywhere else online? Have they seen it anywhere offline, like in a newspaper, on television or radio? Can kids find another source that confirms this information? Can they find one that counters it?**

If kids come across anything online that they're unsure is real or not, they should show it to a parent/guardian or a trusted adult right away.

Conversation Starter:

Ask kids if they've come across online posts – news, articles, videos, etc. – that they're unsure if it's real or not. Maybe an advertisement for a toy or game, or maybe their favourite YouTube star-released a new video.



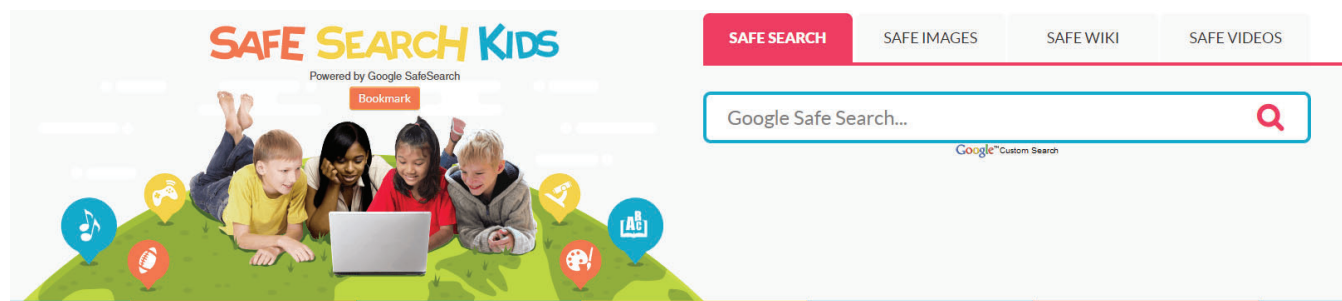
CALL TO ACTION

Encourage kids to be an online detective!

It can be hard for kids to tell the difference between truth and lie online, so they may ask for the help of a parent/guardian quite a bit! However, parents/guardians can provide younger kids with a few tools to help them become online detectives and “decode” what kids are reading and watching online:



- **Try Safe Search Kids for an age-appropriate search option! Safe Search Kids is a search tool powered by Google and designed for younger kids; this search option finds results that are relevant to the search while avoiding results unintended for young people.**





CALL TO ACTION

For example, try searching Safe Search Kids for “Moon Landing Fake”, a topic that traditionally has a lot of counterargument theories and news surrounding it.

Note: When these keywords are searched in a kid-friendly search engine, it returns results related to the moon landing in fact being a true event.

The screenshot shows the SafeSearch Kids search engine interface. The search bar contains the text "Moon Landing Fake". Below the search bar, there are links for "web", "images", "video", "facts", "wiki", "news", "games", "kidztube", and "apps". The search results are displayed below the links. The first result is titled "Was the Moon landing faked? Absolutely not, says a film expert ..." and includes a thumbnail image of an astronaut on the moon. The second result is titled "1969 Moon Landing - HISTORY" and includes a thumbnail image of an astronaut on the moon. The third result is titled "Apollo 11 Mission Overview | NASA" and includes the NASA logo.

**Remember
This:**

It's important that kids be inquisitive when they're online. They should always question what they see, hear or read, because not everything online is as it appears!

ACTIVITY

1

Activities are a useful way for kids to test and demonstrate their knowledge on the topic covered in this resource. Have them try the activities themselves, and offer support when needed.

Detective Challenge! Circle the images below that you think are “fake” or “impossible”. Before circling, remember to ask yourself the important questions outlined in the Truth or lie – how can you tell? section!



Which photos did you choose? Why?

ACTIVITY 2

Find the Fake!

Can you guess which of the following statements is a “fake” fact? Remember, sometimes when you see a photo or read a story on your computer, tablet or phone, it might also be hard to tell what’s real and what’s not, so this is good practice!

A hippopotamus’ milk is pink.

1

Fake / Fact

Cows can walk upstairs, but not down them.

2

Fake / Fact

You can teach a bumblebee how to talk.

3

Fake / Fact

Gorillas burp when they are happy.

4

Fake / Fact

A bat can eat 3,000 insects in one night.

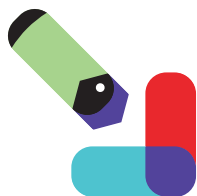
5

Fake / Fact

answers key: 1, 2, 4 & 5 = Fact, 3 = Fake



FOR MORE INFORMATION



For more information on cybersecurity, or to continue the conversation and learning process, visit the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security website:

- <https://cyber.gc.ca/en/>

Kids Help Phone:

Contact by text message at 686868 or by phone at 1-800-668-6868 from across Canada, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; or access their resources online: kidshelpphone.ca





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