

## **Is It Real?: You are the news detective**

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### **Objectives**

Students will be able to...

- Identify the difference between news media types.
- Determine whether a source is valid, reliable, and credible.
- Assess a Web site's reliability.
- Identify how readers/viewers can be manipulated with slanted language, altered videos, and self-interested sources.

### **Guiding Questions**

- When you view a video, how do you know if it's real?
- When reading a Web site, how do you determine its reliability? How do you verify what's found on a site?
- When you read an article, how do you know if the sources are reliable and honest? What's the evidence that indicates the story is most likely credible? Can you determine whether a story can be verified and validated?
- Do controversial events affect the accurate reporting of such events? Does your own "cognitive dissonance" affect your thoughts on the topics?

### **Florida Next Generation Sunshine State Standards**

#### **Information and Media Literacy**

- LA.8.6.1.2: The student will use information from a variety of consumer (e.g., warranties, instructional manuals), workplace (e.g., applications, contracts) and other documents to explain a situation and justify a decision; and
- LA.8.6.2.2: The student will assess, organize, synthesize, and evaluate the **validity** and **reliability** of information in text, using a variety of techniques by examining several sources of information, including both **primary** and **secondary sources**;
- LA.8.6.3.1: The student will analyze ways that production elements (e.g., graphics, color, motion, sound, digital technology) affect communication across the media;

- LA.8.6.4.2: The student will evaluate and apply digital tools (e.g., word processing, multimedia authoring, web tools, graphic organizers) to publications and presentations.

### Writing Process

- LA.8.3.2.1: The student will draft writing by developing ideas from the prewriting plan using primary and secondary sources appropriate to the purpose and audience;
- LA.8.3.3.2: The student will revise by creating clarity and logic by maintaining central theme, idea, or unifying point and developing relationships among ideas;
- LA.8.3.5.1: The student will prepare writing using technology in a format appropriate to audience and purpose (e.g., manuscript, multimedia);

### Reading Process

- LA.8.2.1.7: The student will locate and analyze an author's use of allusions and descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language in a variety of literary text, identifying how word choice is used to appeal to the reader's senses and emotions, providing evidence from text to support the analysis;
- LA.8.2.2.2: The student will synthesize and use information from the text to state the main idea or provide relevant details;
- LA.8.1.7.1: The student will use background knowledge of subject and related content areas, prereading strategies, graphic representations, and knowledge of text structure to make and confirm complex predictions of content, purpose, and organization of a reading selection;
- LA.8.1.7.2: The student will analyze the authors purpose and/or perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning;
- LA.8.1.7.3: The student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details;
- LA.8.1.7.6: The student will analyze and evaluate similar themes or topics by different authors across a variety of fiction and nonfiction selections;

### **Materials**

- You Tube videos (see Resources)
- Web sites (see Resources)
- Online News Articles (see Resources)
- KeyNote presentation

- graphic organizers

## Activities

1. Bellwork/bellringer questions: What makes a news story true? How do you know when a You Tube video is real? How do you know what's true?
2. Students view KeyNote presentation on how to evaluate sources and how to analyze media to determine whether material is credible and verifiable. People are naturally skeptical of supernatural events, often because witnesses must be believed in order to confirm the event took place. In the digital age, videos can be easily faked; photos can be heavily manipulated, further adding to the skepticism. Web sites also need to be evaluated by using a series of questions.
3. Teacher models the evaluation processes using a graphic organizer.
4. Students then choose a story that they want to investigate further. They must find several stories, pictures, and/or video related to their topic. Using the “News Detective” graphic organizers, they evaluate their findings. Students may also visit [snopes.com](http://snopes.com) to further verify the information they find.
5. Students get into groups and share their findings. Peers should question their evidence and findings. Rate their sources.

## Assessment

Students will present their findings to the class in a multimedia presentation that includes pieces from the stories as well as pictures and video clips. Students will be assessed according to a rubric.

## Resources

### UFOs/Aliens

- Video: Russian “alien” - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n16lwgzM0Nw>
- Article: Body of ‘Dead Alien’ found in Siberia - The Telegraph - by Andrew Osborn in Moscow - April 19, 2011

- <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/howaboutthat/ufo/8460645/Body-of-dead-alien-found-in-Siberia.html>
- Video: CNN on MFON Texas Phoenix UFO Jan. 18, 2008 (3 of 6)
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swKCIXBsNWA&feature=grec\\_index](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swKCIXBsNWA&feature=grec_index)
- Video: CNN on MFON Texas Phoenix UFO Jan. 18, 2008 (4 of 6)
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZeKnB8aLI-Q&NR=1>
- Article: UFO Landing is Fact, Not Fantasy, Russians Insist - Esther B. Fein - Special to the NYT - Oct. 11, 1989
- <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/10/11/world/ufo-landing-is-fact-not-fantasy-the-russians-insist.html?src=pm>
- Article: U.F.O. Landing is Fact, Not Fiction, Russians Insist - NYT
- <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/10/11/world/ufo-landing-is-fact-not-fantasy-the-russians-insist.html?src=pm>
- Article: Widespread UFO Reports Pouring In - The Press-Courier Oct. 17, 1973 by Craig Ammerman, Associated Press Writer
- <http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=ipFLAAAIBAJ&sjid=DyQNAAAIBAJ&pg=7129,3916004&dq=ufo+sightings&hl=en>
- Article: Study Finds No Abnormalities in Those Reporting UFOs - NYT - Walter Sullivan - Nov. 29, 1993
- <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/11/29/us/study-finds-no-abnormality-in-those-reporting-ufo-s.html?src=pm>

### **Mermaids**

- Video: Mermaid 1 - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z\\_ElsEJe0Kw&feature=relmfu](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_ElsEJe0Kw&feature=relmfu)
- Video: Mermaid 2 - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pt\\_gPazwnHM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pt_gPazwnHM)
- Article: Mermaid Sighting Craze Makes Splash in Israel - Fox News - Aug. 11, 2009
- <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,538918,00.html> and
- Article: Mermaid Fever Makes a Splash in Israel - Sky News HD - Aug. 11, 2009
- <http://news.sky.com/skynews/Home/World-News/Israel-Mermaid-Fever-Makes-A-Splash-Mythical-Creature-Spotted-Near-Haifa/Article/200908215358515?f=rss>
- Translated Primary Source: Jan. 9, 1493 from Christopher Columbus' Journal
- <http://everything2.com/title/Columbus%2527s+Log%253A+January%252C+1493>

### **Crop Circles**

- Video: Crop circle formation - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bGeS-nDGIkM&NR=1>
- Article: Crop Circle Draws Wide Interest - MyJournalCourier.com (Jacksonville Journal-Courier) - July 8, 2011 by Jake Russell
- <http://www.myjournalcourier.com/news/circle-33984-crop-prank.html>
- Article: It's That Time Again: First Crop Circle of the Season Appears in Historic Wiltshire Field - The Daily Mail - by Daily Mail Reporter - May 3, 2011
- <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1383035/First-crop-circle-season-appears-historic-Wiltshire-field.html>
- Article: How Crop Circles Work - How Stuff Works (a Discovery company) - by Stephanie Watson
- <http://science.howstuffworks.com/science-vs-myth/unexplained-phenomena/crop-circle.htm>
- (Note: There are scientific articles on Google Scholar if you are interested in the scientific experiments involved with the crops.)

### **The Florida Skunk Ape (like Bigfoot, but smelly)**

- Video: Skunk Ape
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPytCu4NJMQ>
- Video: Skunk Ape w/report
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RFbBNG5Ze14>
- Video: Ape Tape Divides Experts - BBC News - By Malcolm Brabant in Miami - July 21, 2000
- <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/845143.stm>
- Facebook -- Florida's Skunk Ape
- <http://www.facebook.com/EvergladesSkunkApe>
- Web site for Skunk Ape
- <http://www.floridaskunkape.com/>

### **Phoenix Lights - UFO sightings**

- Video: raw clip of Phoenix Lights - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6Y5RjhOThM>
- Video: MSNBC - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3DNJb8h8jv0>
- Video: Phoenix Lights Documentary
- 1 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5KtsZ5rljo&feature=related>
- 2 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMEECViEp18&feature=related>
- 3 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3UPvzkdsyY&feature=related>
- 4- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1MPWdmRgxA&feature=related>
- 5 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGRTONpGUK8&NR=1>

- 6 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xj2a-X9KaEU&feature=related>
- 8 - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZmJ1tN\\_Q\\_VE&NR=1](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZmJ1tN_Q_VE&NR=1)
- 9 - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vydKzCpq\\_cE&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vydKzCpq_cE&feature=related)
- Article: Unexplained Red Lights Hover Over Phoenix - CBS/AP - Feb. 11, 2009  
<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2008/04/22/national/main4036233.shtml>
- Video: on You Tube with clip from CNN:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfVOeC8EiPY>
- Article: (In ViewPoints) 'UFOs' Excerpt: A look at the Phoenix Lights - Arizona Republic by Leslie Kean Sept. 12, 2010
- <http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/viewpoints/articles/2010/09/12/20100912ufo-phoenix-lights.html>

### **Outrageous But True**

- Article/commentary: The Secret Strategies Behind Many Viral Videos - Tech Crunch.com - by Dan Ackerman Greenberg - Nov. 22, 1997
- <http://techcrunch.com/2007/11/22/the-secret-strategies-behind-many-viral-videos/>
- Article followup from Greenberg based on reader's negative comments:
- <http://techcrunch.com/2007/11/24/follow-up-to-the-viral-video-post-dan-wants-another-word/>
- Article: Artist shows how he sees what he hears - Dayton Daily News - by Pamela Dillon - contributing writer - June 25, 2011
- <http://www.daytondailynews.com/lifestyle/artist-shows-how-he-sees-what-he-hears-1193739.html>
- Article: Seeing Color in Sounds Has Genetic Link - CNN.com - by Elizabeth Landau - Feb. 9, 2009
- [http://articles.cnn.com/2009-02-09/health/synesthesia.genes\\_1\\_synesthesia-brain-regions-visual-areas?\\_s=PM:HEALTH](http://articles.cnn.com/2009-02-09/health/synesthesia.genes_1_synesthesia-brain-regions-visual-areas?_s=PM:HEALTH)
- Mixed Media: Rusty Knife Removed from Man's Head After 4 Years By KATIE MOISSE, ABC News Medical Unit - Feb. 18, 2011  
<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/Wellness/rusty-knife-removed-mans-head-years/story?id=12949455>
- News of the Weird (a collection of odd events)
- <http://www.newsoftheweird.com/>
- Audio: Orson Welles' War of the Worlds Broadcast
- <http://www.archive.org/details/OrsonWellesMrBrun>

- Article: A Brief History of Orson Welles' War of the Worlds - Time - by Gilbert Cruz - Oct. 30, 2008
- <http://www.time.com/time/arts/article/0,8599,1855120,00.html>