

SPOTTING AI MISINFORMATION

Why this Matters

AI can quickly create realistic text, images, and videos, which makes it easy for misinformation to spread online. Students may see fake news stories, altered photos, or deepfake videos that look real. Our goal isn't to shield them, but to help them recognize and question what they see. This resource provides practical strategies to help learners spot AI-generated misinformation and verify before they trust.



Teach Media Literacy

Use tools like the [News Literacy Project's RumorGuard](#):

- **Authenticity:** Is it real or altered?
- **Source:** Has a credible news outlet confirmed it?
- **Evidence:** Does proof support the claim?
- **Context:** Is it being shown or described accurately?
- **Reasoning:** Does the argument make logical sense?



Verify Visuals

Encourage use of reverse image search tools like [Google Images](#), [TinEye](#), [Bing Visual Search](#), or [Yandex](#), and guide students to:

1. Open the tool and click the camera icon.
2. Paste the image link or upload the file.
3. Review where else the image appears and look for changes or mismatched contexts.



Practice Lateral Reading

Effective fact-checkers don't stay on one site - they **read laterally**. This means opening new tabs to see what other reputable sources say about the same claim. The [Stanford Civic Online Reasoning](#) program and the [APA](#) both highlight lateral reading as essential for evaluating credibility. Teach students to verify unfamiliar claims when using AI tools by cross-checking the model's responses with reliable references instead of accepting information at face value.



Develop Healthy Skepticism

[RumorGuard's "Know and Do"](#) lists recommend practicing healthy skepticism. Normalizing skepticism doesn't mean cynicism; it means refusing to accept claims without independent verification.

Students should observe details such as:

- Are there inconsistencies in the lighting or shadows?
- Does audio sync with lip movements?
- Are the figures proportionate?
- Encourage them to interrogate why a post exists: Who made it, what do they gain, and why is it going viral now?

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Combat Deepfakes

Deepfakes are AI-generated images, videos, or audio designed to mimic real people or events. The same verification steps apply: use reverse image search, check credible news coverage, and apply the **RumorGuard** factors (authenticity, source, evidence, context, reasoning).

Resources like **TeachersFirst's "Uncovering Deepfakes"**, **PBS's AI literacy unit**, and **PBS LearningMedia's "Detecting Deepfakes"** offer engaging ways for students to practice detecting manipulated media.



Encourage Critical Questioning

- Challenge learners to ask "What evidence supports this claim?" and "What do reputable sources say about it?"
- Facilitate debates on AI-related issues (e.g., AI vs. human decision-making or the ethics of generative models).
- Have students analyze AI use in news articles or scientific papers and identify possible misinformation.
- Assign creative projects using AI tools (poems, art, videos) but require students to evaluate the outputs critically.
- Require students to cite AI tools and outputs in their work.

Additional Resources

- **News Literacy Project / RumorGuard:** Classroom posters, interactive lessons, and newsletters that help students evaluate authenticity, source, evidence, context, and reasoning.
- **Reverse Image Search Guide:** A clear, step-by-step article explaining how reverse image search works and why it's essential for verifying images.
- **Deepfake Lesson Plans (TeachersFirst):** Curated lessons, games, and videos for grades K-12 to help students identify manipulated media.
- **Civic Online Reasoning (Stanford):** A free curriculum that teaches lateral reading and other key fact-checking strategies.

Final Word

AI tools will continue to get better at mimicking human output. That means students' critical thinking skills must improve, too. Don't sugar-coat the risks: generative models can produce confident falsehoods, and doctored media can sway elections or incite conflict. By teaching learners to verify authenticity, triangulate sources, and question their own biases, you help them become resilient digital citizens who can engage responsibly with AI-generated content.

