



MODULE: MISINFORMATION – RECOGNIZING FAKE NEWS

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHERS

Linguistic awareness

This series of lessons is designed to introduce high school students to linguistic insights into the role of language in misinformation. These lessons aim to develop students' critical thinking, media literacy, and linguistic awareness through engaging, real-world applications. By examining how language is used to mislead, manipulate, or inform, students gain tools to better understand and navigate the information they encounter daily.

This sequence includes three interconnected lessons:

1. Recognizing fake news.
2. Identifying linguistic cues and fostering epistemic vigilance.
3. Practicing fact-checking and creating fake news articles.

Each lesson builds on the previous one, guiding students from recognizing the characteristics of misinformation, to analyzing its linguistic features, and ultimately to applying their knowledge creatively.

General Preparation and Approach

- **Materials:** Gather all required resources for each lesson, including coursebooks, PPT slides, online videos, printed articles, and websites. Ensure students have access to any digital materials needed for group work. To ensure that there is always an option to base activities on real, attested examples, we offer multiple screenshots of online articles. Feel free to use the resources provided (if still available), or to replace any article you don't want to include in your lesson.
- **Classroom Setup:** Arrange the space to support group collaboration and discussions. Provide a clear structure for activities to keep students focused and engaged.
- **Adapting the Lessons:** As already mentioned, keep in mind that you can always tailor the depth of discussion, the complexity of examples, and pace of activities to suit your students' age, their (and your) interests, as well as language proficiency.

Written in orange below, you will find all the documents to refer to when you plan/teach your lesson.



Lesson 1: Recognizing Fake News > [Misinf Unit 1_Lesson Plan_word](#)

Objectives

- Help students recognize fake news by analyzing its characteristics (sources, visual material, and website features).
- Introduce the general notions that characterize misinformation.

Instructions

1. **Hook Activity (5-7 minutes):** [Misinf_Glossary_word](#)
 - Begin with an engaging exercise, possibly using a chapter in the coursebook focusing on media/social media/online communication. For example, play a YouTube video about fake news to prompt a discussion on what students already know about the topic.
 - Clarify key terms like *misinformation*, *disinformation*, and *manipulation*. You can base yourself on the glossary.
2. **Categorization of Fake News (10 minutes):** [Misinf Unit 1+2_Worksheet presentation_ppt \(slides 1-7\)](#)
 - Present different types of fake news using a PPT. Explain features and provide examples (e.g., satire, propaganda, clickbait).
 - Facilitate a discussion on how these categories differ, for instance regarding their real-world implications.
3. **Hands-On Activity (15 minutes):** [Misinf Unit 1+2_Worksheet_ppt](#)
 - Divide students into groups and assign each group an article or website. Ask them to identify and categorize the fake news using the features discussed.
 - Move around the classroom to provide guidance and ensure students stay on task.
4. **Wrap-Up (5 minutes):**
 - Summarize the lesson by reviewing the key points. Transition to the next lesson by highlighting that the focus will shift to the linguistic cues of fake news.

Lesson 2: Identifying Linguistic Cues and Epistemic Vigilance [Misinf Unit 2_Lesson Plan_word](#)

Objectives

- Teach students to recognize linguistic patterns in fake news.
- Introduce the concept of epistemic vigilance and its importance in assessing information.

Instructions



1. **Review and Transition (5-7 minutes):** [Misinf Unit 1+2_Worksheet presentation \(slides 1-7\)](#)
 - Begin by revisiting the articles or websites analyzed in Lesson 1. Shift the focus to the language used, emphasizing that fake news often relies on specific linguistic cues.
2. **Linguistic Analysis (10 minutes):** [Misinf Unit 1+2_Worksheet presentation_ppt \(slides 7-11\)](#)
 - Introduce linguistic elements like emotionally loaded language, verb tenses, pronouns, and sensational headlines. Use a PPT to provide clear examples.
 - Discuss why these elements are used to manipulate or deceive readers.
3. **Epistemic Vigilance (5-7 minutes):** [Misinf Unit 2_EV for Teachers_word / Misinf Unit 2_Worksheet presentation](#)
 - Explain the concept of epistemic vigilance—i.e. how people evaluate the reliability of information. Use simple examples to connect this concept to students' everyday experiences.
 - Ask students why it's important to critically assess information sources.
4. **Group Activity (10-15 minutes):** [Misinf Unit 1+2_Worksheet_ppt](#)
 - Provide printed (or online) news samples (real, fake, satire, etc.) and have groups evaluate them based on language and credibility. Ask them to share their evaluations with the class.
 - Encourage students to think critically about why certain language choices might mislead or persuade.
5. **Wrap-Up (5 minutes):**
 - Summarize the importance of recognizing linguistic cues and introduce the next lesson on fact-checking and writing their own fake news articles.

Lesson 3: Fact-Checking and Writing Fake News [Misinf Unit 3_Lesson Plan_word](#)

Objectives

- Teach students basic fact-checking techniques.
- Encourage learning of characteristic features of fake news by having students creatively write their own fake news articles.

Instructions

1. **Review and Transition (5-7 minutes):**
 - Start by recalling the concept of epistemic vigilance and the linguistic cues discussed in Lesson 2. Ask students how they would respond to hearing false information.



2. Fact-Checking Techniques (7-10 minutes):

- Demonstrate how to fact-check information using real examples. Show students online tools and strategies for verifying sources and claims.
- Discuss the role of fact-checking in combating misinformation.

3. Creative Writing Activity (20-25 minutes): [Misinf_Worksheet_word](#)

- Divide students into groups and explain the task: each group will create a fake news article. Encourage them to use the characteristics and linguistic cues of fake news discussed in previous lessons.
- Move around the classroom to provide support and feedback as students work on their articles.

4. Wrap-Up (5 minutes):

- Collect the articles and explain that the next session (if applicable) will involve analyzing these articles as a class.
- Reinforce the importance of critical thinking and language awareness in understanding misinformation.

This sequence of lessons is designed to be flexible and interactive, allowing teachers to **adapt** activities to their students' needs. By combining linguistic analysis with practical activities, these lessons not only introduce students to the field of linguistics but also equip them with essential skills for evaluating the information they encounter in their daily lives.