LEARNING BOX OF UNPLUGGED ACTIVITIES

Fake News and Disinformation

In this activity, adult learners not only recognise fake news but create their own fake news stories in small groups. They present them to others, who try to guess what is false and why. Adult learners explore how fake news is created, what makes misleading information appear believable, and how emotional language and unclear facts can influence people. By the end of the activity, adult learners better understand how to recognize misleading information and why it is important to critically evaluate information before believing or sharing it.

Co-funded by the European Union

This project has been co-financed with support from the European Commission's ERASMUS+ programme. This publication reflects only the views of its authors, and neither the European Commission nor SEPIE can be held responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained herein.

Theme

Information Literacy Competences

Duration

90–120 minutes

Level

Advanced

Computational Thinking Steps Used

☑Decomposition
☑ Pattern recognition
☑ Abstraction
☑ Algorithmic thinking

Target Group

☑ Low-skilled adults with low digital competences
☑ Low-skilled adults with limited formal education or qualifications
☑ Low-skilled adults with low participation in lifelong learning / training opportunities

Learning Objectives

By the end of this activity, adult learners will be able to:

- Recognise patterns used in fake news, such as emotional language and exaggeration
- Work in small groups to analyse and create simple news stories
- Break down a simple news story into key elements
- Identify what makes information believable or misleading
- Create a simple fake news example
- Explain why information should be questioned before sharing or believing it
- Reflect on how fake news and disinformation can influence people and society

Competence Areas

a) Innovation Competences

☑ Creativity
☑ Critical thinking
☑ Problem solving

Methodological Approach

☑ Gamification
☑ Challenge-Based Learning
☑ Collaborative learning
☐ Experiential learning

- ☑ Communication
- ☑ Collaboration

b) Information Literacy Competences

- ☑ Ability to access, understand, and critically analyse information
- ☑ Interpretation of digital and visual content
- ☑ Awareness of media influence and biases

c) Life and Career Competences

- ☑ Flexibility and adaptability
- ☑ Initiative and autonomy
- ☑ Sociability and intercultural competence
- ☑ Productivity
- ☑ Leadership and responsibility

Learning Outcomes

Adult learners will be able to:

- Identify misleading elements in information;
- Create a simple fake news example using misleading communication techniques;
- Recognise emotional or exaggerated language in news stories;
- Explain why some information may not be trustworthy;
- Reflect on how fake news spreads and influences opinions;
- Participate in collaborative discussions about information credibility.

Notes

- Materials
- Printed examples of real and fake news headlines
- Paper sheets
- Markers or pens
- Sticky notes
- Voting cards

Recommendations for Facilitator

- Encourage creativity while keeping examples simple and understandable
- Avoid politically sensitive, discriminatory, or controversial topics
- Focus on learning and critical reflection rather than judging opinions

- Use clear and simple language
- Support Adult learners who feel unsure or uncomfortable speaking in groups
- Select examples related to everyday life situations familiar to adult learners

Accessibility Adaptations

- Allow adult learners to explain ideas verbally if writing is difficult
- Use larger printed text when needed
- Use visual examples and symbols to support understanding
- Ensure all group members participate actively

Co-funded by the European Union

Step 1. Decomposition

Adult learners are asked to:

- Break a news story into parts (title, message, details, source)
- Identify what the story is about
- Understand how information is structured
- Discuss which parts attract the most attention

Gamification Element

Adult learners react to the stories using simple reactions such as Appendix 1):

- “Real”;
- “Fake”;
- “Difficult to identify”.

Integrated creation element

What kind of information will make you believe? Adult learners begin creating a simple idea for their own fake news story by choosing:

- a topic,
- a title,
- and a short message.

Facilitator support

Facilitator may ask: “What is the main message?”, “Which part attracts attention first?”, “Does the title match the information?”.

This step helps adult learners break down a news story into clear and manageable parts, making it easier to understand how information is structured.

Step 2: Pattern Recognition

Adult learners analyse examples of fake news and compare them with more trustworthy information examples.
They are asked to identify patterns commonly used in fake news, such as:

- emotional language,
- shocking titles,
- exaggeration,
- unclear facts,
- missing sources,
- urgent messages,
- and unrealistic claims

Recognise what makes fake news attractive or believable
Compare similarities between different fake news examples

Gamification Element

Gamification element: Adult learners vote whether the examples are:

- "Real"
- "Fake"
- or "Difficult to identify"

Integrated Creation Element

Adult learners improve their own fake news story by adding recognised patterns, for example:

- Stronger emotional language,
- Exaggerated claims,
- Or unclear information sources.

Facilitator support

Facilitator may ask: "What looks suspicious?", "Why might people believe this?", "What patterns appear in several examples?".

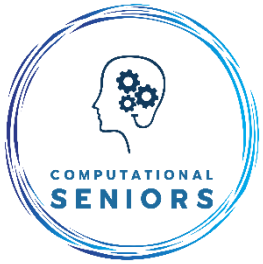
This step helps adult learners recognise patterns in fake news, making it easier to identify misleading information in real life.

Step 3: Abstraction

Adult learners focus on key elements.

They are asked to:

- Identify what makes fake news convincing;
- Ignore less important details;
- Focus on the main misleading techniques: emotional influence, exaggeration, unclear facts, and lack of evidence
- Discuss why people sometimes trust false information.





Co-funded by
the European Union

Gamification element
Groups choose what they believe is the “strongest trick” used in fake news.

Integrated creation and presentation element
Adult learners finalise their fake news stories,
present them to the group,
and explain why people might believe them.
Other adult learners try to identify: what is misleading, which patterns are used, and what information should be questioned.

Facilitator support
Facilitator may ask: “Why would people believe this?”, “Which information is missing?”, “How could we check if this information is true?”
This step helps adult learners focus on the most important elements of fake news, making it easier to understand how misinformation works and how it can be recognised.

Step 4: Algorithmic Thinking

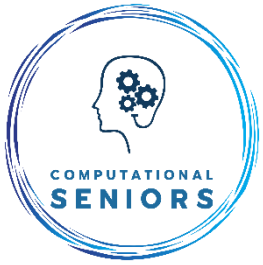
Adult learners are introduced to a simple step-by-step process for checking whether information may be trustworthy or misleading.

Working in groups, adult learners create a basic “verification algorithm” using questions such as:

- Who created the information?
- Is the source clear?
- Does the title use strong emotions or exaggeration?
- Are facts or evidence provided?
- Can the information be checked elsewhere?
- Should the information be trusted or questioned?

Adult learners then apply their verification steps to the fake news examples created during the activity.

Gamification Element
Groups exchange fake news examples and test each other’s “verification algorithm.”





Co-funded by
the European Union

Facilitator Support

The facilitator asks:

“What should people check first?”

“What makes information more trustworthy?”

“What should we do before sharing information online?”

This step helps adult learners understand that information evaluation can follow a logical, step-by-step process.

REAL

FAKE

DIFFICULT TO IDENTIFY