

THE ROLE MODELS PROJECT

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT...?

FAKE NEWS

**TEACHER
RESOURCES**

WHAT IS THE ROLE MODELS PROJECT?

What do we wish we'd known when we were younger?

Role Models is a peer-led mentoring project. A team of students who are currently studying or recently completed Higher Education courses in Sussex were asked to consider a series of issues particularly relevant to young adults. Starting with the question 'What do we wish we'd known when we were younger?' the team have written articles and made videos in response to these issues specifically designed for secondary school students in Years 10 to 13. The project aims to offer this age group ideas, tips, advice and encouragement from the authentic voices of those with recent experience of the issues discussed.

WHAT'S IN THE BOOKLET?

The Role Models team were asked to consider the topic of 'Fake News'. They discussed the impact of fake news on their own lives, as well as wider society. They also considered why it was such a critical issue at the moment.

Each article in this booklet offers a personal perspective from one of the team about fake news, based on their own experiences. They also offer tips and tasks to help students consider whether the information they are passing on is really what it appears and the wider impact of fake news.

By offering a number of different approaches to the issue, we hope your students will recognise a voice with which they connect.

At the end of the booklet the team have also collated further information and support on the topic.

How do I use this booklet with my group?

The booklet has been designed to be used either in a classroom setting or by students working from home.

For students working in school:

The teacher-led lesson activities included here explore the booklet and the themes that arise in the articles. You might choose to use each theme as a lesson plan or select individual activities, depending on time and suitability for your class. The different approaches discussed in each article can be used as a way of stimulating discussion and debate.

Alternatively, students can work through the booklet individually, or in small groups. They might be asked to read each article and then select a few different tasks to complete in school or at home, depending on the time and resources available.

WHAT'S IN THE BOOKLET?

For students working at home:

This booklet is made up of a number of different articles about the topic. Each article is accompanied by a task. The tasks vary in form and in the amount of time required to complete them.

Most tasks can be completed at home without teacher support and only need basic equipment. Some tasks in this booklet require internet access for research purposes. More creative tasks might require other materials, but all have been designed to be accessible.

The basic requirements of each task and the minimum time needed to complete the tasks are clearly labelled. The ideas suggested can be explored in more detail and expanded or used as a starting point for your students to respond in their own way.

Some responses can be recorded in the booklet itself. For some creative tasks, you might ask students to send photographs of their ideas or work to you.

You might ask students to attempt every task in the booklet. Or you could ask them to select a couple of different tasks in different styles that best reflect their own thinking on the topic or require a range of skills and effort.

However you decide to use this resource, please encourage your students to watch the short video that accompanies the booklet first.

The video introduces the team behind the booklet and the style of the project overall, as well as offering some of their initial thoughts and tips about dealing with 'Fake News'. By 'meeting' the young people behind the articles first, we hope your students can get to know the team a little and connect to the ideas and advice they offer in the booklet.

Video Link:

<https://www.sussexlearningnetwork.org.uk/lisetoolkits/Role-Models-Resource-Books>

This project is funded by



TEACHER-LED LESSON ACTIVITIES

THEME: FACT AND OPINION

Whole group	Read	Teacher notes/ timings
	The first page of the booklet where the Role Models project is explained. Key points: • The Role Models team is made up of a group of HE students from across Sussex. • They were asked to consider what they wished they'd known when they were younger. • They discussed issues surrounding 'fake news', experiences of believing false information and their approaches to working out who and what to trust. • In response to these discussions they wrote the articles in the booklet and made videos. Watch Role Models Video that accompanies this booklet: https://www.sussexlearningnetwork.org.uk/lisetoolkits/Role-Models-Resource-Books	
Whole group	Discuss In general terms: • What does the term 'fake news' mean to you? • Where do you find fake news? • What sorts of things can be called fake news?	
Whole group	Read Ani's article on page 3.	
Whole group	Discuss Ani says: <i>'I don't know what or who to trust when it comes to hearing news. Everyone has their own interpretations of what they are told.'</i> • What is the difference between fact and opinion? • What do we mean by the terms 'personal truth' and universal truth'? • Do both terms hold the same value?	

Individually	Research/Write • Research and write down three surprising facts (which can be supported with trustworthy evidence – record your sources.) • Research and write down three opinions/theories (which could be based on your own feelings, but don't have to be.) Try and write the facts and your opinions in the same style so it is not obvious which is which. For example: Facts: Women live longer than men. The first oranges weren't orange. There are over 500 species of shark. Opinions: Cats don't care about their owners. It rains more at night. The best exercise is running.	Teacher notes/timings Internet access
In pairs	Discuss Read each of your sentences out to your partner in a random order. Your partner must guess whether each sentence is a fact or opinion. After you have both done this, discuss the process you each went through to separate fact from opinion. • What clues did you look for? • Are there certain traits or patterns in the language that might help us identify facts or opinions? Feedback to the group.	
Whole group	Read Nick's article on page 11.	
Whole group	Discuss Nick gives an example of a time when he passed on an article that turned out to be fake news and the angry response of his friend. This is a very common mistake. • Do you agree with the response of Nick's friend? • If a friend passes on something you believe to be untrue, how do you respond to it? • What is your responsibility (if any) as the person who receives fake news?	
In pairs	Discuss Nick says: 'Don't give an opinion on something you know very little about.' Nick acknowledges this is something we all do at times! • Why might we pretend to know more than we do? • If you feel comfortable to do so, share an example of a time when you found yourself pretending to know more about something than you really did.	

Individually**Consider**

Nick says:

'The only way to look smart is to be smart.'

- What topic/skill would you consider yourself to be confidently knowledgeable in?
- How many hours of time have you spent practicing/researching/learning about this topic/skill?
- How confident would you be to share with others your knowledge of this topic/skill?

Write

Create the table below:

Things I know a lot about:	Things I know some things about: (and would like to know more)	Things I know nothing about: (and would like to know more)
1		
2		
3		

1. Fill in the first column with the three topics you know the most about:
 - These could be a school subject, a type of music, or a sport or political position – anything you have spent time researching or experiencing and feel confident offering opinions and facts about.
2. In the second column identify up to three topics you know some things about but would like to know more.
 - Again, this could be anything, but it might be something new to you that you have read or heard of, but don't yet know much about.
3. In the third column, write three things you know very little about but would like to learn more about in the future.
 - These could be news items, opinions you've heard others discuss – where you have thought **'I should know more about that'** or **'I want to know more about that'**.

Example

Things I know a lot about:	Things I know some things about: (and would like to know more)	Things I know nothing about: (and would like to know more)
1 Playing the guitar	The climate crisis	World politics
2 Football	Applying for a university course	Spanish (language)
3 Film	Cooking	How to change a lightbulb

**Teacher
notes/
timings**

Whole group	Discuss/Skill share Feed back ideas. Is there anyone in the class who is knowledgeable about a subject you want to know more about? Could they point you in the direction of interesting research or share skills or tips to help you learn more? Looking at your chart, how would you approach discussing something you felt you were an expert in, compared to something you know very little or nothing about? Is passing on unsupported opinions the same as passing on fake news?	Teacher notes/timings
Extension activity	Choose something from column two or three and see if you can get better informed about it in the next month.	
Extension activity	Complete the 'What's the difference' exercise on page 8.	
Extension activity	Complete Nick's 'Dig Deeper' Task on page 12.	

THEME: FINDING THE FACTS

Whole group	Discuss Think back to when you were younger: • What sort of things did you used to believe to be true that you have since discovered to be false? • Are there any media figures/famous people you used to follow, but whose opinions you now don't trust? • What made you decide not to trust their opinion or follow their advice?	Teacher notes/ timings
Whole group	Read Lola's article on page 7.	
Whole group	Discuss Lola says: <i>'The key way I was able to get myself out of the habit of believing everything I saw in the media was to see if science could back it up, if my parents could corroborate it, and if I could draw from personal experience to challenge or agree.'</i> Lola tries to corroborate any information she is unsure about in three places before she forms an opinion. She used this approach to research her own mental health issues and find strategies to support herself, as well as seeking support from professionals. • How often do you check if information you have heard or seen is true? • How many places would you have to see information repeated before you started to believe it? • Where do you go to check out information you are unsure about? • How do you know if these sources are reliable?	
In three groups	Discuss/Research As a class select a current news story everyone in the group has heard about. What are your current opinions on this story? In three groups, research that news story. Each group will take a different approach: Group A: Facts Find as many facts as you can about the news story. • Any facts must be supported by evidence from trusted sources. • If relevant, consider scientific sources. Group B: Expert Opinions Note down as many expert opinions as you can about the news story. • Any experts quoted must be a specialist in this field or have a lot of experience in this area. So you may have to research your expert too! Group B: Non-Expert Opinions Note down opinions of non-experts, quotes from the general public, including other members of the class. Research the opinions of people you follow on social media.	Internet/ library access

Whole group	Discuss Each group shares their key research findings. • What was the most interesting/memorable/shocking/funny piece or research shared by any group? • What was the most useful piece of research shared when trying to form an opinion on the story? • Was there any research that made you question or change your opinion on this story? • Are all forms of research worth the same when we are trying to form an opinion? What are your final opinions on the news story? Have they changed at all?	Teacher notes/timings
Whole group	Read Vic's article on page 9.	
In pairs	Discuss There is a lot of fake news about health and wellbeing, especially at the moment. Discuss any adverts or health stories you have seen repeated on social media or mainstream media recently that you think may be fake. For example, • Adverts offering 'quick fixes' to conditions or illnesses. • Advice about losing weight quickly or building muscle fast. • Cures or protections from Covid-19 or theories about it. • Remedies that solve long term health issues or improve your overall health. Where do you come across these kinds of stories or adverts most frequently? What makes you think it might be fake?	
Whole group	Discuss Vic says: <i>'It's worth being wary of the promise of 'quick and easy' especially when it comes to topics such as weight loss or gaining muscle. These trends and methods can end up doing way more harm than good. I used to fall for them all the time and believed in 'no pain, no gain'. Instead I got all pain and very little gain'.</i> Why do we want to believe in these kinds of adverts/remedies? Some 'health myths' are created by companies trying to sell their product. Some are myths passed on from generation to generation without being questioned. What health myths have been passed on to you?	
In pairs	Complete the 'Bust a Myth' task on page 10. From your research for this task and your own knowledge, make a list of trusted sources and places to research health and wellbeing. Share your sources with the class.	Internet access
Extension activity	Complete Lola's 'True or False' research task on page 4.	Internet access

THEME: FAKE NEWS V REAL NEWS

Whole group	Read Drew's article on page 5.	Teacher notes/ timings
Whole group	Discuss Drew says: <i>'For me, the meaning that can be found through listening, understanding and true conversation is far deeper than any false sense of security or certainty that is felt through echo chambers on social media feeds.'</i> Drew has given up finding his news on social media because he believes it had a negative impact on the way he viewed the world and formed opinions. • Where do you get your 'news' from? • Do you feel any responsibility to keep up to date with the news? • Do you feel the rise of fake news means you trust all news less? • Are there any sources of news that you feel you can reliably trust?	
Whole group	Watch/Make notes Watch this short video by BBC bitesize called 'What's so bad about Fake News'. https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zjykkmn The video identifies different types of fake news. While watching, make notes on the following terms: • Satire • Clickbait • Propaganda • Mistakes	Internet access
Small groups	Discuss Of the four categories of fake news discussed in the film • Which category do you come across the most? • Which category do you think makes the most impact on how much we trust all news in general? Feedback ideas to the class.	
Two teams	Research The film suggests that there is now so much fake news about, that we struggle to trust the 'real' news. In two teams prepare to debate the following statement: 'You can't trust the news any more.' Take a vote on the statement before you form groups. You may have to argue against your current opinion but keep open minded and see what you can find out. • Team A will argue for the statement • Team B will argue against the statement Each team must present at least two arguments to support their position. Each argument must be backed up with: • Facts – including data from verifiable sources. • Expert opinions – from experts whose credentials can be checked. • Examples – from verifiable sources. Make sure you don't <i>mistakenly</i> use fake news to make your point!	Internet access

Whole group	Debate Once you have formed your arguments and gathered supportive research, debate the statement, 'You can't trust the news any more.' • Set clear rules about listening to the opinions presented and respecting the position each person takes. At the end of the debate, vote again on the statement. • Have any opinions changed? • What was the most persuasive argument made and why?	Teacher notes/timings
Whole group	Discuss Why is it important that we have news sources we can trust? What can we do to rebuild confidence in our news?	
Extension activity	Complete Drew's 'Discussion Challenge' on page 6.	
Extension activity	Film Making Watch the Role Models video that accompanies this booklet. https://www.sussexlearningnetwork.org.uk/lisetoolkits/Role-Models-Resource-Books Make your own video clip offering practical advice about Fake News, its impact on our lives and how we might challenge it.	

This resource was created in 2021.

For more information about the Role Models projects including links to our Role Models films and other topic booklets visit

<https://www.sussexlearningnetwork.org.uk/lisetoolkits/Role-Models-Resource-Books>

Thanks for supporting the Role Models Project.