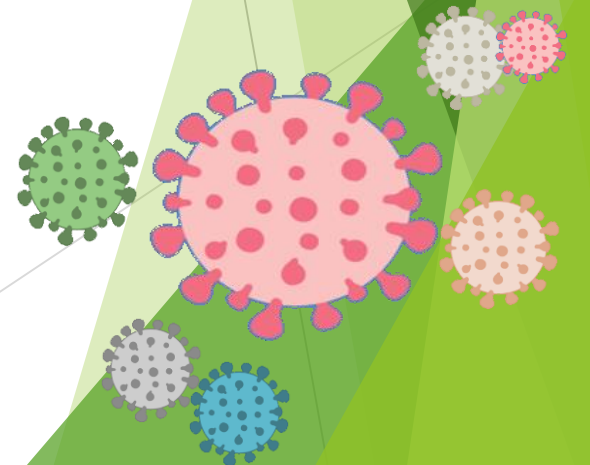# Learning and Teaching Resources on English Language

Combatting Misinformation of COVID-19

Developed by English Language Education Section

Curriculum Development Institute

Education Bureau

An Overview of the Learning Task

Learning objectives:

Content

- To develop students' information literacy skills and guide them to think critically and evaluate the information on the Internet

- To create a visual text to raise awareness of misinformation related to COVID-19

Language

- To understand the features of visual texts

- To use modals (e.g. "can", "should", "will") to make suggestions, express ability, prohibition and future possibility

- To use imperatives to give instructions and express prohibition

How much do you know about the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)?

▶ Let's take an online quiz on the website of UNICEF: https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/fact-or-fiction-how-much-do-you-actually-know-about-coronavirus-covid-19

▶ What is your score?

▶ Have you ever been misled by fake news about COVID-19?

Part 1 Brainstorming

A) What do you know about misinformation of COVID-19? Put your answers in the left column of the K-W-L chart on the worksheet.

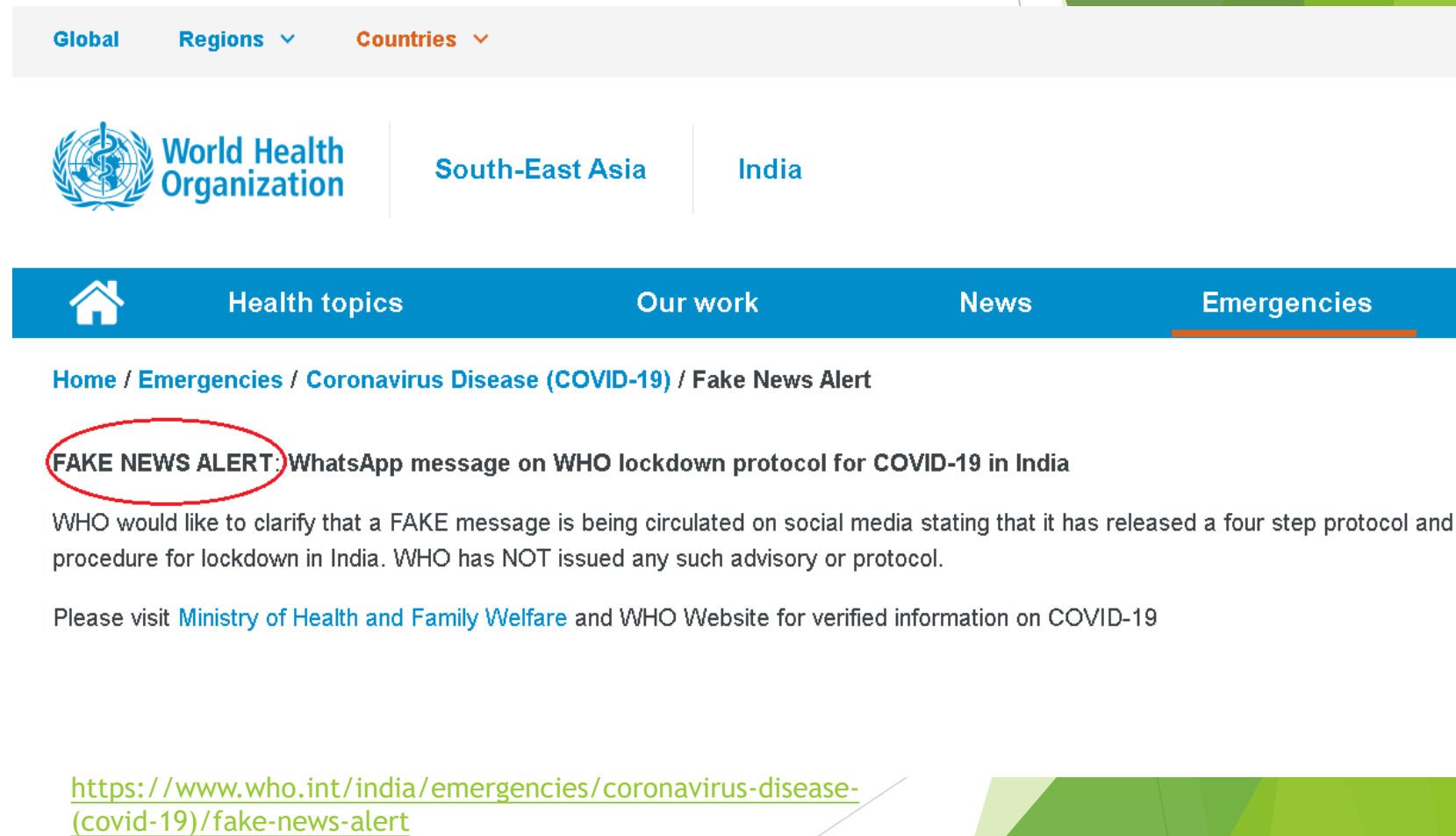| What do you 💡Know?	What do you Want to Know?	What have you Learnt?

B) Why are these web pages created?

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

同心抗疫 Together, We Fight the Virus!

Tamar Talk	news.gov.hk FB	ISD YouTube
news.gov.hk	CHP FB	CHP YouTube
HA FB	HA YouTube	

हिन्दी | नेपाली | ,,/| ไทย| Bahasa Indonesia | Tagalog | සිංහල භාෂාව|
বাংলা ভাষা| Tiếng Việt

繁 简 Text Size   Search keyword(s)

CLARIFICATIONS

Date	Clarifications
25 May 2020	Hong Kong Customs further arrests director of trader supplying suspected law-breaking surgical masks
20 May 2020	Government refutes unfounded claims on further relaxation for group gatherings

https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/clarifications.html

Global   Regions ∨   Countries ∨

World Health Organization   South-East Asia   India

🏠   Health topics   Our work   News   Emergencies

Home / Emergencies / Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) / Fake News Alert

FAKE NEWS ALERT: WhatsApp message on WHO lockdown protocol for COVID-19 in India

WHO would like to clarify that a FAKE message is being circulated on social media stating that it has released a four step protocol and procedure for lockdown in India. WHO has NOT issued any such advisory or protocol.

Please visit Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and WHO Website for verified information on COVID-19

https://www.who.int/india/emergencies/coronavirus-disease-(covid-19)/fake-news-alert
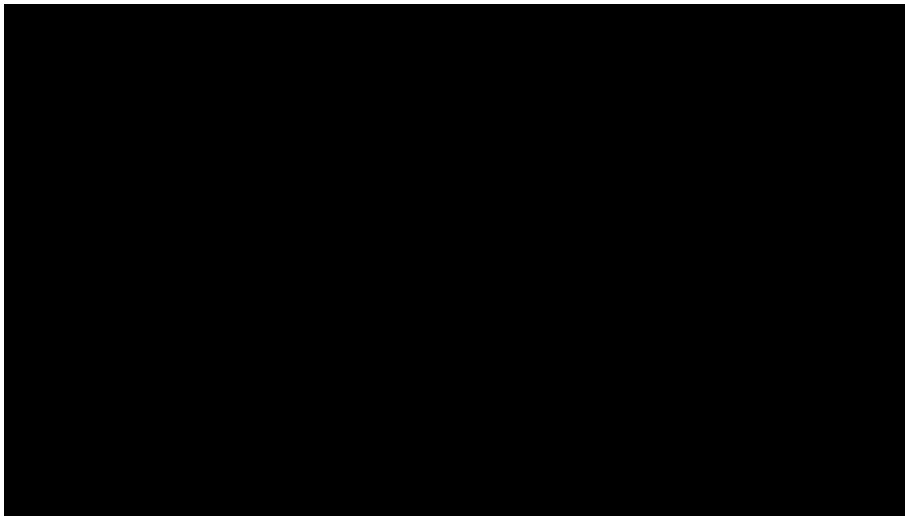
(▶Answers)

Why are these web pages created?

▶ These web pages are created because fake news has spread and if it is not clarified, people may be misled and the consequences can be serious or even fatal.

Part 2

How does fake news spread?
What are the consequences of the spread of fake news?

▶ Watch the video clip of *Verified* on the website of the United Nations:
https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/05/1064622.

From *UN launches new initiative to fight COVID-19 misinformation through 'digital first responders'*, by WFP/Sonia Assoue, ©2020 United Nations. Reprinted with the permission of the United Nations.
https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/05/1064622. Date downloaded: 19 June, 2020

▶ A) Answer the following questions with the information from the video clip and your own knowledge.

1. How does fake news spread?

2. Why is the impact of the spread of fake news deadly?

▶ B) What is the key message of this video clip?

(▶ Answers)

A) How does fake news spread?
What are the consequences of the spread of fake news?

1. How does fake news spread?

▶ It spreads online (e.g. social media) and through daily communication (e.g. instant messaging, face-to-face interaction).

2. Why is the impact of the spread of fake news deadly?

▶ The spread of fake news is deadly because
i) people may be misled into making wrong decisions which can be life-threatening, such as taking unproven drugs;
ii) fake news spreads at an exponential rate and it is difficult to stop the spread; and
iii) fake news is usually spread among close friends and relatives who are well-trusted and people may not be skeptical about the information being shared.

B)

▶ Fake news, rumours and <u>misinformation</u> spread even <u>faster</u> than the virus.
The impact is <u>deadly</u>.

Spread of fake news

C) Scan the following title on the website of the United Nations and identify the word used to describe the spread of misinformation of COVID-19: https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/un-tackling-%E2%80%98infodemic%E2%80%99-misinformation-and-cybercrime-covid-19

BY THE DEPARTMENT OF GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS

UN tackles 'infodemic' of misinformation and cybercrime in COVID-19 crisis

31 March 2020 — From selling fake coronavirus cures online to a cyberattack on hospitals' critical information systems, criminals are exploiting the COVID-19 crisis, the United Nations has warned, as it also steps up its fight against a proliferation of false information about the virus.

About the aut

Department of Glol

The United Nations Dep

From *UN tackles 'infodemic' of misinformation and cybercrime in COVID-19 crisis*, by the Department of Global Communications, ©2020 United Nations. Reprinted with the permission of the United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/un-tackling-%E2%80%98infodemic%E2%80%99-misinformation-and-cybercrime-covid-19. Date downloaded: 19 June, 2020

▶ Which word is used to describe the spread of misinformation of COVID-19?

▶ How is this word formed? How does the formation of the word illustrate the spread of misinformation of COVID-19?

(▶ Answers)

Spread of fake news

▶ The word "infodemic" is used to describe the spread of misinformation of COVID-19.

▶ "Infodemic" is a blended word formed by combining "information" and "pandemic". COVID-19 is a pandemic, which means a disease that spreads over a whole country or the whole world. The blended word illustrates how misinformation spreads like a pandemic and affects many people in the world.

What do you want to know about misinformation of COVID-19? Put your answers in the middle column of the K-W-L chart on the worksheet.

What do you **K**now?	💡What do you **W**ant to Know?	What have you **L**earnt?

How to differentiate facts from misinformation?
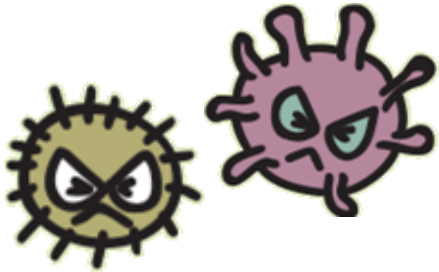
Let's brainstorm some ideas.

How to differentiate facts from misinformation?

▶ Watch the video clip "Check the facts to keep fake news in check": https://www.isd.gov.hk/eng/tvapi/19_ms285.html

▶ What are the ways to help us differentiate facts from misinformation?

(▶ Answers)

How to differentiate facts from misinformation?

▶ Do you believe everything you read online?
Are you sure it's true?

Be critical.

Does the number of followers guarantee credibility?
On the Internet, anyone can share anything.
What we read might not be true.

Examine the authority of the source.
Is it evidence-based? What is the track record of the source?

So, we need to look more from different angles.

Stay calm.

Check facts before jumping to conclusions,
and try not to let emotions sway your judgment.
If fake news goes viral,
it can have severe repercussions.

Are there other sources which show the same information?

- Check facts from the official/reliable websites.
- Check whether the images have been edited (e.g. look for similar images and the websites that contain these images).

▶ Check facts to keep fake news in check

**Do not share information before
we make sure it is accurate!**

How to differentiate facts from misinformation?
Six ways to evaluate information: ESCAPE
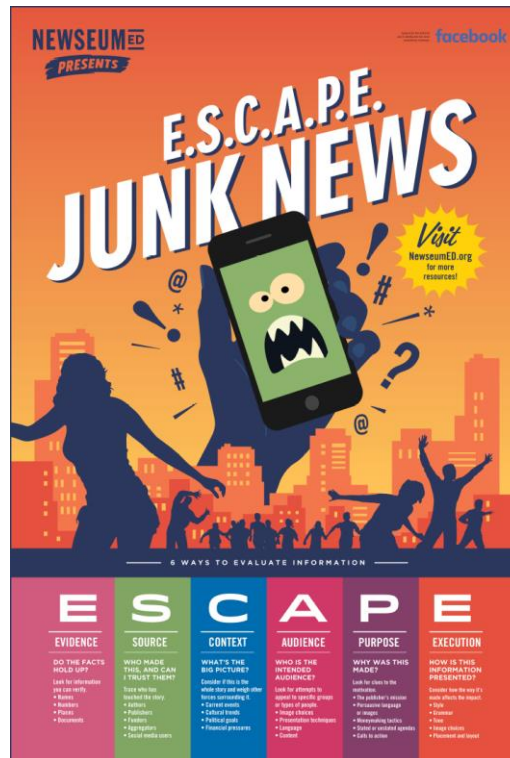
"E.S.C.A.P.E. Junk News" poster by NewseumEd

https://newseumed.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/Evaluating%20COVID-19%20News.pdf

Part 4
Features of visual texts

Study the features of the following visual texts and complete the table on the worksheet.

Visual text 1

Drinking methanol, ethanol or bleach DOES NOT prevent or cure COVID-19 and can be extremely dangerous. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization; 2020. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters

Visual text 2

Do not under any circumstance spray or introduce bleach or any other disinfectant into your body. These substances can be poisonous if ingested and cause irritation and damage to your skin and eyes.

Bleach and disinfectant should be used carefully to disinfect surfaces only.

Remember to keep chlorine (bleach) and other disinfectants out of the reach of children.

World Health Organization

#COVID19   #coronavirus

FACT:
Spraying or introducing bleach or another disinfectant into your body WILL NOT protect you against COVID-19 and can be dangerous

27 April 2020

Spraying or introducing bleach or another disinfectant into your body WILL NOT protect you against COVID-19 and can be dangerous. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization; 2020. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters

Visual text 3

To date there has been no information nor evidence to suggest that the new coronavirus could be transmitted by mosquitoes. The new coronavirus is a respiratory virus which spreads primarily through droplets generated when an infected person coughs or sneezes, or through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose.

To protect yourself, clean your hands frequently with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water. Also, avoid close contact with anyone who is coughing and sneezing.
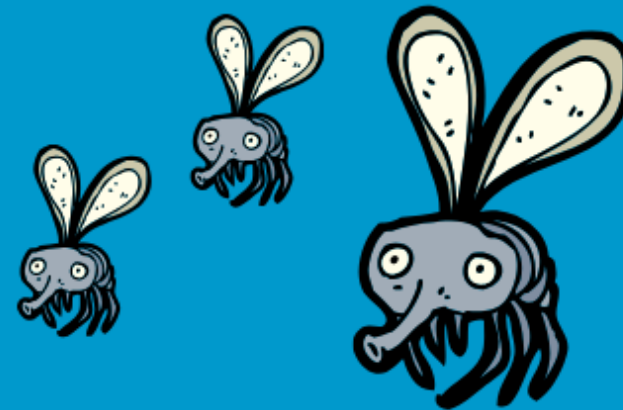
World Health Organization   #Coronavirus   #COVID19

FACT:
The new coronavirus CANNOT be transmitted through mosquito bites

The new coronavirus CANNOT be transmitted through mosquito bites. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization; 2020. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters

Features of visual texts

		Features (What?)	Purpose (Why?)
1.	Language (e.g. fonts, use of language)		
2.	Images (e.g. use of colours, pictures)		
3.	Messages (e.g. what the writers want to tell the reader)		

(▶ Answers)

Features of visual texts

		Features (What?)	Purpose (Why?)
1.	Language (e.g. fonts, use of language)	• Use bigger font size and capital letters	➢ To draw readers' attention
		• Use modals	➢ To make suggestions, and express ability, prohibition and future possibility
		• Use imperatives • Use of hashtags	➢ To give instructions and express prohibition
2.	Images (e.g. use of colours, pictures)	• Use different colours and bright colours (yellow)	➢ To draw readers' attention and emphasise key messages
		• Use pictures	➢ To help readers understand the content and grasp the key messages
3.	Messages (e.g. what the writers want to tell the reader)	• Clarification of misinformation of COVID-19	➢ To warn the readers against believing the misinformation
		• Advice about how to keep clean and stay healthy	➢ To provide readers with safe suggestions to prevent infection of COVID-19

Creating a visual text (Junior Secondary)

- You are Chris Wong. Your classmate sent you the following message.

!!BREAKING: 5G mobile networks spread COVID-19!!

- Apply the six ways to evaluate information: ESCAPE to evaluate the reliability of the above message.

Creating a visual text (Junior Secondary)

You find that "5G mobile networks spread COVID-19" is misinformation after checking the facts and decide to create a visual text to debunk the myth. The school will upload the visual text to the school's website and post it on campus.

The visual text should include the following:

▶ facts related to "5G mobile networks spread COVID-19";

▶ use of different colours and fonts to help convey the key message;

▶ modals and imperatives; and

▶ image(s)/drawing(s) to illustrate the key message.

Part 5

Creating two visual texts (Senior Secondary)

You are Chris Wong, the Chairperson of the Student Union. The teacher advisor has asked you to research into misinformation about COVID-19. You have to do the following:

▶ identify two pieces of misinformation about COVID-19 by applying the ESCAPE model to evaluate the reliability of the information; and

▶ use appropriate language and features of visual texts in your work

The school will upload the visual texts to the school's website.

Post-writing self-reflection

Put a ✓ for the item(s) that you can do.

		Yes (✓)	No(✓)
1.	I can search for different types of information from a range of sources.		
2.	I can extract and organise information from multiple sources.		
3.	I can verify and evaluate the accuracy and reliability of information.		
4.	I can integrate, synthesise, summarise, compare and contrast the extracted information.		
5.	I can create and present information in different forms, including texts, images, etc.		
6.	I can use modals (e.g. "can", "should", "will") to make suggestions, and express ability, prohibition and future possibility.		
7.	I can use imperatives to give instructions and express prohibition.		

What have you learnt about misinformation of COVID-19? Please put your answers in the right column of the K-W-L chart on the worksheet.

What do you **K**now?	What do you **W**ant to Know?	What have you **L**earnt?

Let's be an effective and ethical user of information and IT!