

**Victorian Student’s Parliamentary Program
Secondary School’ Convention**

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1. Context of Topic

Social media platforms have become an essential part of our society and provide many avenues for communication, information sharing and community engagement. However, with the surge in social media use there has also been a rise in the spread of misinformation and fake news. This then raises questions about the responsibility of social media platforms to control and reduce the spread of false information.

This unit of work has been developed to enable students to prepare for the debate at the VSPP Secondary Schools Convention.

****There are seven activities to choose from before the convention and four suggested activities to choose from post the convention. All are listed in the student workbook. All are provided as stand-alone activities. Teachers should use their discretion when selecting appropriate activities for their cohort to complete.**

Students are *not* expected to complete all activities prior to participating in the Convention, nor are they expected to complete all post-convention activities.

2. Links to Curriculum

Social media and its potential to spread misinformation and/or fake news, has strong links to Level 9 & 10 of the Civics and Citizenship Strand of the Victorian Curriculum including the following Content Descriptors at Years 9 & 10:

Government and Democracy

Code: VCCCG030

Analyse how citizens' political choices are shaped, including the influence of the media

Elaboration:

- analysing a range of strategies used to persuade citizens' electoral choices such as public debate, **media**, opinion polls, advertising, interest groups and political party campaigns.
- discussing how social media is used to influence people's understanding of issues (direct link to this topic as students are required to discuss the use of social media platforms to spread fake news and misinformation which can influence citizens' thinking and political choices.

The link to the topic:

Australia's democracy is built on the principles of free and fair elections, the rule of law, the protection of human rights, and a system of checks and balances. We are also impacted by migration, international relations, and our participation in the global economy. Additionally, the digital age of technology has brought about challenges related to the spread of misinformation and the possibility of foreign interference in our news services in Australia.

Citizens, Diversity, and Identity

Code: VCCCC038

*Examine the influence of a range of media, including **social media**, in shaping identities and attitudes to diversity and how ideas about Australian identity may be influenced by global events.*

Elaboration:

- Analysing how media represent different groups in Australian society and assessing the impact those representations have on community cohesiveness, for example, a human rights campaign that uses social media.
- Examining stories of how Australian citizens' perspectives on their role in the global community have been influenced by their experiences of living and working in other countries.
- Debating the concepts of 'global identity' and 'global citizenship' and their implications for Australian citizens.

Code: VCCCC036

*Discuss **challenges to and ways of sustaining a resilient democracy and cohesive society.***

Elaboration:

- discussing the concept of 'cohesive society' using examples from contemporary events in Australia or in other countries to identify factors that support cohesiveness
- considering threats to Australian democracy and other democracies, such as the influence of vested interests, organised crime, corruption and lawlessness
- identifying the safeguards that protect Australia's democratic system and society, including shared values and the right to dissent within the bounds of the law

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The link to the topic:

Media and social media platforms play a key role in shaping public opinion and attitudes towards different groups within our Australian society. The way specific groups are portrayed can have a major effect on community connectiveness, human rights issues and equality. Social media platforms allow campaigners to reach a wide audience quickly and easily and can be an effective way of raising awareness on an important issue e.g. asylum seekers, COVID virus etc. However, if the information provided is false or misleading it can create confusion and a level of mistrust which could lead to online trolling and hate speeches. Students need to consider these factors when debating this topic on the day of the convention.

Key Questions that apply to this topic:

- How is Australia's democracy defined and shaped by the global context?
- How do citizens participate in an interconnected world?
- What are the features of a resilient democracy?

Levels 9 and 10 Achievement

Students analyse a range of factors that influence identities and attitudes to diversity. Students evaluate a range of factors that sustain democratic societies and analyse ways they can be active and informed citizens in different contexts, considering multiple perspectives and ambiguities.

3. Learning Intentions and Success Criteria for this unit of work:

By the completion of this unit or lessons students will be able to:

- Understand the role of social media in our society and how it is used by people
- critically analyse the role of social media platforms in the spread of information and fake news.
- form an opinion on whether social media platforms should be held responsible for the spread of misinformation and fake news.
- analyse how a person's political thoughts and choices are shaped by social media.
- discuss the maintenance of a cohesive society when fake news and disinformation is spread.

On the day of the Convention

- actively participate in parliamentary proceedings.
- think critically about the steps involved in creating and modifying law through parliament.
- understand why parliament uses a preferential voting system and/or why we use 'first past the post' in a mock scenario.

Students will know that they have achieved the learning intentions when they can state the following:

- I can show an understanding of social media use in society and explain how I use it personally.
- I can demonstrate a clear understanding of the role of social media platforms in spreading misinformation and fake news and show this through completion of the activities provided in this unit of work, class discussions and active participation in group work.
- I can explain what misinformation and fake news is by either discussing it with peers or writing explanations for the teacher to read.
- I can differentiate and distinguish between credible news sources and misinformation on social media platforms by analysing the content and clearly stating whether it is fact, opinion, or fiction.
- I can identify methods of how a person's political views are shaped through social media.

On the day of the Convention

- I will show active engagement in parliamentary proceedings by debating during the soap box session.
- I can explain the steps involved in creating and modify law through parliament.
- I can confidently and independently vote.
- I can show an understanding of why the outcome achieved through voting, is a democratic representation of the people.

4. Suggested answers to questions in the student booklet.

Topic: *Should social media platforms be held responsible for the spread of misinformation and fake news?*

Activity 1 - PRE-UNIT SURVEY

Suggested time frame 15 – 20 minutes.

Learning Intentions

By the completion of this activity students will be able to:

- Understand the role of social media in our society and how it is used by people.

Success Criteria

- I can show an understanding of social media use in society and explain how I use it personally.

Teacher Instructions:

Before exploring this topic conduct a short survey of the class to determine which social media platforms students in your class are familiar with, including which ones they use regularly or occasionally. This will enable them to prepare for the topic.

Student Instructions/SOLUTIONS:

1. In your own words explain what a social media platform is:

Possible explanations include:

1. Social media platforms refer to online platforms and digital tools that allow people to create, share, and exchange information and content with others

2. Social media platform means any internet-based platform, including those which may be accessed through an app, through which users are able to create and/or share content that is accessible to members of the public, and includes, but is not limited to, sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter, Clubhouse, Pinterest, Tumblr, Google+, and YouTube.

3. Social media platforms refers to a variety of technologies that facilitate the sharing of ideas and information among their users. From Facebook and Instagram to X platform (formerly Twitter) and YouTube, more than 4.7 billion people use social media, equal to roughly 60% of the world's population. In early 2023, 94.8% of users accessed chat and messaging apps and websites, followed closely by social platforms, with 94.6% of users.

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2. Look at the list of social media platforms below. Circle the ones that you use and if there are others which are not listed add them to the list.

Answers for the remaining tasks in this activity will vary depending on what the students' experiences. Teachers are advised to use Questions 2 – 8 as a basis for a class discussion once the students have completed the questions.

My Social Media Empire

What social media platforms do you access on a regular basis?

Circle all those that apply.

Facebook (and/or Messenger)	Snapchat
"X" (Formerly Twitter)	Pinterest
YouTube Instagram	Reddit
Discord	Other: _____
TikTok	Other: _____
	Other: _____

3. From the choices above, which 3 do you use the most?

Social Media #1 = _____

How and why do you use it?

Social Media #2 = _____

How and why do you use it?

Social Media #3 = _____

How and why do you use it?

Answers will vary depending on students' experiences.

4. How long do you use social media on average per day? Circle **one** option only.

Less than an hour

1-2 hours

3-5 hours

5+ hours

Answers will vary depending on students' experiences.

5. For what reasons do you use social media? Circle all that apply.

Entertainment

Content Creation

Give Feedback

Relationships

Networking

Income Source

News/Research

Sense of Belonging

Other(s): *Answers will vary depending on students' experiences.*

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6. Which in your opinion is the best social media platform today? Why?

Answers will vary depending on students' experiences.

7. Which of the top social media platforms currently out there do you think is most likely declining in popularity? Why?

Answers will vary depending on students' experiences.

8. Predict what the future may look like for social media platforms 5 years from now? 20 years from now? Give reasons to support your predictions.

Answers will vary depending on students' experiences.

Activity 2 - UNPACKING SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Suggested time frame 20 – 30 minutes.

Learning Intentions

By the completion of this activity students will be able to:

- Understand the role of social media in our society and how it is used by people.
- critically analyse the role of social media platforms in the spread of information and fake news.

Success Criteria

- I can show an understanding of social media use in society and explain how I use it personally.
- I can explain what misinformation and fake news is by either discussing it with peers or writing explanations for the teacher to read.

Teacher Instructions:

The following activity is a class warm up to help students to think about the broader social media issues that will be discussed at this convention. Each activity can be undertaken individually, or as a 'Think, Pair and Share' task.

Student Instructions/SOLUTIONS:

1. What are social media platforms – cloze activity

Fill in the blanks solutions:

Social media platforms are **ONLINE** services that allow **INDIVIDUALS**, organisations, and **BUSINESSES** to create and share content, connect with others, and engage in social **NETWORKING**. These platforms provide a variety of features such as **POSTING** text, **IMAGES**, **VIDEOS** and links as well as **TOOLS** for **COMMUNICATION**, interaction and community building. A user can create a **PROFILES**, FOLLOW other users, **JOIN** groups or communities, and interact through **COMMENTS**, likes, **SHARES** and **DIRECT** messaging.

2. List three aspects of society that social media platforms have impacted or influenced:

- a. **MARKETING/ ADVERTISING STRATEGIES** – *use of influencers to promote the business on online platforms for example to attract more customer interest and sales.*
 - b. **COMMUNICATION PATTERNS** – *move to digital rather than face to face communication.*
 - c. **CULTURAL TRENDS** - *promote popular trends e.g. the friendship bracelets through the Taylor Swift concerts.*
- Others: *political influences especially during elections, online education etc.*

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3. Think, Pair and Share Activity - Social Media and You

Think about what effects social media has had on your life? What are some of the positive and negatives you have seen with social media on your family, friendship circles and school. Include examples. Share your answer with your partner and list any similarities or differences that you discovered.

Examples:

- *Reliance on text messaging rather than phone calls or letters*
- *Ability to contact others 24/7*
- *Ability to follow favourite actors, musicians, sporting heroes etc.*
- *Rise in online bullying*

Activity 3 - WHAT IS FAKE NEWS?

Suggested time frame – one lesson.

Learning Intentions

By the completion of this activity students will be able to:

- critically analyse the role of social media platforms in the spread of information and fake news.
- analyse how a person’s political thoughts and choices are shaped by social media.

Success Criteria

- I can explain what misinformation and fake news is by either discussing it with peers or writing explanations for the teacher to read.
- I can differentiate and distinguish between credible news sources and misinformation on social media platforms by analysing the content and clearly stating whether it is fact, opinion, or fiction.

Teacher Instructions:

Review the PowerPoint with your class titled “Fake News and Misinformation on Social Media Platforms – truth or lies”.

The activity can be completed in groups of 3-4 students with each group being allocated one story to investigate and respond to by writing down their thoughts. After students have had time to consider the story, discuss as a class each group’s finding. Please note that this task can also be completed individually with students recording their own thoughts, rather than as a group or class activity.

There are particular slides in the PowerPoint presentation which will require the students to undertake work. These include:

Slide 10– This is a brainstorm activity that can be completed as a whole class

Knowledge is power. If incorrect information is being shared through social media, then this will impact people’s choices, government choices, election outcomes, popularity of performers, and it can lead to people making poor choices based on what they have seen through the online platforms, rather than what is fact.



Slide 11 –This slide is about images of social media platforms

Statements	Symbol	Symbol	Symbol	Symbol
Social media platform that allows users to post videos.				
Posts must be no more than 280 characters; uses many hashtags.				
Platform that allows users to use hashtags for trends and searches.				
One of these platforms is the oldest and one is the newest.				

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Slide 13- This is a research & writing task and includes YouTube Videos.

After the videos students completing the 3-2-1 mind map for each clip that is on the next page.

Print and distribute this page to students which can be completed as a pair/share or an individual activity.

Solutions to this activity are provided overpage.

Reflect: 3-2-1	
3	Things I learned
2	Things I found interesting
1	Question I have










Slide 13 – Fake News Interactive Game – There are 5 stories provided within the weblink in this slide.

Student Instructions/SOLUTIONS:

Your teacher will go over the PowerPoint titled 'Fake News and Misinformation on Social Media Platforms'. There are a series of activities that you will complete either individually or in groups to consolidate your knowledge and understanding of the news as it is presented today.

Slide 11

Slide 9 Solution

<i>Statements</i>	<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Symbol</i>
<i>Social media platform that allows users to post <u>videos</u></i>				
<i>Posts must be no more than 280 characters; uses many <u>hashtags</u></i>				
<i>Platform that allows users to use <u>hashtags</u> for trends and <u>searches</u></i>				
<i>One of these platforms is the <u>oldest</u> and one is the <u>newest</u></i>	 <i>oldest</i>			

What conclusions can you draw from the above table?

- *Each social media platform offers something that users are looking for or are interested in*
- *Older people use Facebook while younger people prefer TIK TOK and Instagram*
- *Instagram is the preferred social media platform for influencers*

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Slide 13

Things I learned:

- *Before the digital age newspapers gathered information directly from the source before going to print*
- *The desire by individuals to source quick answers can affect the bias in information provided online*
- *Bad actors can use fake news for their benefit*
- *Media provides both high quality and low quality information*

Things I found interesting:

- *Circular reporting, refers to a piece of information appearing to come from multiple independent sources, but really comes from only one source*
- *Wiki contributes to circular reporting*
- *Need to be more vigilant with what we read online*
- *We need to understand that the news is a snapshot in time and can change very quickly*

Question I have:

- *How does Wiki get away with circular reporting?*
- *How do we distinguish between real and fake news?*

Slide 13

Answers to this activity are within the weblink. Following the activity, ask students to provide their own thoughts in the boxes provided and use this as a basis for a class discussion.

Activity 4 – BEHIND THE NEWS ACTIVITY

Suggested time frame: 30- 40 minutes.

Learning Intentions

By the completion of this activity students will be able to:

- discuss the maintenance of a cohesive society when fake news and disinformation is spread.
- critically analyse the role of social media platforms in the spread of information and fake news.

Success Criteria

- I can demonstrate a clear understanding of the role of social media platforms in spreading misinformation and fake news and show this through completion of the activities provided in this unit of work, class discussions and active participation in group work.
- I can differentiate and distinguish between credible news sources and misinformation on social media platforms by analysing the content and clearly stating whether it is fact, opinion, or fiction.

Teacher Instructions:

There are a series of clips on the topic of Fake News and Social Media on Behind the News. They are listed below.

You can elect to show all of three clips and ask the students complete the questions that follow, or you can assign a group of 3-4 students to watch one of the three clips, answer the questions and then share what they have learned with the rest of the class.

Student Instructions:

Your teacher will assign you in a group and you are required to watch the Behind the News Clip at least twice before you answer the questions that follow. One of the group members will share your answers with the rest of the class.

Link 1: (5 minutes)

<https://www.abc.net.au/btn/high/fake-news/103017236>

Questions:

1. List two reasons why misinformation seems to be on the increase through social media platforms.
 - *Technology is getting better and easier to use.*
 - *More and more people are turning to social media for their news and are not sourcing it from trusted organisations.*
2. Identify the 4 things suggested in the clip to check for before sharing information online.
 1. *Where is the information coming from; is it a credible source; what is the expertise of the person posting the information; is there potential for bias?*
 2. *Check the date to verify it is not an old article or a video that has been taken out of context.*
 3. *Remember if it is a big news story then it will appear in multiple places and if it hasn't then it may suggest that experts have not verified the facts yet.*
 4. *Be aware of your own personal biases because the content may tell you what you want to hear.*

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3. Is all misinformation false? Justify your answer.

Not all misinformation is false as there may be some truth in fake news that is being spread. It could also be completely true but has been taken out of context. We need to look at different sources of information that challenge what we believe before we share or post something online.

Link 2: (3 minutes 36 seconds)

<https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/fake-news-fight/13188752>

Questions:

1. Provide two examples of fake news that are referred to in the clip.

Example of fake news include:

- *Vegans don't get COVID.*
- *The earth is flat, and the moon does not exist.*
- *Triceratops were found in Indonesia.*
- *The Prime Minister faked his COVID vaccine, so he did not actually get it*
- *US elections were rigged.*
- *People who boil orange peels and drink water will be cured of the coronavirus.*

2. Describe how social media companies have tried to stop the spread of fake news?

Social media companies have tried to stop the spread by issuing warnings or taking down posts. They have also signed up to a new code of conduct agreeing to do more to stop the spread of fake news and misinformation in Australia.

3. Explain how you can stop the spread of fake news?

Check where the story came from and if it has been reported on other reliable news sites. Also think about why someone may be spreading the news. Don't assume pictures are always real as they can be easily altered or taken out of context. The key is to do some more research before you repost or share.

Link 3: (4 minutes)

<https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/fake-news/10523704>

Questions:

1. List the two main reasons why fake news is spread through social media platforms.

- *To get people to click on their site so that the creator can make money through advertising or scams.*
- *To make people think differently about an issue or someone which could then be a problem.*

2. Outline how the spread of fake news can influence election outcomes in countries like America or Australia?

It can influence how people vote. Many people are getting their information in small bits from their mobile phone rather than the full picture or the truth, so they are making voting choices based on this misinformation.

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3. Explain how Mark Zuckerberg, the CEO of Facebook, is trying to tackle the spread of fake news on his social media platform.

Facebook is going to make it easier for people to report dodgy stories when they see them and may also post warnings alongside fake reports.

Class discussion point

Identify the common theme from all three 'Behind the News' clips regarding fake news and misinformation?

Activity 5 – DEEP DIVE INTO ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST MISINFORMATION AND FAKE NEWS

Suggested time frame: 1 lesson.

Learning Intentions

By the completion of this activity students will be able to:

- form an opinion on whether social media platforms should be held responsible for the spread of misinformation and fake news.
- analyse how a person's political thoughts and choices are shaped by social media.
- discuss the maintenance of a cohesive society when fake news and disinformation is spread.

Success Criteria

- I can explain what misinformation and fake news is by either discussing it with peers or writing explanations for the teacher to read.
- I can differentiate and distinguish between credible news sources and misinformation on social media platforms by analysing the content and clearly stating whether it is fact, opinion, or fiction.
- I can demonstrate a clear understanding of the role of social media platforms in spreading misinformation and fake news and show this through completion of the activities provided in this unit of work, class discussions and active participation in group work.

Teacher Instructions:

A list of arguments that are relevant to this topic has been provided below. Your students need to read each statement and decide if it is an argument for or an argument against social media platforms being held responsible and place the statement in the correct column in the table provided below. A class discussion can then be held about the points raised in both columns.

Student Instructions:

Read the following statements and categorise each statement into an argument for or against social media platforms being held responsible. If they do not relate to an argument do not allocate the statement but be prepared to explain why it does not fit.

<i>Arguments for social media platforms being held responsible for the spread of misinformation and fake news.</i>	<i>Arguments against social media platforms being held responsible for the spread of misinformation and fake news.</i>
<p><i>Fake news and misinformation try to deceive or trick readers and influence public opinion by presenting made up or exaggerated content as factual news.</i></p> <p><i>Fake news can include altered images, misleading headings and untrue stories intended to look like genuine journalism.</i></p>	<p><i>Placing some form of accountability on social media platforms that spread misinformation and fake news can potentially breach the rights of individuals to express their opinions even if those opinions are false or misleading.</i></p> <p><i>Holding social media platforms accountable may lead to censorship and restrictions of free speech.</i></p>

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<p><i>In Australia there is immunity set out in Schedule 5 of the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 (C'th), which</i></p>	
<p><i>Arguments for social media platforms being held responsible for the spread of misinformation and fake news.</i></p>	<p><i>Arguments against social media platforms being held responsible for the spread of misinformation and fake news.</i></p>
<p><i>excuses Internet Service Providers and Internet Content Hosts from liability under any rule of the common law, equity or statute in any state or territory, where they were 'not aware of the nature of the internet content' or the effect of the law.</i></p> <p><i>The main feature of fake news is the deliberate intent to deceive or mislead the audience.</i></p> <p><i>Fake information or misinformation aims to influence public opinion, promote a particular agenda or cause harm.</i></p> <p><i>Fake news often uses emotional language and sensationalism to stir strong reactions from the audience relying on emotions rather than real facts to influence people's beliefs and behaviours. Fake news can have a significant impact on society by shaping public perceptions or beliefs, influencing elections, and influencing people's trust in reliable sources of information.</i></p> <p><i>Fake news and misinformation represent a major challenge in today's spread of news and information posing threats to public discussions and democratic processes.</i></p>	<p><i>It will be very challenging for social media platforms like Facebook to moderate content with billions of users and vast amounts of content uploaded online every day.</i></p> <p><i>The huge amount of content on social medial platforms makes it difficult to distinguish between genuine misinformation and legitimate debate and discussions leading to concerns about over censorship.</i></p> <p><i>It is the role of the individual used to work out the credibility or integrity of information that they read online.</i></p> <p><i>Users of social media online platfoms should be able to critically evaluate the information they access, fact-check claims and be selective about the sources they trust.</i></p> <p><i>Imposing liability on social media platforms for misinformation and fake news could set a dangerous precedent that could extend beyond combating false information increasing regulation and government intervention on online freedom of speech.</i></p>

Activity 6 – FACT SHEET CREATION

Suggested time frame: 1 lesson

Learning Intentions

By the completion of this activity students will be able to:

- form an opinion on whether social media platforms should be held responsible for the spread of misinformation and fake news.
- critically analyse the role of social media platforms in the spread of information and fake news.
- discuss the maintenance of a cohesive society when fake news and disinformation is spread.

Success Criteria

- I can explain what misinformation and fake news is by either discussing it with peers or writing explanations for the teacher to read.
- I can differentiate and distinguish between credible news sources and misinformation on social media platforms by analysing the content and clearly stating whether it is fact, opinion, or fiction.
- I can identify methods of how a person's political views are shaped through social media.

A fact sheet is a short, typed, or handwritten document that contains a summary of relevant information about a particular topic in the least amount of space. The aim is to provide facts and key points about the topic in a clear, concise, and easy to understand way.

Teacher Instructions:

Student can refer to either or both of the following links to access information about fake news and misinformation. Students then place the key points relevant to this topic in a fact sheet – a template has been provided on the next page.

Student Instructions:

Refer to the links provided below and read the information provided regarding fake new and misinformation. Use this information to create a fact sheet which is a one page document that contains a summary of the key points made about this topic. You can use the template provided or create your own.

Link 1:

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/young-people/fake-news>


Link 2:

https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BriefingBook46p/FakeNews

See over page for sample fact sheet

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Sample fact sheet based on the information from the e-safety link.

Topic: <i>FAKE NEWS AND MISINFORMATION FACT SHEET</i>	
	<p><i>Anyone can post a story online that can spread even though it is fictional</i></p>
	<p><i>We all have a responsibility to call out fake news for safety reasons.</i></p>
	<p><i>WHAT IS FAKE NEWS?</i></p>
	<p><i>Misinformation that is presented in a way to make it look like a trustworthy news report</i></p>
<p><i>WHY DO WE NEED TO IDENTIFY AND REPORT FAKE NEWS?</i></p>	<p><i>WHY DOES FAKE NEWS EXIST?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<p><i>*To stop the spread throughout social media networks</i> <i>*To promote community safety</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To help promote a political agenda</i> • <i>Easier to believe than real news</i> • <i>Click driven through social media platforms to generate more interest and attention than real news</i>
<p><i>TIPS TO SPOT FAKE NEWS</i></p>	
<p><i>1. Check the story source and decide if it is credible</i></p>	
<p><i>2. How is the story written – is biased or pushing a specific point of view?</i></p>	
<p><i>3. Does the news rely on emotionally charged words to create interest and support and how accurate is the information provided?</i></p>	
<p><i>4. Dive deeper and check for incorrect facts or outdated information</i></p>	
<p> </p>	

Activity 7 – MEDIA ANALYSIS

Suggested time frame: 40 minutes.

Learning Intentions

By the completion of this activity students will be able to:

- form an opinion on whether social media platforms should be held responsible for the spread of misinformation and fake news.
- critically analyse the role of social media platforms in the spread of information and fake news.
- discuss the maintenance of a cohesive society when fake news and disinformation is spread.

Success Criteria

- I can explain what misinformation and fake news is by either discussing it with peers or writing explanations for the teacher to read.
- I can differentiate and distinguish between credible news sources and misinformation on social media platforms by analysing the content and clearly stating whether it is fact, opinion, or fiction.
- I can identify methods of how a person's political views are shaped through social media.

Teacher Instructions:

Three newspaper articles have been provided for you to read with the class on this topic.

You can complete this task as group work by allocating one newspaper article to a group of 3 to 4 students. They need to read the article and complete the PMI chart on the next page based on what they read. The class can then discuss the key points raised in each article.

[Australia takes on Elon Musk over spike in online hate on Twitter](#)

Student Instructions:

You will be allocated an article to read and discuss in a group of 3-4 students.

Highlight the key points from the article and place each key point under the following headings which you can find in the mind map on the following page:

Plus – positives points in relation to this topic

Minus – negatives points in relation to this topic

Interesting – interesting points on this topic

Article 1: Most young Australians can't identify fake news online.

<https://theconversation.com/most-young-australians-cant-identify-fake-news-online-87100>

Plus/ Positives could include:

- *One third of young people aged between 8-16 could tell the difference between fake and real news.*
- *80% of those survey consumed news from at least one source primarily a family member, followed by television or teachers with social media coming in at 22%.*

Minus/Negatives could include:

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- Only 10% of those surveyed verified stories presented on the Internet with more than half hardly or never bothering to check the source.
- Social media platforms allowed people with vested interest to push content into feeds target specific groups.

Interesting:

- Older children had the skills and confidence to identify fake news.
- In 2017 Facebook was the most popular social media site for teens.
- Media Education is gaining growing importance for pre-school to Year 10 students to help them identify what postings online are fake news.

Article 2: Facebook, Google, Twitter release industry code to fight spread of disinformation.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2021-02-22/facebook-google-release-voluntary-industry-code-disinformation/13178488>

Plus/ Positives could include:

- Technology companies like Facebook and Google have released a final version of their industry code to address the spread of misinformation in Australia.
- The Industry Code could lead to more pop-up warnings about fake news and a better system of reporting misinformation.
- Signatories/Parties were voluntary to the industry code that targeted the development and implementation of measures to deal with misinformation on their service including X (formerly Twitter), Google, Facebook and TikTok

Minus/Negatives could include:

- Self-regulatory nature of agreements makes it difficult for social media platforms to be held accountable for breachers of the code (according to a 2022 independent review of EU codes)
- Resert Australia believe that DIGI codes are pointless as they will not be followed by the social media platforms – instead a public regulator is needed to control fake news by issuing fines and other penalties.
- Facebook continues to use algorithms that promote misinformation through its online service.

Interesting:

- This industry was allowed to write its own code.
- Signatories/parties will publish an annual report and provide additional information about actions they take so users know what to expect when accessing services.

Article 3: Social media giants to face multimillion-dollar fines for spreading fake news.

www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/social-media-giants-to-face-multimillion-dollar-fines-for-spreading-fake-news-20230623-p5dj07.html

Plus/ Positives could include:

- Social media giants will be issued with million-dollar fines if they repeatedly fail to remove misinformation on their platforms.
- Release of draft legislation from the Federal government to the Australian Communication Media Authority to review giving them powers to hold digital platforms accountable for the spreading of harmful fake news.

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- *Tech giants are becoming more proactive in removing videos and misinformation online including Google and Meta (Facebook)*
- *Federal government is trying to strike a balance with this proposed legislation between harmful misinformation and freedom of speech.*

Minus/Negatives could include:

- *Only draft legislation and the Federal government will seek public consultation about the contents of the bill, so this will delay its introduction.*
- *Proposed power will not apply to individual pieces of content online.*

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Interesting:

- *The link between misinformation, hate speeches and the failed Voice referendum in 2023.*

Article 4: Australia takes on Elon Musk over a Spike in Online Hate on Twitter (this article is referred to in Article 3)

Source: <https://www.smh.com.au/national/australia-takes-on-elon-musk-over-spike-in-online-hate-on-twitter-20230621-p5dibk.htm>

Plus/ Positives could include:

- *Australian authorities are demanding that X (formerly Twitter) explain what preventative measures they are taking to stop online hate through their social media platform.*
- *Testing of new online safety powers through the eSafety Commission*

Minus/Negatives could include:

- *X (formerly Twitter) has been increasingly used as a vehicle/ channel to spread online hate and abuse*
- *Elon Musk is an advocate of free speech and has granted amnesty to 62,000 accounts previously banned including the very controversial Andrew Tate*
- *There is growing suspicion that X (formerly Twitter) algorithms has been changed to increase emotionally charged tweets*

Interesting:

- *Threat of a \$687,000 fine each day if Twitter and Musk do not address this issue.*

Post Convention Day Activities

There are **four** post-convention activities provided for the teacher to use with students in the classroom after the Convention. They may choose to do one, or all of the activities. Each has a suggested time frame of up to 1 period.

Activity 1: Gallery Walk

A gallery walk is a strategy that allows students to reflect on the unit of work they have completed. Students are given time in class to reflect on what they have learned and to write or draw the knowledge and skills gained from the VSPP experience. You will need to supply them with paper, textas, pencils, or other materials to create their reflection piece for the 'gallery'. The piece that they create could reflect upon the topic, the debate, the parliamentary process, social media platforms, or fake news topics. Completed gallery pieces for the display are then attached to poster paper or to the classroom wall to enable students to walk around and view each other's reflections. Provide some post-it notes so that the students can then add their own thoughts to the gallery pieces to either extend the idea presented or to commend the original piece of work.

Activity 2: In other news...

Each student is required to prepare a short newscast about this topic. Time is allocated to let them write their new bulletin and then they are given the opportunity to read it to the rest of the class simulating a news desk.

Activity 3: Exit Tickets (sample over the page)

Students are to complete each of the four tasks on the Exit Ticket provided. They can then share what they wrote with their partner or the rest of the class.

Activity 4: Letter to the Editor or one of the Social Media Platforms (sample over the page)

Write a letter to the Herald Sun, the Age or a specific social media platform expressing your point of view of whether social media platforms should be held responsible for the spread of information and fake news.

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EXIT TICKET SAMPLES

Complete an exit ticket at the end of this activity. Answer each of the tasks as creatively as you can and share it with the class.

POST IT ON FACEBOOK

Write a Facebook post explaining something you have learnt in relation to the topic. Make sure to include a photo/diagram to demonstrate what your post is all about.

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INSTAGRAM

Create a post about this topic. Make sure to include a caption and #hashtags about what you have learnt!

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TWEET
ABOUT IT

Write a tweet about the Convention in 140 characters or less.

_____ (name)

Now it's time to share. Write a reply to one of your friends' tweets about reflection on the Convention. Remember a reply requires a "@" followed by their name!

_____ (name)

BLOG
ABOUT IT

Create a blog post telling the world about what you have done today. Aim to write 3 things you have learnt, 2 things you found interesting and 1 question you still have...

Sample Letter

<your name>
<your address>

<date>

<address of person you are writing to>
Newspaper Name
Street Name
City, Postcode

Dear <Title & Full Name of Person>

I am writing to express my feelings/thoughts about

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<Insert Paragraph>

<Insert Paragraph>

I am looking forward to hearing from you on this matter. I can be contacted at <insert details>.

Kind regards,

<Sign here>

<your name in writing here>

Additional Teacher References

You may find these resources helpful to unpack the topic as you prepare for the Convention with your students

https://www.kqed.org/lowdown/24674/the-honest-truth-about-fake-news-with-lesson-plan	Article and lesson plan on Fake News with a link to a You Tube clip from the Wall Street Journal on the topic (3.15 minutes)
BBC - Help Your Students Spot False News	A collection of resources from around the BBC to help students spot fake news and false information. This content explores the social, political, and economic impact of news reporting, and the skills needed to analyse and critically evaluate information across a range of media.
https://youtu.be/V4o0B6IDo50?si=s_kNPLn2ec13teTm	You Tube clip that explores what Fake News is (3.34 minutes) – good lesson warmer
https://www.nla.gov.au/faq/what-is-fake-news-misinformation-and-disinformation#	1 page outline of what fake information and misinformation is on digital platforms with links to other information on this topic
https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/tech-giants-warn-new-fake-news-rules-could-limit-free-speech-20230711-p5dngw.html	Good article on arguments against holding social platforms accountable for the spread of fake news as it could limit free speech
https://www.kcl.ac.uk/the-fine-line-between-fake-news-and-freedom-of-speech	UK article that explores the link between fake news and freedom of speech – easy read

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https://humanrights.gov.au/about/news/opinions/why-misinformation-bill-risks-freedoms-it-aims-protect	Opinion piece that focuses on freedom of speech and how misinformation can have a negative effect on human rights, social cohesion, and democratic processes
https://youtu.be/rVi9sEpHSMI?si=ulrMMsfpQZTIGGxC	This video looks at the Commonwealth Government's attempt to combat misinformation through the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023