



Curriculum: Adult learners

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How to use this curriculum

1. This curriculum is designed for **educators, trainers, or community facilitators** working with **adult learners (18+)** on **media and digital literacy**.
2. Each module includes key resources and activities.
3. The curriculum is based on the **Journalistic Approach** from **University of the Basque Country**.
4. For each activity, choose **topics that have been newsworthy** in the week or month prior to the class, in your context.
5. We recommend about **90 minutes for each module** but this can be adapted to the pool of learners' current media literacy level. If learners need extra support, it can be more effective to spend more time together in plenary rather than working in groups.
6. Encourage **open dialogue** and **critical thinking**. Use the activities to spark real-life connections with participants' media habits.



Introductions & ice breaker

- Trainer/teacher to introduce themselves and invite participants to share their name - and affiliation if relevant.
- Ask participants to go on their phones and check:
 - What's the latest news you've read?
 - Where did you see it (Facebook, WhatsApp, Yahoo News, etc.)?
 - Did you check its veracity?
- Discussion: Share with the group your responses and discuss: what makes you trust or doubt a piece of information?



Every day, it is becoming **more difficult** to be sure that a piece of information (whether **text, image, or video**) is **correct**.
There are **three steps** we can take to fight disinformation.



Objectives of this curriculum

1) Break down how information is built

- Learn how to spot the key facts in a story – who's involved, what happened, when, where, why, and how – and notice what might be missing.

2) Learn how to tell where information is coming from

- Understand who created or shared the content, why they did it, and whether they're trustworthy.

3) Tell the difference between facts and personal opinions

- Practise identifying when something is based on evidence, and when it's just someone's point of view, belief, or bias.

Module 1

Breaking down information



The 5 Ws + 1

- **Who** is involved?
- **What** happened?
- **When** did it happen?
- **Where** did it happen?
- **Why** did it happen?
- **How** much/many did it happen?



Going deeper: complex and relational Ws

- **How** did it happen?
- **For what (purpose)** did it happen?

These relational Ws help explore the intention behind the message. They help us:

- Spot missing or misleading details.
- Compare versions of the same story.
- Check if something is opinion dressed up as fact.



ACTIVITY 1

Step 1: Divide participants into groups of 2-3 people.

Step 2: Give each group a different news article – all from biased media outlets – and ask them to: (15 minutes)

- identify the 5Ws+, complex and relational Ws.
- discuss why some Ws might be missing.

Step 3: Everyone return in plenary session and each group presents their results. You discuss these in full group. (15 minutes)



ACTIVITY 1

Group 1: *"Il numero di NEET è in continua crescita"*

<https://www.liberoquotidiano.it/news/politica/43195361/valditara-giovani-immaturi-famiglie-e-scuola-unite-per-una-rivoluzione-culturale-/>

Explanation: <https://pagellapolitica.it/fact-checking/valditara-calo-giovani-neet>

Group 2: *"Gli stranieri sono quasi la metà dei detenuti, per la maggior parte extracomunitari"*

https://www.ilmessaggero.it/politica/nordio_toti_dimissioni_riforma_giustizia_intervista_oggi-8266593.html

Explanation: <https://pagellapolitica.it/fact-checking/numeri-detenuti-stranieri-italia>



ACTIVITY 2

Step 1: Divide participants into the same groups of 2-3 people.

Step 2: Give each group a different social media 'informative' post – and ask them to: (15 minutes)

- identify the 5Ws+, complex and relational Ws
- discuss why some Ws might be missing.

Step 3: Everyone return in plenary session, the groups present their results. You discuss these in full group, with a particular focus on the differences between information from a newspaper and from social media. (15 minutes)



ACTIVITY 2

Group 1:

https://x.com/Frenkie_Woody/status/1933482641698807885

Explanation:

<https://www.facta.news/antibufale/toyota-motore-acqua>

Group 2:

<https://x.com/AzzurraBarbuto/status/1937809178648555905>

Explanation: <https://www.facta.news/antibufale/gaza-cola-hamas>

Module 2

Following the information trail



Types of sources

Lacks sources	Information presented without any reference or supporting evidence. Example: A message that circulates with no indication of who said it or where it came from.
Unknown sources	Sources that are unidentified, either due to anonymity or lack of clear mention. Example: "Statistics show that..." without specifying the source or offering additional proof.
Personal / Documentary sources	Personal: Individuals providing information based on their direct experience, testimony, or knowledge. Example: An interview with a technology expert. Documentary: Documents or records containing formalised, archived information. Example: An academic study or a statistical report.
Organisational / Non-organisational sources	Organisational: Sources originating from institutions or organised entities issuing information officially. Example: A press release from a ministry or a company. Non-organisational (particular): Personal sources, meaning people offering their knowledge or personal experience. Example: A business owner discussing the impact of a law on their company.



Primary / Secondary sources	<p>Primary: Direct sources or eyewitnesses of events, or original documents that serve as a foundation. Example: An eyewitness to an accident or an official government document.</p> <p>Secondary: Sources that interpret, comment on, or summarise information from primary sources. Example: An opinion article analysing the results of scientific research.</p>
Authorised / Unauthorised sources	<p>Authorised: Sources with the expertise and legitimacy to speak on the topic due to their experience, knowledge, or position. Example: An epidemiologist discussing a pandemic.</p> <p>Unauthorised: Sources lacking sufficient training, experience, or authority on the topic they address. Example: An influencer without medical knowledge talking about vaccine effects.</p>
Relevant / Irrelevant sources	<p>Relevant: Sources that provide key information directly related to the topic in question. Example: An official economic report in a news piece about a financial crisis.</p> <p>Irrelevant: Sources that do not provide directly connected or useful information on the topic discussed. Example: A general comment on international politics in an article on the local economy.</p>
Pertinent / Non-pertinent sources	<p>Pertinent: Sources that are appropriate and align with the context and focus of the news or topic discussed. Example: A historian specialising in historical conflicts in a report on international diplomacy.</p> <p>Non-pertinent: Sources that may be vaguely connected to the topic but do not provide useful or suitable information for the context. Example: A musician giving opinions on energy policies without direct connection to the topic at hand.</p>



ACTIVITY 3

Step 1: Divide participants into groups of 2-3 people.

Step 2: Give each group a different news article OR social media carousel post/video and ask them to identify the range of sources, referring themselves to the handout on the types of sources. (15 minutes)

Step 3: Everyone return to the plenary session and each group presents their results. You discuss these in full group, also with a focus on the differences between traditional and social media. (15 minutes)

Practising lateral & vertical reading



Lateral & vertical reading

These are strategies used to evaluate the credibility of an online source.

Lateral reading	Vertical reading
Searching for information about the source of an article using other independent media.	Going through a website in depth, examining the rest of the content, formats, links, author, etc.
<i>Example:</i> You read a news story on a website. Then you conduct an Internet search for the title, the author, and the website to see what other media outlets and websites say about that news.	<i>Example:</i> You read an article on a blog. Then you read other content on that website and examine carefully the rest of the blog, to determine whether it appears serious and well-documented, without leaving that site.



Deep fake and altered images & videos

- AI tools can now create **highly realistic fake** images and videos.
- These are often used to **manipulate public opinion**, impersonate public figures, or generate fake news stories.

How to recognise them?

- Look for visual clues: distorted hands, unnatural lighting, inconsistent shadows or reflections.
- Use reverse image search: try Google Images, TinEye, or Bing.
- Check metadata (when possible): right-click to inspect file info.
- Use deepfake detection tools: like InVID, Hive, or FotoForensics.
- Compare with trusted sources: has the image/video been reported or verified by a reliable media outlet?



ACTIVITY 4

Step 1: Divide participants into groups of 2-3 people and give each group the link to a Youtube/TikTok/Instagram video.

Step 2: Ask each group to fact-check the video, using: (15 minutes)

- Google, Wikipedia, Youtube, or other search engines.
- Siri, ChatGPT or other AI.
- Social media fact-checking tools.
- ChatGPT or Google Lens for reverse image search.

Step 3: Everyone return in plenary session, each group presents their results. You discuss these with the full group. (15 minutes)



ACTIVITY 4

Group 1: <https://x.com/Alienogentile/status/1935601739480068592>

Explanation: <https://www.facta.news/antibufale/persone-intervistate-iraniani-tel-aviv-israele>

Group 1: <https://x.com/puresoulfree/status/1933972895459348861>

Explanation: <https://www.facta.news/antibufale/astronauta-nasa-falsifica-voli-spaziali>

Module 3

Distinguishing information from opinion



Sender VS source

- The sender of a message and the source of information are not the same, although they may sometimes coincide.
 - The sender = the person or entity that transmits the message;
 - The source = the origin of the content used by that sender to craft their message.



The journalistic genres

Informative genres

News article	Presents facts and events objectively, using verified data and direct quotes.
Reportage	Explains events by adding context and background while remaining neutral.
Interview	Shares information through a journalist-led dialogue that is verified and contextualised.
Chronicle	A first-person narrative based on real facts, enriched with descriptions and observations. Comes from the Spanish and Latin American cultures.

Opinion genres

Editorial	Expresses the official stance of a media outlet on a public issue.
Column	A signed article offering the personal, reasoned opinion of the author.
Opinion piece	A one-off article where someone shares their viewpoint on a specific topic.



Indicators to assess if an information is fact of opinion

Content clues	Tone and language
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Is the claim verifiable?- Are sources or data mentioned?- Is there a call to action or emotional appeal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Is the language neutral, persuasive, or emotional?- Are there signs of bias, exaggeration, or loaded words?- Does it sound like it's trying to convince, inform, or provoke?
Visual clues	Intent and credibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Are there charts or numbers? Are they clear and sourced?- Does the design style (fonts, colours, emojis) make it look more personal or authoritative?- Is it trying to feel "relatable" or "official"?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Who created it? Can you find their background or purpose?- What audience is it targeting?- Could this be misleading, even if not intentionally false?



ACTIVITY 5

Step 1: Divide participants into groups and give each group a different media excerpts of the same news - for example, an magazine editorial, a TV news clip, and a radio reportage (choose contrasting tones or political leanings).

Step 2: Ask each group to analyse their news piece, checking them against the indicators. (Use a Miro board) (15 minutes)

Step 3: Everyone return in plenary session, each group presents their results. You discuss these with the full group. (15 minutes)

**Distinguishing
information from
opinion... in a social
media-ruled world**



Social media & disinformation

- **Virality:** sensational nature of 'information' on social media, with clickbait images and heightened emotions > will be shared more and more quickly.
- **Algorithms:** content that maximises user engagement is prioritised - reinforcing confirmation bias by showing to the user 'information' they are ready to agree with - and the more emotionally charged the better because it inhibits the need to verify sources and search for counter-evidence. > Encourages misinformation
- **Echo chambers:** with the combined efforts of algorithms and viral content: formation of insulated communities where disinformation is more readily accepted and disseminated, as opposing viewpoints are less likely to be encountered.



Social media & disinformation

- **False information spreads six times faster than the truth on Twitter** - an MIT study found:
 - False news spreads significantly faster, deeper, and more broadly than true news.

Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., & Aral, S. (2018). The spread of true and false news online. *Science*, 359(6380), 1146-1151. DOI: 10.1126/science.aap9559

- **Sharing of misinformation on social media is habitual, not just lazy or biased** - the study:
 - Conducted among 2,476 active Facebook users aged 18 to 89.
 - The 15% most habitual news sharers were responsible for spreading about 30% to 40% of the false news in the study.
 - The reward structures of social media platforms encourage users to share sensational content without adequate verification.

G. Ceylan, I.A. Anderson, & W. Wood, Sharing of misinformation is habitual, not just lazy or biased, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A.* 120 (4) e2216614120, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2216614120> (2023).



ACTIVITY 6

Step 1: Divide participants into groups of 2-3 people, and give them a range of Instagram 'informative' posts: an infographic with statistics / a news carousel / a personal rant disguised as news / a podcast episode teaser / a remix of another person's post with added take, etc.

Step 2: Ask participants to analyse each post, checking them against the indicators. (15 minutes)

Step 3: Everyone return in plenary session, each group presents their results. You discuss these with the full group. (15 minutes)



ACTIVITY 6

Group 1: <https://x.com/DSantanche/status/1938606303481409849>

Explanation: <https://pagellapolitica.it/articoli/santanche-benefici-economici-matrimonio-bezos-venezia>

Group 2: https://x.com/Antonio_Tajani/status/1939350134426402945

Explanation: <https://pagellapolitica.it/articoli/bandiera-unione-europea-simbolo-cristiano>



Curriculum evaluation

Tell us what you think:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/16Bml40zWaOgAifeiRhTd5KCGd4JtudMy2xNi36_dBlo/edit



? yourself

Question what you get. Media education to fight Disinformation



Erasmus+: Key Action 2, Cooperation partnerships in adult education

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