

THE LIE DETECTORS NEWS CHALLENGE

Hello students,

Grab your notebooks and get ready to sharpen your investigative skills. As you know, you can find tons of photos, videos, and articles about just about any topic imaginable online. You can trust many of them. Others are misleading - sometimes intentionally so. And some are simply untrue. In our news challenge, we have three online posts for you. Can you figure out how to separate the fake items from the truth? We journalists at Lie Detectors do this every day, and you can, too. You just need the right tools.

How do you do it? Professional journalists have some key tools they use to do their job. Here we'll show you how to use these tools to think critically, just like junior reporters do.

Ready for a news challenge?

On the next page, you will find **your journalist toolbox**.

- There **are 9 tools** in the toolbox. Take a good look at them. They will help you do your investigative work. Next to each assignment, you'll see an icon that will point you to a tool that's particularly useful.
- Use the tools to help you figure out which, if any, of these 3 stories are actually true.

What does Lie Detectors do?

We at Lie Detectors work with professional journalists to help show students like you how to tell the difference between true and questionable stories on the internet and also to help you understand how news is created. We do this in several countries: Belgium, Germany, and Austria. It's a fun job, we've won a prize for our work and been on the news a lot, often with groups of students like you.

How long will you take for this challenge? *About 30 minutes.*



CHECKLIST

HOW TO RECOGNISE DISINFORMATION



SOURCE CHECK

By source we mean: where did it come from? Take a close look:

Where did you read or see this piece of news? What do the contact details and profile tell you?



DIG DEEPER

Don't just read the headline:

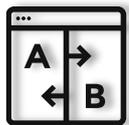
What's the whole story? Headlines often exaggerate to attract clicks. Are there links in the text you can click that could tell you more?



AUTHOR

Find out more about the author:

Who published this story? Is he or she credible?



COMPARE

Take a look at other sources and compare them:

What do others say about the issue? This is very easy to do with a search engine such as Google, Bing, Yandex or others.



DATE CHECK

Take a look at the date:

Is this a recent piece of news or has somebody just copied an image or story?



HA HA!

Is it a joke?

Does the report seem a bit crazy? It could be a joke or satire, so the true meaning might be different. Check the source and the authors.



EXPERTS

Talk to the experts

What do well-informed people say about it?



KNOW YOUR OWN MIND

It's really important to think for yourself!

What are your own instincts telling you? Have you already formed an opinion about this issue that might be influencing you?



IMAGE SEARCH

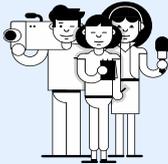
Where does the image or video come from?

A reverse image search is easy to do and sometimes reveals a lot about the image.

ARE YOU READY?

Here's the first of the three challenges.

TIP: Use the toolbox and find the right tool to help you investigate whether the report is true or fake.



| | | |
|---|--|--|
|  SOURCE CHECK |  DIG DEEPER |  AUTHOR |
|  COMPARE |  DATE CHECK |  HA HAI! |
|  EXPERTS |  KNOW YOUR OWN MIND |  IMAGE SEARCH |

CHALLENGE 1: GARLIC WATER BELIEVED TO CURE THE CORONAVIRUS

Lots of people are sharing this story on WhatsApp. It says that a mixture of water and garlic can cure the coronavirus. Garlic is certainly healthy, but does it protect us from catching the infection? Here's the post:



Information about the source:

one of the Lie Detectors received this message on WhatsApp. It has been written in many different languages and shared thousands of times.



TASK A

Examine the text carefully



TOP TIP:

If you want to know if a text is believable or not, it helps if you can find out who actually wrote it.

Experts are people such as scientists who know a lot about their speciality subjects. The main job of a journalist is to report information truthfully. The general public usually writes stories for fun, so you can expect there to be mistakes.

1. Can you see who wrote the text?

2. What can you find out about the author? Do you think s/he is trustworthy?

3. What do you notice about the spelling and grammar? Are the words and punctuation all in the right places?



TASK E



1. Give two reasons why you think this post went viral on the internet

2. Explain why you think it's important to double-check these types of stories before sharing them with friends. Describe the consequences of forwarding them along without doing some investigative work first.

3. Take another look at the toolbox. Which of the tools did you use to investigate the story?

ANSWER SHEET

CHALLENGE 1:

GARLIC WATER BELIEVED TO CURE THE CORONAVIRUS

TASK A

1. Can you tell who wrote the text?
2. What can you find out about the author? Is s/he trustworthy?
3. What do you notice about the spelling and grammar? Are the words and punctuation all in the right places?

Answers to task A

1. No. With WhatsApp and other social media apps, it's tough to tell who originally wrote this reports. These types of chain messages tend to be forwarded by friends or acquaintances who don't know who wrote the message either. That's why it's good to be a bit sceptical about what you read - and to use your critical thinking skills.
2. No, the name can't be found in the text. Without knowing the name, you can't check to see if the writer is trustworthy - another good reason to be suspicious of this message.
3. No. The grammar is pretty bad. Sure, we all misspell a word from time to time, but too many mistakes-including misplaced periods and commas--are definite warning signs. The bad spelling here is a good clue that the text hasn't been written by a professional.

TASK B

Now compare the report with information on the internet.

1. Use a search engine (e.g. Google) and find out if someone else, or another news organisation, has written anything about our report. Compare the results. What do you notice at first glance?



Answers to task B

1. Yes, a lot has already been written about it, including in newspapers that you've probably heard of, for example, **The Guardian** (a daily newspaper), **The Week** (the online portal of a weekly magazine) and many others. Journalists must adhere to professional rules to ensure that their reporting is as accurate as possible. <https://www.ipso.co.uk> This website is a good place to find out more about these rules. Maybe you found this article in *The Conversation*.



You can also do an internet search if you want to find out more about a newspaper or any other source.

Journalists carry out this research carefully to help them decide if something is real or fake. This is one of the most important parts of their job after all! But it's not always easy ...

TASK C:

Ask an expert

Answers to task C:

There is no one right answer here. The point is, don't hesitate to ask lots of questions when you talk to experts- and make sure that you understand their answers, too! We hope you had fun, and don't forget: the more complicated the question, the more important it is to rely on experts who have specialized knowledge, like scientists or doctors in the case of, say, medical questions. The more qualified the expert, the more you can trust the answer they give you.

TASK D:

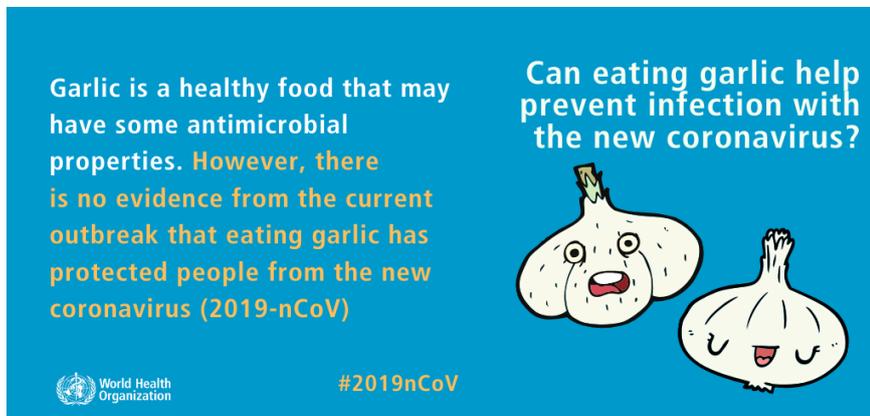
1. Do you think this report is true or has it been made up?
2. How did you come to this conclusion?



Answers to task D:

1. Fact or fake? **It's fake!**

There is actually a grain of truth in this hoax: it's true that garlic is quite healthy. **But, according to the latest scientific research, it cannot cure the coronavirus.** The World



Health Organization (WHO) has confirmed this. Here is a poster that the WHO published as part of its myth busters campaign against fake coronavirus news:

You can see the poster on the WHO website:

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

2. _____ This is a question only you can answer.

TASK E:

1. Give two reasons why you think this report went viral on the internet.
2. Explain why you think it's important to double check these types of stories before sharing them with friends. Describe the consequences of forwarding them along without doing some investigative work first
3. Take another look at the Toolbox. Which tools did you use to expose this fake news report?

Answers to task E:

1. **Fake news reports go viral for lots of reasons.**

People generally have three motives for creating them: fun, money and power.

Whether they know if the reports are true or not, people tend to share fake news for one or more of these reasons. To:

- Draw attention to themselves



- Make money (this is also called “clickbait” and explains why so many YouTubers are so rich!)
 - Sow the seeds of mistrust
 - Make people feel uncomfortable or scared
 - Be funny
 - Send their friends something that they think is genuine
 - Sell garlic!
2. **Why is double-checking stories important? What kind of consequences can forwarding them along without doing some investigative work first?**
It’s always important to be careful with content, especially when it appears to be exaggerated. This is because:
- It can frighten people and make them feel unsettled.
 - It can give people false hope or make them feel more in control than they actually are.
 - Even if it was meant to be a joke, people could actually believe it to be true.
 - No one likes to be lied to, even when it’s unintentional.
3. **Source check, author check, compare texts, ask an expert, use your own common sense.**
It’s especially important to carry out a **source check** and to **compare** the text with other sources. And remember: you’ll need to use investigative skills when you’re deciding whether a report can be trusted or not. Think critically, use more than one of the tools, and carry out your research one step at a time. It will take practice, but that practice will help you develop the good instincts you need to separate fact from fiction.

Have you thought of any more questions after reading through this answer sheet? Please feel free to send them to your teacher. We would be happy to work with your teacher to get you answers.

THE LIE DETECTORS NEWS CHALLENGE #2

Dear students,

Thank you for the great work you did on the first Lie Detectors' News Challenge. And you were right! The post was fake.

We've found another curious story for you to investigate. Maybe you regularly use Instagram and TikTok and are used to seeing countless pictures and videos every day. This is why we'd like you to know about a really useful tool you can use to check whether pictures or videos have been altered or faked. It's called the reverse image search.

Ready for a news challenge?

To carry out this investigative assignment, you need to use the following two resources:

- The 9 tools in the Lie Detectors Toolbox. Study it carefully – it will help you do the tasks.
- Instructions on how to carry out a reverse image search – a very useful way to compare images on the internet. It's very easy to do.

We hope you enjoy the assignment!

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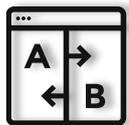
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IMAGE SEARCH

Where does the image or video come from?

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ARE YOU READY?

Here's the report. It's time to find out whether it is fact or fake. Complete the tasks to uncover the truth



| | | |
|---|---|---|
|  SOURCE CHECK |  DIG DEEPER |  AUTHOR |
|  COMPARE |  DATE CHECK |  HA HAI! |
|  EXPERTS |  KNOW YOUR OWN MIND |  IMAGE SEARCH |

CHALLENGE 2:

PENGUINS LET LOOSE IN AQUARIUM

This video of cute penguins waddling freely around an aquarium that was closed due to the coronavirus has been a big hit on the internet. But did this really happen? Or is it a fake video? Click here to watch:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6UY33qhKhoM>

...or use the QR code to open the video:



Information about the source:

This is a screenshot of a video from NBC Chicago, taken at 0.10sec. It has already been shared many thousands of times.



TASK A



1. Who posted the video on YouTube?

2. What does this information tell you about the authenticity of the video?



TOP TIP:

The best way to check if a video is real is to find out who actually made it.

Important: Some websites are more trustworthy than others. Take a look at the “about us” tab on the site, which tells you something about the people who runs it. On a news site, this is known as the “masthead.” It should tell you who owns the organisation, and who works there and if, for example, it is a professional news site or the web page of a private person. If there is no information about the web site at all, that should be a warning sign.



TASK B



INSTRUCTIONS

How can I do a reverse image search?

Now things are really getting interesting. Professional journalists often use reverse image searches to find out if pictures and videos are real or doctored in some way. The tool works by recognising similar images on the internet from the way the pixels are composed and coloured, which allow us to compare the images. By doing this, you can find out how often the image has appeared on the internet, when it was first published and where it can still be found.

This might sound tricky, but we'll show you in simple steps how to do a reverse image search on your PC or smartphone using Google.

1. Click on the link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6UY33qhKhoM> and watch the video.
2. Make the video bigger so it fills the whole screen and then take a screenshot: Use the **[Print Screen]** button on your keyboard. If you use a MacBook, you can use the shortcut **Shift + Command ⌘ + 3**
3. On an (Android) **smartphone**, use the down button and/or the on/off button. Use the Home button and the on/off button if you have an Apple iPhone. It may work differently on other types of phone. If you're unsure, search for some instructions on Google.



TOP TIP:

The reverse image search can help you find out if the photos are genuine or if they have been altered or faked. It also helps you to tell if genuine photos are being used with fake text. But this is just one of the many useful tools a Youth Reporter can use.

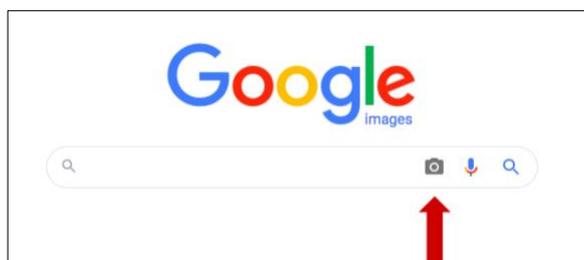
Important: The search tool might not help you find the answer you need straight away, but it can give you some important clues. Don't be discouraged, as you know, there are always other tools that can help you.



4. Save and name the image e.g.: funny penguins.jpg. You can use Paint to do this on a Windows PC. This will help you to find it again easily.
5. Go onto the internet and open the Google homepage www.google.com
6. Click on the word 'Images' on the top right-hand corner of the screen.



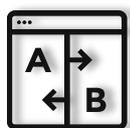
7. You will see a small black camera under the Google logo. Now click on the camera which will take you to the reverse image search tool



8. You can then upload the image (funny penguins.jpg)
9. The reverse image search tool will now search the entire internet for your image.
10. It's now time to take a look at the results. You'll need to do some detective work to find the answers you're looking for.



TASK C



1. You will see lots of websites. Read through the headings.
Has anyone said that the video is fake?

2. There are a lot of articles from news websites in the results.
Click on one of the links to an article and read it through.
What can you find out?

3. Use your common sense. Does the report make sense to you? Do you think this report is true or has it been made up?

- fact
- fake



TASK D



SUMMARY AND YOUR QUESTIONS

1. What tools did you use to get your results?

2. Why do you think this story was written?

3. You've done some great work here! Did you enjoy doing this research? If so, why? If not, why not?

4. If you could ask a journalist a question, what would it be?

*We'll be back soon. Watch out for more news from your teacher.
Until then! Best wishes from the Lie Detectors Team.*

ANSWER SHEET

CHALLENGE 2: PENGUINS IN THE AQUARIUM

TASK A

1. Who posted this video on YouTube?
2. What does this information tell you about the authenticity of the video?

Answers to task A

1. This video with the cute penguins was originally posted on a YouTube channel called NBC Chicago.
2. Here, NBC stands for “National Broadcasting Company”—a very big and popular television and national news station in the USA. News channels like this are generally subject to very strict professional rules. This means that professional journalists work there, and even if professional journalists sometimes make mistakes, we can safely assume that they double-check to make sure the video is real before they post it.

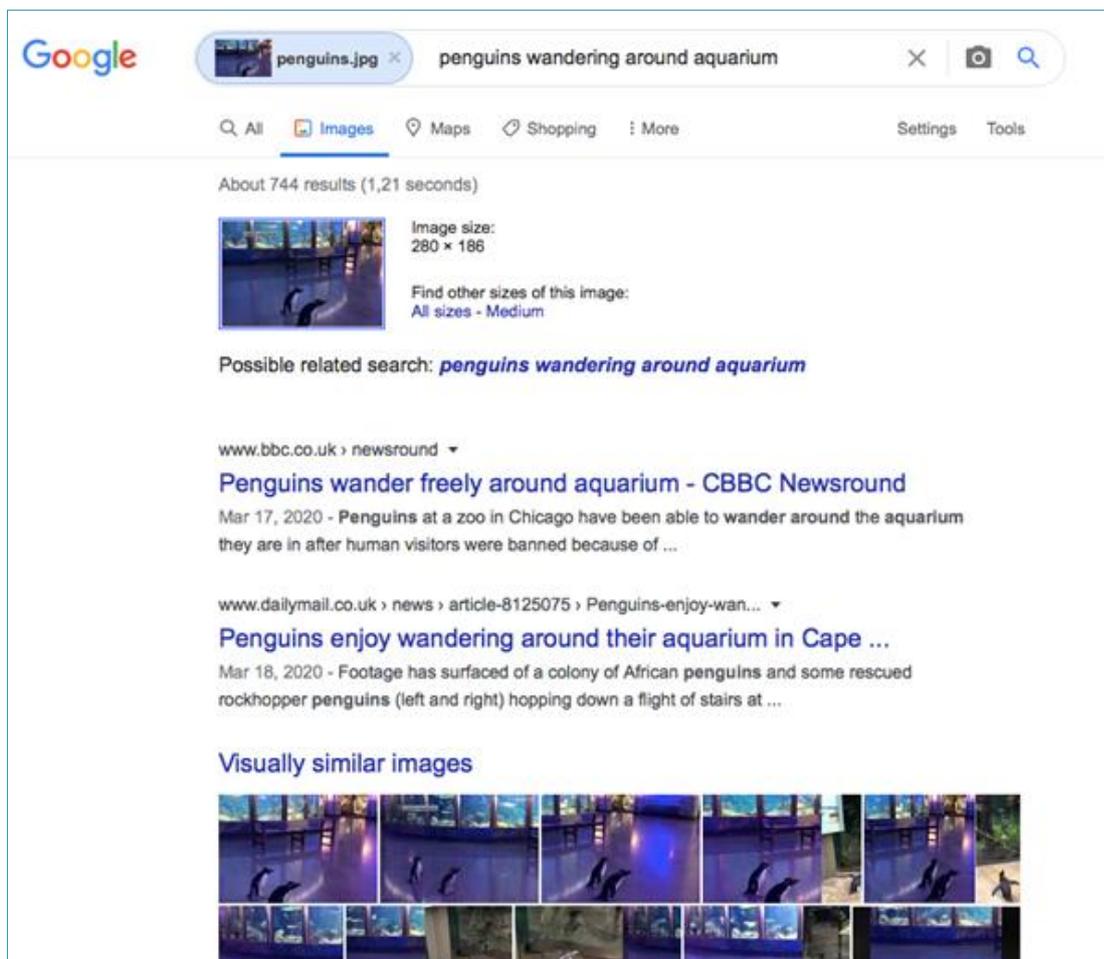
DID YOU KNOW?

...that many news articles written by professional journalists are checked and corrected by another person, known as a fact-checker. This helps to spot and avoid most mistakes. If professional news organizations do accidentally publish and then later discover incorrect information, they always correct it afterwards. This doesn't mean that mistakes can't sometimes still happen, of course, but if a lot of news sites have similar stories about the same news event, it is safe to assume that it actually happened. Use the tools to help you figure out which, if any, of these 3 stories are actually true.



TASK B

In Task B there are no questions to answer, but there are some important instructions to learn. Here you use the tools for a reverse image search. If you do the ten steps, you will likely find a page with lots of results. Or you also could have downloaded a fact-checking plug-in with Weverify at <https://weverify.eu/>. A results page for a reverse image search could look like this:



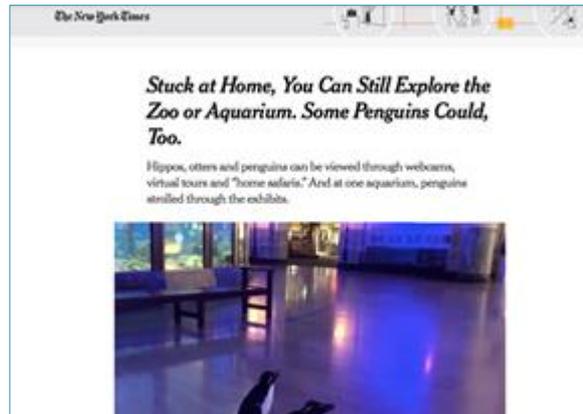
TASK C:

1. Now you're seeing many different websites. Read the headlines. Is anyone saying that the video is fake?
2. Open an article and read through it. What did you find out?
3. Do you think the post is true, or fake?



Answers to task C:

1. No, no one is saying that the video is fake. Other sites also confirm that this aquarium with the cute penguins exists. The aquarium itself also wrote something about it—in fact, employees there actually made the video. The news was also picked up by the BBC and the New York Times and they've put it on their website:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51924024>.



2. There's a lot of information about this video. The penguins—called Rockhopper penguins—live in the Shedd Aquarium. We also learn the penguins' names: Edward, Anna, and Wellington. If you keep reading, you'll also find out that people around the world who work with animals in zoos and aquariums were thinking about how to cheer them up during the coronavirus crisis. And that's one reason why the aquarium employees here decided to take their penguins for a walk.

***Important to note:** A reverse image search works best when images or videos have been shared often and can be found all over the internet. This is not always the case, so you shouldn't just rely on this one tool. You can also use other tools, including the fact-checking plug-in above.*

3. The video is true. Since this Chicago aquarium was closed to visitors, penguins were allowed to walk around freely and check out the rest of the aquarium. The employees captured their adventure on video.

TASK D:

1. What tools did you use to get your results?
2. Why do you think this post was made?



Answers to task D

1. What tools did you use to get this result? Many tools are helpful here: the reverse image search, source checks, image comparisons, asking experts, using your own common sense—and many others.
2. Why do you think this post was made? This post was made, firstly, because it actually happened and, secondly, because it's also interesting and entertaining. With such a fun post, you can actually accomplish a lot of things, including:
 - informing people about the topic
 - entertaining people, because it's easy to get them interested in these sorts of things
 - doing a bit of advertising, since stories like this spread quite quickly.

DID YOU KNOW?

...that in some countries, there is no freedom of the press or freedom of expression. Journalists or politicians who criticize the government, for example, often have to work through anonymous accounts, because otherwise they might be arrested or thrown in jail. This is happily not the case in Austria, Belgium, or Germany.

ARE YOU READY?

TIP: Use the toolbox and find the right tool to help you investigate whether the report is true or fake.



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|--|--|--|
|  SOURCE CHECK |  DIG DEEPER |  AUTHOR |
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CHALLENGE 3:

WHAT'S THE POINT OF MONEY WHEN WE'RE DEALING WITH A PANDEMIC?

ITALIANS THROW MONEY IN THE STREETS

There are lots of videos about the coronavirus on the video sharing app TikTok. In March 2020, a post went viral that supposedly showed a street in Italy littered with bank notes as people made a point that money means nothing compared to the coronavirus. The video started as a Facebook post, then was taken over on TikTok and circulated in many other formats. Here's a screenshot from the video.



It shows a lot of bills on the pavement with the comment "In Italy they throw their money on the streets. A clear message to the whole world that money is not enough when health be in danger". It's easy to believe this could be true because many people were contaminated in Italy and Italians found themselves very sad about this. But did this scene really happen? Is it fact or fake? You'll need your tools again to complete this task.



Information about the source:

This is a screenshot of a Facebook post that was turned into a video that was posted on TikTok

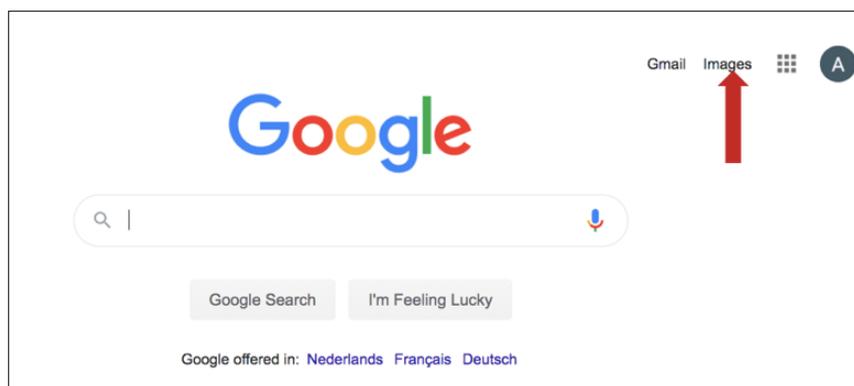


TASK C



You have already used the reverse image search when you investigated the penguin video. It's time to practice what you've learned. Use the same tool to examine this video. Since you already have a screenshot of this image, you can start at point 3 of the previous instructions you were given

- Save the image shown on the first page of this handout or take a photo of it. Save the image file, e.g. news-challenge.jpg. This will help you find it again more easily.
- Go onto the internet and find the page www.google.com
- Click on the word 'Images' on the top right-hand corner of the screen.

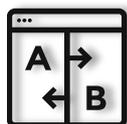


- You will see a small black camera under the Google logo. Now click on the camera, which will take you to the reverse image search tool.
- You can then upload the image (panic-buying.jpg).
- The reverse image search tool will now search the entire internet for your image.
- It's now time to take a good look at the results. This is really going to help you!



TASK D

You will see a long list of websites. Use the search results to help you find out the truth about the video.



1. What can you find out?

2. When was this video first posted?

3. Use your common sense. Does the report make sense to you? Do you think this report is true or has it been made up?

fact

fake



TOP TIP:

Look at the following websites that are listed when you carried out the reverse image search.

[bbc.com/news/reality_check](https://www.bbc.com/news/reality_check)

[fullfact.org](https://www.fullfact.org)



TASK E

Use your common sense and ask yourself:

Does the report make any sense to you?

Read through your previous answers again to tackle the following questions



1. Why do you think this video was created?

2. Why do you think it's important to check these kinds of reports before you share them with your friends? What kind of consequences could there be if people believe this report?

ANSWER SHEET

CHALLENGE 3:

WHAT'S THE POINT OF MONEY WHEN WE'RE DEALING WITH A PANDEMIC? ITALIANS THROW MONEY IN THE STREETS.

TASK A

1. Take a close look at the source here: What is this app best known for?
2. Can you trust this source? Explain your answer.

Answers to task A

1. Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube are primarily known for short, funny videos or great pictures. Anyone can upload whatever they want onto the site. Most of these uploads are funny and harmless—but this also leaves open the possibility for misinformation.
2. You need to be careful with this source, since anyone can upload to social media sites. This means that content can be published by people who don't really know what they're talking about, or who simply aren't trying to inform you.

TASK B

1. Who posted this report? What do you know about the people behind the video?

Answers to task B

1. The video was uploaded by channel@manishdaha148. We don't know about this user, because it was the first video that he (or she, or they) ever uploaded. We also don't know the real names of the people who run the channel, because they haven't shared anything about their background. So, as a result, we should be a bit suspicious, or at least very careful, about the content they post.



TASK C:

There aren't any questions to answer here, but you've probably found lots of pictures and videos.

TASK D:

You're now seeing a number of different web sites. Read through the headlines.

1. What did you find out?
2. When was the video first posted?
3. True or false?

Answers to task D:

1. Whether you're working on a phone or a computer, a Google search will bring up more information, including several articles by Reuters, which is an international news organization that employs professional journalists. They spend their days writing stories and double-checking whether things on the internet are real or fake—including content like this video. As soon as you start reading, you'll probably quickly realize that the video has nothing to do with the coronavirus.
2. March, 2019
3. Fact or fake? This video about throwing money into the streets out of despair during the coronavirus epidemic is **fake!** This video is **misleading**—it's trying to make you believe false information. It's possible to detect a small kernel of truth in this report. The video does in fact show a bunch of money in the streets. But this happened a year ago—and on another continent—following a bank robbery. It has absolutely nothing to do with the coronavirus.

DID YOU KNOW?

...that you can earn a lot of money through clicks on the internet? This includes "clickbait," which is what it's called when you try to get people to read an article or share a video with a particularly crazy headline. This content often doesn't deliver on what the headline promises—you've probably come across this before. Some YouTube influencers, for example, earn very good livings this way. Fake news posts are usually especially crazy in order to attract a lot of attention and get a lot of clicks—and a lot of money.

TASK E:

1. Why do you think this video was created?



2. Why do you think it's important to double-check a post like this, instead of immediately sharing it with friends?

Answers to task E

1. Why was this video created? There are many reasons. Maybe through videos like these someone wants:
 - to upset people
 - to make us afraid that soon there will be nothing more to buy or to eat
 - to attract attention. This video from a new TikTok account called "Viral Videos Germany" was clicked more than 4 million times. And on the internet, clicks mean money.
 - to create suspicion that supermarkets and even government authorities aren't properly prepared
 - to do nothing harmful on purpose. Many people share fake reports without any bad intentions. They personally have fallen for a fake, and they're just passing it along.
2. So why is it important to always double-check these kinds of reports before you share them? It's important because:
 - It can frighten people
 - It can upset people or make them feel extra hopeless for no reason
 - In this way, it can lead people to make bad or uninformed decisions
 - Even if it was supposed to be a joke, people could actually believe it
 - No one likes to fall for a lie!

DID YOU KNOW?

...The most common reasons people spread hoaxes are for fun, for money, or for power.

- Fun: Many people spread fake news by accident, or without any bad intentions. They're just trying to have fun. This doesn't sound like a big deal at first, but it can be dangerous.*
- Money: On the internet, clicks mean money and fake news can bring in lots of clicks. This is how some people turn fake news into a business. This includes "clickbait," which you've probably heard of, or come across before.*
- Power: This is probably the biggest motivation. In many cases, fake news is used in politics or business to hurt someone else's reputation, or to make the person or people posting it look better.*