

Steps to Fact-Check SHSJC

Misinformation refers to information that is false or inaccurate, and is often spread widely with others, but not intended to deceive.

Disinformation refers to lies contrived and delivered to intentionally mislead the audience.



Steps to Fact-Check

Below are some clues to determine if information received is fair, true and accurate.

1. Is it reasonable?

Does the content of the story seem reasonable and does the reporter seem reasonable in how he or she presents the story and its facts? If the answer to those questions are "yes," there's a reasonable chance most people will find the story plausible and believable.

2. Is it too dramatic or emotional?

Does the story seem unnecessarily dramatic or emotional? Or is it legitimately dramatic and emotional because of its inherent nature and due to its "deep" or poignant content?

Clue: if a story seems overly dramatic for no apparent reason, there's a good chance the reporter is substituting hard work and fact-finding with emotional manipulation.

3. Is the language too one-sided, exaggerated and mean?

Is the story filled with hyperbole or vitriol – exaggeration and meanness? If so, that is not honest reporting, it is editorializing – giving a personal opinion – and possibly is low on facts and high on lies, misinformation and propaganda.

4. What are the sources used?

Does the reporter reveal his or her sources? And if the story's major source is anonymous, does the reporter quote other multiple anonymous sources, or one or more on-the-record sources to corroborate the story's content?

5. Is the reporter/news outlet credible?

Does the reporter have a history of being credible, or insulting and highly critical just to attract attention? And if the latter is the case, does the reporter treat all people in that fashion, or reveal consistent bias, prejudice?

6. Is the story in any other news outlets?

Do other reputable news outlets carry the same story? And if so, is there a consistency in the facts and general tenor of those reports, or do those stories imply widely different and contradictory facts and conclusions?

7. Is it unnecessarily controversial?

Is the reporter delivering a story just to be controversial? Is he or she in fact, a gossipmonger just trying to stir the pot and build or appeal to a gullible audience?

8. What do the experts say?

Does the information match what the experts say or is there new, uncorroborated information?