The changing news

READING

I can use reference words to understand text organisation.

1 Look at the social media post in the article. Why are the daisies deformed?

SOCIAL MEDIA NEWS

CAN YOU TRUST YOUR NEWSFEED?

Many older people are used to traditional news media, such as newspapers and TV news shows. They're still getting used to the informal, 'sharing' world of social media, and they prefer it when the news is reported by professional journalists. However, for many younger people, social media is the most convenient and enjoyable way to keep up with what's happening in the world ... It all depends on your attitudes towards social media.

On the one hand, social media has made the news more accessible: as anyone with a phone and internet access can post live news updates and videos in real time. ... What's more, these eyewitness reports sometimes seem more **trustworthy** and reliable, because they come directly from the scene.

Some people also believe that social media news is more **balanced** because it is free from editorial bias. In the past, big media organizations decided what news was and wasn't 'important'. Some stories were given a lot of coverage ...
Similarly, only certain opinions on a particular subject were ever included in newspapers or on news programs. On social media, everyone can express their views on any topic.

However, social media stories can be **inaccurate** because users accidentally share wrong information or don't check their posts for mistakes. Worryingly, sometimes users deliberately spread false stories online, in the hope of influencing how we think, believe, or vote ... In 2019, the expression '**fake news**' didn't exist. In 2018, Twitter identified an astonishing ten million fake news accounts.

Social media has also changed our news reading habits. We've gotten used to reading more quickly on our smartphones, and now we tend to focus more on exciting, **sensational** headlines and images, while we miss important details. In one Stanford University experiment, researchers showed students a post from someone who claimed that daisies had been contaminated by the accident at a nuclear power plant in Japan. They asked, 'Does this post provide strong evidence about the conditions near the Fukushima Daiichi Power Plant?' The students weren't used to questioning news sources ... The correct answer is 'no'. The post had come from an **unreliable** source!

In any case, social media is here to stay. It complements more traditional journalism but will never replace it. Happily, the Stanford researchers also suggested a few tips to help us distinguish between real news and fake news ... What's the source? Is the story **biased** or fair? Can you check the facts elsewhere? Always trust your own critical instincts first and your rechecked second!

LIVEWORKSHEETS

VOCABULARY

1 Match each word from the article with its correct meaning.

accessible • trustworthy • inaccurate • sensational
balanced • bias • source • unreliable

1. **sensational** • easy to reach, use or understand.

2. **unreliable** • deserving trust; you can believe it.

3. **balanced** • where information or news comes from.

4. **accessible** • intended to shock or excite people.

5. **source** • fair; showing both sides of a story.

6. **bias** • not correct or not completely true.

7. **trustworthy** • not able to be trusted or depended on.

8. **inaccurate** • when something affects your opinion unfairly.

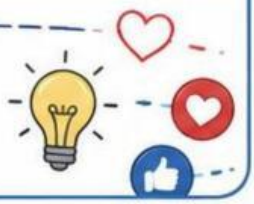
LIVEWORKSHEETS

TRUE OR FALSE

2 Read the sentences about the article. Write TRUE or FALSE.

	TRUE	FALSE
1 Older people prefer social media news more than traditional news.	☐	☐
2 Social media makes news more accessible because anyone with a phone can share updates.	☐	☐
3 The Stanford study showed that the false post came from a reliable source.	☐	☐
4 In 2018, Twitter discovered ten million fake news accounts.	☐	☐
5 The article says we should stop using social media because it is only fake news.	☐	☐

Think critically!
Always check your sources and form your own opinion.



LIVEWORKSHEETS