6 Breaking news

2 Read the article. Complete the summary with these words.

exaggeration	factual	gossip
opinions	sensationalist	true

Fake news has existed for as long as news itself. It is more than simple [1]_____ of facts, it's actually news that is not [2]_____ at all. When newspapers were the only news media, [3]_____ headlines were used to sell more newspapers, with stories often based on hoaxes (untrue stories intended to deceive the reader), [4]_____ or people's [5]_____. In news media, there is a long history of fake stories that are not completely true or [6]_____.

4 Read the statements from the article. Are they supported (S) or unsupported (U) by the rest of the text? Underline any parts of the text which support the claims.

1 Fake news existed even before the time of modern media. _____

2 Some stories were created by people who wanted to gain more influence or an advantage in politics. _____

3 In the past, unlike today, it was much harder for readers to check stories. _____

7 Now decide which statements (1–3) you agree with.

1 It does take 1,000 years to degrade a plastic bag.

2 Nobody knows how long it takes plastic to disappear.

3 It takes a very long time for plastic bags to degrade.

Read all about it!

A free and reliable press is extremely important in society. It informs people about the actions of their elected politicians and about how public money is used. Ground-breaking investigative journalism brings facts to light that powerful people and organizations may wish to hide. However, the freedom to publish can also lead to the reporting of false or inaccurate information that misleads the reader - and that's fake news. Is it a new thing? Where does it come from? Read on …

What is it?

Sensationalist headlines always get the readers' attention, whether they are on news websites, social media or traditional newspapers. But sometimes, a headline is more than simply exaggeration – it's totally untrue. That's fake news.

Is it a new thing?

Not at all – fake news existed even before the time of modern media. After the invention of the printing press at the end of the 1400s, there was an explosion in printed information throughout Europe. Much of the material was opinion and gossip rather than factual information. You might even say that fake news and real news are as old as each other.

Why did fake news exist?

There were different reasons for reporting news that wasn't completely true or factual. Some stories were created by people who wanted to gain more influence or an advantage in politics. These stories would usually try to change public opinion.

Other stories were about individual people, often claiming to do remarkable things such as breaking records or achieving things nobody had previously managed. In the days before radio and television, exciting stories like this made the printed word of the newspaper come to life.

Then there were the business interests of the newspapers themselves – like any company, they needed to increase their customers. If it was a story that would sell papers, few editors worried about how true it really was. In the past, unlike today, it was much harder for readers to check stories.

YESTERDAY'S NEWS



- *The Roman Empire, first century BC, Mark Antony and Cleopatra.* Mark Antony's great enemy, Octavian, reported that Cleopatra had died, which was untrue. Sadly, Mark Antony believed the story and killed himself.



- *Britain in the 1700s, the time of King George III and a period of great conflict.* Stories were printed that told of the King's illness, in order to create more chaos and conflict. The 'news' was quickly repeated in trusted and respected newspapers.



- *1874, New York.* A hoax story was published, reporting the escape of animals from the zoo and the resulting death of 49 people. It led to panic among the readers, even though the final line of the story revealed it was untrue.



- *1890s news giants Joseph Pulitzer and William Hearst.* The two publishers were in competition with each other and so to try to sell more than the other, they published more and more sensationalist stories and rumours. This become known as 'yellow journalism', which eventually the public rejected.



- *1903, two local American newspapers.* The editor of one paper suspected the other paper was stealing their stories. They reported a made-up story about a man called 'Swenekafew', which the rival paper later printed. At this point, the editor was able to point out that the man's name was 'wefakenews' written backwards.



- *1927, European newspapers.* Several European newspapers celebrated the achievement of a British doctor, Dorothy Cochrane Logan, who had swum across the English Channel. One newspaper paid her a prize of a thousand pounds. However, it was later discovered that she had done most of the trip by boat.

Grammar

Passive structures

1 Complete the passive sentences with the verb in brackets and in the form given.

1 An unexpected improvement in the economy _____ (report) last month. (past simple)

2 A controversial video _____ (remove) from several social media platforms. (present perfect)

3 Websites selling fake holidays _____ (investigate) by police. (present continuous)

4 Why _____ travellers _____ (tell) about the airline's bankruptcy so late? (past simple)

5 A new radio station _____ (launch) next month by the world's biggest newspaper group. (future with *will*)

6 Why _____ the adverts _____ (ban) from television? (present perfect)

LIVEWORKSHEETS

2 Rewrite the sentences using the passive + *to* + infinitive.

1 The studio expects the latest superhero film to break all records.

The latest superhero film _____.

2 People understand school exam results are better than ever this year.

School exam results _____.

3 Police believe the suspect used false identities.

The suspect _____.

4 People think the environmental proposals include ambitious targets.

The environmental proposals _____.

5 People consider the triathlon to be one of the most challenging sports.

The triathlon _____.

6 Experts know self-drive vehicles have had problems in certain situations.

Self-drive vehicles _____.

3 Rewrite the sentences using the passive + (*that*) + clause. Begin each sentence with *It*.

1 The fans hope entry to the concert will be free.

_____

2 People understand the awards ceremony might be cancelled.

_____

3 Studies have revealed people spend more time than ever on social media.

_____

4 Experts think some companies will work a four-day week.

_____

5 People considered the customers were lucky to receive a refund.

_____

6 Experts recommend we eat a lot of green vegetables.

_____

4 Complete the science news report with passive structures of the verbs.



The batteries in your phone [1]_____ (know / have) a high environmental cost. Scientists around the world having been trying to develop better batteries, and now [2]_____ (report) that fruit might be the answer. Jackfruit, the world's biggest fruit, and durian which [3]_____ (consider / be) the smelliest, [4]_____ (study) in an Australian laboratory. These fruit [5]_____ (find / have) amazing energy storage. [6]_____ (hope) that one day we'll be able to grow our batteries on trees!

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Listening

1 6.2 **Listen to a radio show about the news cycle. What is the discussion about?**

1 Why today's news cycle is bad for journalists.

2 What the main changes in the news cycle have meant.

3 Where most people get their news from.

2 6.2 **Listen again and choose the correct option according to what is said.**

1 The 'news cycle' is the term for *how long a story stays in the news / how serious a story is*.

2 Today the news cycle is described as being *24-hour / second-by-second*.

3 Many *specialist / tabloid* journalists used to work for the major news companies.

4 One effect of 24-hour news was that *newspapers / television* started to report on fewer serious news stories than before.

5 These days not all news sources are *news organizations / follow the news cycle*.

3 6.2 **Listen again. Match the speaker (1–4) to the information or opinion they expressed (a–f). There are two extra letters. Then write I (information) or O (opinion) next to the four sentences.**

1 Presenter _____

2 Kate _____

3 Joao _____

4 Luisa _____

a 24-hour news channels meant people had a better understanding of major events. _____

b Before 24-hour news, television news was usually on three times a day. _____

c Local news stories getting national attention has been a good thing. _____

d Many of today's news sources don't give us any useful information. _____

e Newspapers used to print several different editions a day. _____

f There's not enough serious news to fill 24-hour news channels. _____

Vocabulary

The news

1 Complete the definitions with the correct collocation.

a in-depth articles

b make the headlines

c objective information

d skim over the headlines

e tabloid press

f top story

1 The main news item on any particular day is the _____.

2 A story about something that is important, unusual or unexpected will probably _____.

3 To quickly look at the main stories is to _____.

4 News stories that give details and background information are _____.

5 Facts and truthful reports that don't depend on opinion are _____.

6 The sensationalist news media is called the _____.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

2 Complete the text with these words. There is one extra word.

foreign	in-depth	make	reported
skim over	tabloids	top	

We usually catch up with the news in our coffee break. I like the [1]_____, but my friend prefers papers that do more [2]_____ articles. Sometimes, she gives me her paper and I [3]_____ the front page. It's funny that most days, the stories that [4]_____ the headlines in our papers are different. For example, in my paper, today's [5]_____ story was about a TV star. Her paper [6]_____ the political situation in Europe.

Pronunciation

Pronouncing long vowels

2 6.4 Add the words in Exercise 1 to the correct group. Then listen again and practise saying the words.

1 /ɜː/ word, _____

2 /iː/ piece, _____

3 /uː/ news, _____

4 /ɑː/ guard, _____

5 /ɔː/ story, _____

Focus on

the ... the ...

1 Match each beginning (1–4) with two endings (a–h) to make eight logical sentences.

1 The stranger the news story,
_____ and _____

2 The more I click on links in news stories,
_____ and _____

3 The more online news sites there are,
_____ and _____

4 The shorter the headline,
_____ and _____

a the more background information I find out.

b the fewer newspapers people buy.

c the more people want to believe it.

d the easier it is to fit on your phone screen.

e the easier it is to get the news for free.

f the further I get away from the original story.

g the more quickly you can read it.

h the more attention it attracts.

2 Choose the correct option (a–c) to complete the paragraph about reactions to news.

Whenever someone starts a story with the words 'You'll never believe this, but …' I think to myself that no, I probably won't. [1]_____ the person seems about the story, [2]_____ I trust it. I actually quite enjoy reading the gossip pages, but [3]_____ I get, [4]_____ I can see that most of the stories are nonsense. As long as the stories are not harmful to the people involved, I think they part of our world. To be honest, [5]_____ the tale, [6]_____ it tends to be. But believable? No.

1 a The more excited b The less excited c More excited

2 a less b the less c the more

3 a older b the more c the older

4 a the easier b the less c the more easily

5 a the more ridiculous b the less ridiculous c the ridiculous

6 a the less b the more c the more entertaining

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Writing

1 Read the news story from 2019. Underline the word in each pair of synonyms that is more sensationalist.



Woman footballer breaks records

It's an [1]*astonishing / unusual* day for women's football! It has been [2]*mentioned / revealed* that Brazilian footballer Formiga is to make [3]*an unbelievable / an important* seventh appearance in a World Cup. This is a [4]*high / record-breaking* achievement in both the women's and men's games. Formiga began her international career at the [5]*young / breath-taking* age of just 17 and is said to be the footballer of her generation. From the start, Formiga [6]*chased / followed* her dream and her story is a [7]*success / victory* for women's football everywhere.

2 Rewrite each sentence to sound more objective using the words given. Are there any similar words you can use in sentences 1–6?

1 The tennis competition will be the most exciting of the year. *potentially*

_____

2 The study will show what we should do next. *may*

_____

3 All the experts say that there is only one solution to the crisis. *virtually*

_____

4 The election results will be announced before midnight. *likely*

_____

5 Results prove that the general public doesn't know anything about the issue. *suggest*

_____

6 The problems were caused by the huge rainfall in recent weeks. *seem to*

_____

LIVEWORKSHEETS