

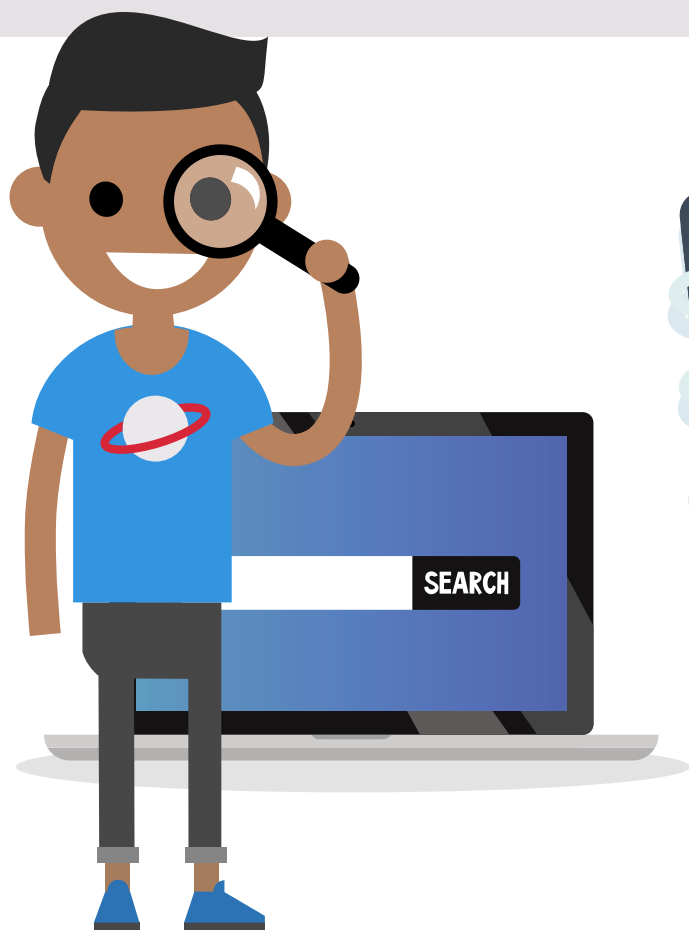
Developing Scepticism

AGES 5 TO 7

From this age, children should learn about the ease with which very professional looking websites can be made and how people may abuse this to access their private information.

Tell your child that anyone can create genuine looking posts containing many comments that appear to be supportive. Encourage children to think for themselves. Does the website seem too good to be true? If children come to you with an improbable tale, talk to them about checking their sources and help them to do this.

When children have homework that involves internet research, model a process of looking for reputable websites for information.



Did You Know?

On average,

8 of 10

children access the online world through a smart phone (Global Kids Online Project, 2017)

This statistic supports the idea that they are independently accessing the internet often away from adult supervision.

Top tips:

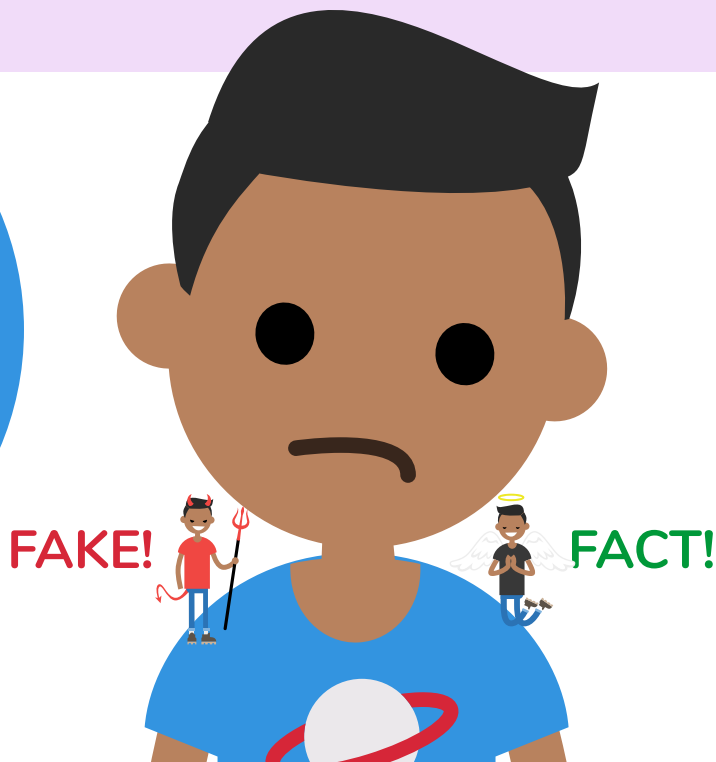
- Encourage your child to think for themselves and build on this ability as they get older.
- Help your child recognise that anyone can now create professional looking websites and legitimate looking posts.
- Help your child categorise what they see or hear online into either a fact, belief or opinion. Support them with this skill by sharing examples of fake and real information online.



There is something about seeing well-formatted and illustrated content on screen that makes us believe it is true. More and more companies are providing powerful, easy-to-use tools that enable tech amateurs to build their own websites and apps. Groups and individuals are exploiting this for personal gain, which can have damaging effects on others. Therefore, developing scepticism is a vital component of staying safe online.

30%

of 8-11s find it easy to check if an image or video is truthful. (UK Safer Internet Centre, 2016)



AGES 7 TO 11

Children should continue to develop their scepticism and critical thinking skills. They might start using email to communicate and could then become a target for phishing scams that look very genuine. Share information about scam emails that you receive and talk about what you do to handle these.

Children will probably hear the term 'fake news'; support them in seeking the truth of stories by using reputable sources to check information online.

Peer influence will be getting stronger; support your child in having the strength of their convictions and in exposing 'fake news' to others.

Children may watch videos online and see amazing images; talk about how easy it is to manipulate images.

You can have a lot of fun doing this but also be aware that 'impossible' images may affect self-esteem if children are trying to live up to them. If they know that most of these images are enhanced and that perfection is not possible, this relieves the pressure upon them. To counter the negative influences, select media that empowers your child and supports their belief in themselves.

Help children to categorise what they see online or hear from others as a fact (backed up by valid evidence), a belief (something a person believes to be true but doesn't have evidence for) or an opinion (a person's view on something where there may be no right or wrong answer). People online might disguise false information as fact.