

Misinformation and disinformation: what they are

40 minutes

Following My Interests Online

Outcome 3.3

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

Learn to distinguish misinformation from disinformation and true but misleading content using invented cases. Sort claims and discuss how the intent behind a false statement affects whether you correct it or avoid amplifying it.

CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Outcome	What the specification asks for
3.3	Explain, using examples, what is meant by misinformation and disinformation.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Explain, using examples, what is meant by misinformation and disinformation (LO 3.3)
- Tell the difference between getting it wrong and deliberately misleading
- Discuss why the intent behind a false claim matters for how we respond

BEFORE THE BELL

- Write the three category labels on the board ready for the lesson.
- Pre-seed two clean invent-a-claim one-liners on the board before the pair beat (bus cancelled; free concert tickets) so pairs who stall do not burn definition time.
- Teacher device with the interactive on the board; student devices optional

Misinformation and disinformation: what they are

HOW THE LESSON RUNS

4 min	introduction	Start
6 min	content	Examine and discuss
12 min	activity	Hands-on: sort the claims
10 min	activity	Hands-on: why intent changes the response
4 min	content	Make sense
3 min	content	Reflect
1 min	summary	What you covered

TEACHING MOVES

- If devices are limited, run the sorting activity teacher-led on the board with student input.
- Keep the live sort to three cards (one per bucket); park the spare cards as extension only.
- Treat incorrect placements as discussion points for the whole class; reconcile contested cards only.
- For the pairs intent task, allow time to consider both versions separately to highlight the contrast.
- Circulate the room during pair discussions to encourage students to justify their responses.
- Invented scenarios only: redirect any claim that names a real classmate, school, politician, creator, or local business.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Labelling every false claim as disinformation without considering intent: prompt students to look for signs of deliberate misleading.
- Missing true but misleading examples: emphasise how correct facts can still lead to the wrong conclusion (real flood photo, exaggerated headline about the whole town).
- Assuming intent can always be proven: stress that this is a judgement exercise based on presented information.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Support: Keep the definitions visible on the board throughout the activities.
- Support: Have students work in pairs for the sorting and discussion tasks.
- Extension: Challenge students to place the spare cards, or create one original example for each of the three categories.