

Spotting AI Online

40 minutes

Digital Media Literacy

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

In this lesson, you'll learn practical techniques to identify AI-generated content online. Explore how to spot clues in text, images, audio, and video, and apply verification methods like reverse image searches to become a more discerning digital citizen.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Understand the importance of identifying AI-generated content to prevent misinformation and deception online.
- Recognise key indicators of AI-generated material across text, images, audio, and video formats.
- Apply practical verification techniques, such as reverse image searches and source checks, to assess content authenticity.
- Develop a systematic approach to evaluate digital content using personal checklists and workflows.
- Cultivate a critical mindset to question and verify suspicious online material before sharing or acting on it.

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Devices for each pupil or pair, with sound working: steps 7 and 8 play audio and video, so headphones or a way to share sound is worth having.
- Open and test the site on your own device first, especially the image quiz in step 5 and the audio and video clips, in case your school filter blocks the media.
- Have paper or notebooks ready for step 9, where pupils build their own checklist by hand or type it.

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HOW THE LESSON RUNS

Introduction

Fast Checks First

Spotting AI in Text

Spotting AI in Images

Ai Image Quiz

Red Flags & Verification

Spotting AI in Audio

Analysing AI in Videos

AI Checklist

Reflection

TEACHING MOVES

- 1. Introduction. Ask the class up front whether they have ever seen a photo or video online they were not sure was real. Frame the lesson as building a smart habit, not becoming suspicious of everything.
- 2. Fast Checks First. Model one fast check aloud on a surprising post: say who posted it, the date and whether the caption matches. Stress these are brain checks done before any tool.
- 3. Spotting AI in Text. Read a smooth but vague sentence aloud and ask pupils what facts they could actually check in it. Name the tell: real writing has specific names, dates and places.
- 4. Spotting AI in Images. Have pupils zoom into the Taylor Swift image and hunt small details: hands, teeth, jewellery, background edges. AI gets the big picture right and slips on the small things.
- 5. Ai Image Quiz. Let pupils guess before revealing each answer, then read the explanation together. The point is the reasoning, not the score, so pause on any they got wrong.
- 6. Red Flags & Verification. Walk through the checklist as a routine: pause, scan for warning signs, verify. Point out that one red flag is a reason to check further, not proof on its own.
- 7. Spotting AI in Audio. Play the clip once for a first reaction, then again while pupils listen for flat emotion, odd pauses or breathing. Second listens catch what the first misses.
- 8. Analysing AI in Videos. Play the clip and ask pupils to slow down and check lighting, shadows and movement. Encourage pausing the video to study a single frame.
- 9. AI Checklist. Set pupils to write a short personal checklist drawn from the lesson. Push for short and usable over long and complete, so they will actually reach for it.
- 10. Reflection. Ask a few pupils to say aloud one clue they will remember and one thing they would check before sharing. Keep this spoken.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Pupils think one red flag proves something is AI-made, and start calling every polished post fake. Reframe red flags as reasons to check further, not verdicts. Show a real photo that has one odd feature to prove a single clue is not proof.
- Pupils believe that if something looks or sounds real, it must be real. Use the image quiz and audio clip to show convincing fakes, then point to the small tell in each. Realness of appearance is exactly what AI is good at faking.
- Pupils assume all AI content is bad or made to trick people. Note the lesson's own examples of helpful uses, such as reading stories aloud. The skill is checking before believing or sharing, not distrusting everything.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Emerging: Give one clear thing to look for at a time, such as just checking hands in the image, before adding more clues. Pair them with a partner for the quiz so they can talk through each guess aloud.
- Developing: Ask them to name why they think something is AI, pointing to a specific clue, before they see the answer. Have them explain one red flag from step 6 back to you in their own words.
- Proficient: Ask them to write a longer checklist that covers all four formats and to add one clue not mentioned in the lesson. Challenge them to describe how they would verify a suspicious image using a source and date check.