

LESSON 2

Research Without Getting Tricked, Sources, Scams & AI in 2026

60 minutes

Digital Foundations

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

Learn to spot trustworthy sources, verify facts against independent sources, and use AI safely for research. Build a Research Page with 5 verified facts for your Something Real project.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Apply the CRAAP test to evaluate source trustworthiness
- Verify factual claims against independent sources
- Identify where AI assistants help and where they can provide false information
- Recognise phishing patterns and understand two-factor authentication
- Distinguish between using AI as a learning support and using it dishonestly

BEFORE THE BELL

- Print or prepare the four claim-and-source pairs for the Flip Your Instinct activity (or display them on screen).
- Ensure students have access to their portfolio accounts and can create a new page.

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HOW THE LESSON RUNS

Introduction

Key Concepts

Flip Your Instinct

Step-by-step: Verify a Claim and Check an AI Answer

Common Issues

Digital Safety Aside, Phishing and 2FA

Portfolio Build: Your Research Page

Reflection

Lesson Summary

TEACHING MOVES

- During Flip Your Instinct, do a hands-up vote before revealing verifications so students see the gap between instinct and fact. Make the discussion about *why* gut feel failed, not about right answers.
- When demonstrating the verification process, model searching aloud: show the exact keywords you use, pause when a source looks promising, and explain why you chose a second source. Students need to see the thinking, not just the result.
- For the AI check, show both what ChatGPT (or equivalent) said and the official Irish source side by side. Point out the tone difference, confidence without evidence is a red flag.
- During portfolio build, circulate and push back on vague trust justifications ('it's official' or 'Google found it'). The Why I Trust This line must name what was verified (author, date, official body, cross-check result).

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Students assume a specialist's personal blog is more trustworthy than a government source because it sounds detailed. Remind them that detail does not equal accuracy, check who runs it and when it was last updated.
- AI hallucinations are written with confidence. Students treat a plausible-sounding answer as true without checking. Push them to test every AI claim against an official Irish source before using it.
- Students write 'Why I trust this' as a general statement rather than naming what they verified. Ask them to complete the sentence: 'I checked [specific thing] and found that [specific result].'

DIFFERENTIATION

- Support: Provide a partially filled Research Page template with one completed entry and blank headings (Claim, Source, Why I trust this) so students can see the structure before filling their own. During portfolio build, pair struggling students with a peer to share search strategies.
- Support: For students who struggle to find a second independent source, suggest official Irish bodies (CORU, Health Service Executive, Department of Enterprise, Revenue, An Post) relevant to their Something Real topic before they start searching.
- Extension: Challenge students to find one fact where two sources disagree and use a third source to determine which is correct. Record both findings and the resolution in their Research Page.