

LESSON 3

Deepfakes and Synthetic Media

40 minutes

What You Are Really Looking At

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

Practise identifying synthetic media and deepfakes by examining remaining visual and audio tells. Judge examples as real, likely synthetic or cannot tell, then explore how this affects news reporting, evidence and personal trust in media.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Recognise AI-generated and deepfake media using available tells.
- Commit to verdicts of real, likely synthetic or cannot tell on examples.
- Discuss the implications of synthetic media for news, evidence and trust.

BEFORE THE BELL

- No printing required. Case cards are already fully in the student step. For the discussion, project step 4 or write the Evidence and Trust headings on the board (News is optional if time allows).

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HOW THE LESSON RUNS

4 min	introduction	Start
5 min	content	Examine and Discuss
17 min	activity	Hands-on: Deepfake Detection Challenge
8 min	content	Your Turn: News, Evidence and Trust
3 min	content	Make Sense
2 min	content	Reflect
1 min	summary	What You Covered

TEACHING MOVES

- 1. Start. Link back to spotting altered media, then name today's distinct question: detection under pressure, not whether editing exists. Keep the tone curious and practical, not alarming.
- 2. Examine and Discuss. Keep this to about five minutes. Define synthetic media and deepfake once, name the three verdicts, and stress that cannot tell is a skilled answer and clean quality is not proof.
- 3. Hands-on: Deepfake Detection Challenge. Read each item aloud, give pairs 20 to 30 seconds to whisper a call, take a show of hands, then reveal. Spend longest where the room splits. Protect the cannot-tell audio item even if time runs short.
- 4. Your Turn: News, Evidence and Trust. Run the Evidence and Trust cards as structured discussion, not a march to a verdict. Steelman both caution and the cost of total distrust. If short on time, run Evidence only.
- 5. Make Sense. Name the transferable skill aloud: choose among real, likely synthetic and cannot tell, then pick a next check. Keep it hopeful: detection is harder, not hopeless.
- 6. Reflect. Take two or three spoken voices on when they would choose cannot tell and what one check they will actually run. Nothing is typed or saved.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Students treat sharp, high-quality media as proof it is real. State plainly that clean quality is no longer a reliability signal, and use a challenge item where a convincing clip turns out synthetic to make it concrete.
- Students equate synthetic with lie, or edited with deepfake. Point out synthetic media includes film effects, accessibility tools and satire. Use the real footage item with ordinary phone compression to separate edited from fabricated.
- Students think only celebrities get deepfaked. Note that ordinary-person cases matter for their own world, and keep student agency at verify-before-you-share rather than diagnosing real people.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Emerging: Give the student one starter prompt to watch for, such as lip timing, so they have a single concrete thing to check before voting.
- Developing: Ask them to name the one detail that did the most work in their call, so they move from a feeling to a specific observation.
- Proficient: Ask which single check they would run next on the item they were least sure about, or hand them the optional News card to argue both sides.