

Help Children Spot Fake News and Decode Media Messages

With so much media and information coming at us through the television, phones, social media and more, it's more important than ever for children to understand the basics of media literacy. When children can identify different types of news and media, and the methods and meanings behind them, they're on their way to being critical thinkers and smart consumers.

Check out these 5 tips

1

Encourage healthy scepticism.

Help them analyse the messages around them -- from toy packaging to news headlines -- and question the purpose of the words and images they see.

2

Play "spot the advert".

When you see advertising on TV or on a hoarding, ask children to figure out what the advert is selling. Sometimes it's obvious and sometimes it isn't. Help them explore why certain pictures, sounds or words are used to sell certain products.

3

Explore different sides of a story.

Use real-life examples to help children understand how people can view the same situation from totally different perspectives. One child might experience a game in the playground as fun, while another might feel like the rules are unfair. When appropriate, tie this example to a news story.

4

Discuss fact vs. opinion.

Play around with ideas and decide which are facts and which are opinions. Ask: *How tall are you? What's the best food in the world? Do rocks sink or float? Do you like dogs?* Point out that both facts and opinions show up in the news, but opinions are usually labelled.

5

Choose a variety of sources.

Show children how you get news and information from different places and explain how you make your choices. Use words like "credible", "trustworthy", "respected" and "fair". As children get older, introduce the ideas of "bias", "satire" and "clickbait".

