

## Unit 12:

# Crap Detection

### A Warm-up

1. Do you know these words related to social media? *hoax, meme, scam, viral*
2. How often do you read or share viral posts? Are they usually memes, articles or videos?
3. Are you ever suspicious of the material some people share on social media?
4. Look at the social media post below. Do you trust it? Why or why not?



## B Vocabulary

### 1. Match the words from the Academic Word List with their definitions.

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| a) detect (v)       | ___ something that is unusual or difficult to understand or explain fully |
| b) consumer (n)     | ___ check   |
| c) correspond (v)   | ___ a person who buys or uses something                                   |
| d) distribution (n) | ___ to be similar   |
| e) inaccurate (adj) | ___ delivery  |
| f) confirm (v)      | ___ discover; notice  |
| g) phenomena (n)    | ___ unfair; not balanced  |
| h) biased (adj)     | ___ not correct or exact; having a mistake or error                       |

### 2. Learn the different uses of these phrasal verbs.

1. Match the meaning of **fall for** with its use in the example sentences:

- a) fall in love with  
b) be deceived by (something)

\_\_\_ I won't fall for any of your April Fools jokes anymore.

\_\_\_ Harry had always been a single guy, so people were surprised when he fell for Sally.

2. Match the meaning of **point out** with its use in the example sentences:

- a) to direct someone's attention towards (something)  
b) to make someone aware of a fact

\_\_\_ Our guide pointed out several interesting sites as we toured the city.

\_\_\_ Tom was interested in Meg until someone pointed out she was married.

### 3. Personalization

- Have you ever fallen for a joke or a lie that your friend told you?
- Do you think Japanese magazines usually have accurate or inaccurate news stories?
- How can you confirm information you read on social media?
- Can you detect when someone is lying to you?
- Who do you think is the best musician in Japan? Is your opinion biased?

## C While Reading

### Complete the following exercises while reading the article on the next page.

- Look at the title of the article on the next page. What do you think it means?
- Fill in the blanks with the words from Vocabulary exercise.
- Find the phrasal verb *fall for* in the text. What is its meaning in this article? \_\_\_\_\_
- Find the phrasal verb *point out* in the text. What is its meaning in this article? \_\_\_\_\_

# Thinking critically while online



*“Every man should have a built-in automatic crap detector operating inside him.”*

-Ernest Hemingway

Thanks to the Internet, the answer to almost every question is available to us within seconds. But how do we know if this information is true? How useful are these facts if they are mixed with hoaxes and scams? Some critics claim that there is too much false information on the Internet. Unfortunately, social media is responsible for a lot of the \_\_\_\_\_ of misinformation (or "crap").



Rumours and \_\_\_\_\_ stories are not new in media. For hundreds of years newspaper editors and owners have often reported incorrect information, depending on their own views. However, traditional publishers had to be careful about what they print as someone might sue them for publishing lies. Social media has changed the way information spreads. These days, the reliability of information is no longer the responsibility of the publisher, but of the \_\_\_\_\_. So, do we have to fact-check every meme, link and news story that appears in our social network feeds? And when we find a piece of false information, should we try to correct the person who posted the material?

An interesting \_\_\_\_\_ of this side of social media is that many users often don't care if the stories they share are false. People usually believe stories that \_\_\_\_\_ to their view

of the world. If someone else points out that these stories are untrue, it often doesn't matter. Perhaps this explains why rumours and conspiracy theories continue to spread long after they have been proven false.

We cannot control the information that is put on the Internet. We can however choose what to believe. Howard Rheingold, a social media expert has designed the "CRAP test". It is a list of four simple questions that Internet users can ask themselves to help \_\_\_\_\_ false information:

**Currency:** How current (recent) is the information?

**Reliability:** Does the author provide references or sources?

**Authority:** Who is the author? Are they an expert?

**Point of view:** Is this fact or opinion? Is it \_\_\_\_\_? Is it trying to sell you something?

Asking yourself these questions is a good first step to \_\_\_\_\_ the reliability of a piece of information.

If people continue clicking, liking and sharing without thinking, nothing will change. We need to learn to become critical consumers of online media. Asking questions about what we read and watch is the first step to building our own crap detector.

Notes

## D Check Your Understanding

Circle true (T) or false (F) for the following statements about the article.

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1. Before the Internet, there were never any lies printed in media.                       | T/F |
| 2. Social media websites are responsible for the accuracy of the information they spread. | T/F |
| 3. People sometimes don't care if the media they read is true.                            | T/F |
| 4. Asking questions about what we read is an important part of critical consumption.      | T/F |

## E What Do You Think?

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

The main goal of social media sites is to make money.	strongly agree	agree	not sure	disagree	strongly disagree
Almost everything printed in newspapers is true.	strongly agree	agree	not sure	disagree	strongly disagree
Almost everything shared on social media is true.	strongly agree	agree	not sure	disagree	strongly disagree
It should be a website's responsibility to identify false information online.	strongly agree	agree	not sure	disagree	strongly disagree
It should be a user's responsibility to identify false information online.	strongly agree	agree	not sure	disagree	strongly disagree
It should be the government's responsibility to identify false information online.	strongly agree	agree	not sure	disagree	strongly disagree
I have never shared false information online.	strongly agree	agree	not sure	disagree	strongly disagree
I am good at identifying false information online.	strongly agree	agree	not sure	disagree	strongly disagree

### Further discussion

1. What does the quote at the beginning of the article mean?
2. How often do you read or share viral posts? Are they usually memes, articles or videos?
3. Do you ever check if these posts are true?
4. Do you actually care if these memes are true or not?
5. What responsibilities do journalists or websites have when sharing this information?