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ACTIVATING LESSON SCENARIO
developed as part of the project

‘INNOVATIONS IN SCHOOL EDUCATION’

TOPIC:

**Celebrities and Gossip – How Do False Information Work in
Show Business?**
*(The role of entertainment media in shaping opinions and spreading
fake news)*

1. Lesson objectives

The student:

- understands what fake news and gossip are in the context of show business,
- can identify the difference between confirmed information and unverified gossip,
- knows the mechanisms of spreading false information in entertainment media,
- develops the ability to analyse headlines and sources of celebrity news,
- learns to take a critical approach to sensational content on the internet and social media.

2. Target group

Primary school students

3. Teaching methods

- Brainstorming
- Guided discussion
- Group work
- Analysis of texts, headlines, social media posts
- Mini-quiz

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4. Teaching aids / sources

- Projector or interactive whiteboard
- Cards with article/gossip headlines (2 true, 2 false)
- Flipchart and markers
- Infographic: *“How Gossip Spreads Online”*
- Fact-checking platforms:
 - **Poland:** Demagog.org.pl, Konkret24
 - **Czech Republic:** Manipulátoři.cz, Demagog.cz
 - **Slovakia:** Demagog.sk, Infosecurity.sk
 - **EU:** EUvsDisinfo.eu, EDMO.eu

5. Lesson course (45 minutes)

1. Introduction – Is every celebrity gossip true? (5 min)

Form: Brainstorming

Course:

The teacher begins the lesson with a short introductory conversation:

Questions for students:

- Have you ever heard a shocking piece of gossip about stars that later turned out to be false or invented by the media?
- Why do celebrity news spread faster than other information on the internet?
- Does the fact that someone is very famous and often appears in the media make us more likely to believe every story about them?
- What emotions do such news items most often evoke – curiosity, surprise, outrage, laughter?

Substantive information (for the teacher):

Mechanisms of gossip creation:

Gossip about famous people often arises without thorough fact-checking. They may be based on:

- a single photo taken out of context,
- an omission or altered quote,
- information from anonymous “witnesses” that has never been confirmed.



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Why do they spread?

- Celebrities attract attention because they are popular and easily recognisable.
- Stories about their private lives grab attention, spark emotions and curiosity, so people eagerly pass them on – even without verification.
- Entertainment media and gossip portals often publish unverified information because speed and sensation matter more than truth.
- Social media algorithms reward emotional content, causing gossip to spread rapidly.

Consequences of false information about celebrities:

- Can destroy a person's reputation and harm their private and professional life.
- Misleads fans and public opinion, perpetuating a false image of the person.
- Can lead to witch-hunts, hate, cyberbullying, or loss of advertising contracts and jobs in the industry.

2. Definitions and examples (10 min)

Form: Mini-lecture + oral quiz

Course:

The teacher presents key concepts related to false information in show business and discusses their impact on public opinion. Then, a short oral quiz is conducted where students decide whether the given examples are gossip, fake news, or reliable information.

Expanded definitions:

- **Gossip:**
 - Unverified information passed on orally, on social media, or by gossip portals.
 - Usually has no cited source, content is based on guesses, out-of-context photos, or anonymous accounts.
 - Often arises from audience curiosity – the more sensational, the faster it spreads.
 - May lead to misunderstandings, media scandals, or even lawsuits for defamation.
- **Fake news in show business:**
 - Completely false or manipulated news about a celebrity, presented as an article, post, or video to look like genuine journalism.
 - Created deliberately to shock, stir emotions, get clicks, or harm a person.
 - Can be a tool of competition, haters, or sometimes even a deliberate “scandal marketing” tactic to draw attention to a star.
- **Entertainment clickbait:**



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- An exaggerated, sensational, or misleading headline intended to make audiences click on an article or video.
- Often contains words like *“shocking!”*, *“scandal!”*, *“no one expected this!”*, but the content doesn’t match the title’s promise.
- Widely used on gossip portals, entertainment sites, and platforms such as YouTube or TikTok to boost views.
- **Media fact-checking:**
 - The process of verifying information about public figures using reliable sources – e.g., press agencies, official celebrity accounts, fact-checking portals.
 - Helps distinguish true news from gossip and fake news, protecting both audiences and celebrities from harmful content.

Examples:

1. **Fake news:**
 - *“Famous actor fled the film set after a scandal – footage online!”*
No sources, no evidence, edited or context-switched video.
2. **Gossip:**
 - *“Celebrity X is expecting a child”* – based on a single photo, without confirmation from the person or their representatives.
3. **Clickbait:**
 - *“You won’t believe what singer Y did at the gala – everyone was shocked!”* – headline suggests a sensation, but the article describes an ordinary situation, e.g., a change of dress.
4. **Reliable information:**
 - *“Musician Y announced a new concert tour – confirmed by his official Instagram profile and press agency.”*

Mini oral quiz:

The teacher reads 4–5 short headlines, and students say whether it is gossip, fake news, clickbait, or reliable news. They then justify their answers together.

3. Exercise – Spot false celebrity news (15 min)

Form: Group work (3–5 people)

Objective: Develop skills in analysing media content, critical thinking, and identifying unverified information in the showbiz world.

Teacher’s instructions:

1. Divide the class into small groups (3–5 people).



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2. Give each group a set of 4 headlines/posts about celebrities (2 true, 2 false or unverified).
3. Ensure headlines are neutral, non-offensive, possibly fictional but styled like real gossip news.
4. Include both reliable materials (e.g., official press releases) and fake news based on gossip, manipulated photos, or anonymous sources.

Task for groups:

Read all headlines/posts and decide which ones seem false and which might be true.

Example set of 4 headlines:

True / confirmed:

1. *“Robert Lewandowski visited a primary school in Warsaw”*
Description: The FC Barcelona footballer met students, gave autographs, and talked about his career path. Information from an official school release and sports media.
2. *“Julia Wieniawa recorded a song for a family movie”*
Description: The actress and singer took part in recording a song for a Polish family film. Confirmed by the film’s producer.

False or unverified (styled as gossip):

3. *“Actor from a popular series secretly lives in a zoo”*
Description: An online rumour claimed a youth-series actor lived in a keeper’s house at a zoo. No photos or proof – likely an internet joke.
4. *“Famous singer can talk to parrots in their language”*
Description: Social media post claims the artist learned “parrot language” and converses with them. Not confirmed by any credible source.

Headline analysis card

Headline text	True or false?	What emotions does it evoke? (e.g., joy, surprise, laughter)	Why might someone write this? (e.g., information, joke, to grab attention)	Warning signs (what suggests it’s false?)
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Headline text	True or false?	What emotions does it evoke? (e.g., joy, surprise, laughter)	Why might someone write this? (e.g., information, joke, to grab attention)	Warning signs (what suggests it's false?)
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Warning signs – examples for students

(to print at the bottom of the table or on a separate help card)

1. No cited source (“*Who said this? Where was it published?*”).
2. Sounds too strange or unbelievable (“*Actor lives in a zoo*”).
3. Uses exaggerated words (“*the most amazing in the world’s history!*”).
4. No photo or obviously edited photo.
5. No coverage from any reputable media.

Step 2: Try to verify the news – if possible, use phones, fact-checking portals, or celebrities’ official profiles.

Discussion (5 min):

Each group presents one example and explains why they considered it true or false.

Teacher prompts:

- What helped you tell gossip from fact?
- What mistakes do people make when sharing unverified celebrity news?



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- What could be the consequences of spreading such content (for celebrities, for readers, for society)?

4. Discussion – Why do we believe celebrity gossip? (8 min)

Form: Guided classroom discussion moderated by the teacher

Objective: Make students aware of the psychological and media mechanisms that make it easy to believe unverified celebrity information and the possible consequences of spreading it.

Questions for students:

- Why is it easy to believe sensational stories about celebrities? (Is it related to their popularity, media presence, our feeling that we “know” them?)
- What emotions do gossip creators exploit? (Curiosity, jealousy, outrage, surprise, the desire to tell others something “exciting”).
- Is every negative piece of news about a star necessarily true? (How easy is it to manipulate a photo, take a quote out of context, use a clickbait title?)
- How can we check whether information about a public figure is reliable? (Check the star’s official profiles, press agency releases, fact-checking portals, credible industry media).

Substantive info (teacher’s note):

Mechanisms making gossip work:

1. **Proximity effect:** Celebrities are constantly present in our lives (social media, TV), so we feel as if we know them personally – easier to believe supposed “secrets.”
2. **Sensationalism sells:** Gossip portals make money from clicks, so they create catchy, even exaggerated headlines.
3. **Emotion psychology:** Information that provokes emotions (shock, anger, jealousy) is remembered better and shared more, regardless of its truth.
4. **Lack of verification:** We rarely check sources, and a “story from a friend” or a popular profile seems credible just because many people share it.

Summary of discussion:



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- Gossip is not always true – often created to provoke emotions, sell clicks, or cause controversy.
- Every piece of news about a celebrity should be verified with official sources.
- Sharing unverified news can destroy reputations and contribute to online hate.

5. Summary and reflection (7 min)

Form: Individual work + joint class board

Objective: Make students aware of the effects unverified gossip can have and develop rules for responsible use of celebrity information.

Course:

1. Individual work (3–4 min):

Students write in notebooks or on cards their reflections, completing sentences:

- “I realised that gossip in show business can...”
- “The most suspicious thing in celebrity news is...”
- “Before I click a sensational title, I will check...”

(Teacher may ask some volunteers to read their answers or collect anonymous cards and read selected examples).

2. Group work – class board (3–4 min):

Together with students, the teacher creates a list of rules for responsible use of celebrity information.

The rules are written on the board or flipchart as a “classroom poster.”

Sample list:

1. Check the source – does it come from a reliable portal or official profile?
2. Don’t believe photos or videos without context – they may be manipulated.
3. Look for confirmation in official channels (celebrity profiles, press agencies, credible media).
4. Avoid sharing gossip that could harm someone – false news destroys reputations.
5. Remember that popularity or number of shares doesn’t make news true.
6. Ask yourself: “*Would I want someone to share unverified gossip about me?*” – empathy online matters.

3. Teacher’s wrap-up (1 min):



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- Gossip in show business can be harmless fun but often becomes a tool for manipulation or hate.
- Each of us influences whether fake news about others spreads – it's worth being a responsible consumer and creator of content.

6. Glossary – Fake News in Show Business

Term	Definition
Gossip	Unverified information, often repeated without evidence.
Entertainment fake news	False news about a celebrity, looking like a real article.
Clickbait	Sensational headline intended to encourage clicks, often misleading.
Fact-checking	Verifying the reliability of news in credible sources.
Media disinformation	Deliberately creating false content about public figures to gain popularity or harm someone.

7. Methodological guide for the teacher

1. General lesson aims:

- Develop the ability to distinguish facts from unverified information.
- Raise awareness of the impact of fake news and gossip on celebrities' private and public lives.
- Promote responsible use of online information.
- Practise critical thinking and analysing content from entertainment portals and social media.

2. Examples and materials:

- Use fictional or neutral, international gossip to avoid conflicts involving local celebrities.
- Prepare a set of headlines/posts (2 true, 2 false) for group exercises.
- Use screenshots from gossip portals, YouTube, TikTok, Instagram to show how headlines appear in different formats (text, photo, video, comments).
- You can prepare a "*Gossip Life Cycle*" graphic – how quickly false info spreads online.

3. Moderating discussion:

- Ask open questions: "*Why do you think so?*", "*What makes this seem true?*", "*How could you check this?*"

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- Don't judge students who admit they believed gossip – show that anyone can fall for false info, even adults.
- Point out that emotions (curiosity, sensation, outrage) are not proof of truth.
- Emphasise that even reputable media can make mistakes or publish unverified news.

4. Safe atmosphere:

- Avoid discussing real local gossip that may involve people known in the students' community.
- Remind the rule of empathy: *"Would you want someone to spread unverified gossip about you?"*
- Set the rule: during exercises, we don't publish, laugh at, or repeat unverified stories.

5. Possible lesson extensions:

- **Class project "Map of Gossip and Facts"** – students search celebrity news, verify their truth (e.g., via fact-checking sites, official celebrity profiles), and create a board divided into *facts* and *false information*.
- **Educational game "Gossip or Truth?"** – teacher reads headlines, students vote true/false, then check evidence.
- **Mini-drama** – act out a scene where false celebrity news spreads and show its effects.

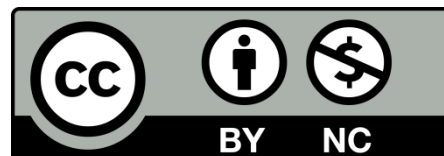
6. Supporting materials:

- Sets of headlines (2 true, 2 false) – paper or slides.
- Flipchart/board for safe-information-use rules.
- Cards for individual reflection.
- Access to phones/computers to search for information verification.
- List of fact-checking sites and official channels (press agencies, Demagog, EDMO, EUvsDisinfo).

8. Scientific and educational sources (international and EU)

- **European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO)**
<https://edmo.eu> – materials on disinformation, media literacy, and fact-checking tools.
- **EUvsDisinfo – European External Action Service**
<https://euvsdisinfo.eu> – database of fake news, propaganda reports, examples of manipulation.
- **UNESCO – Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers**
[Link](#) – materials on fake news, emotions in media, and recognising manipulation.
- **Poland:** Demagog.org.pl, Konkret24
- **Czech Republic:** Manipulátoři.cz, Demagog.cz

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- **Slovakia:** Demagog.sk, Infosecurity.sk