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**ACTIVATING LESSON SCENARIO**  
**developed as part of the project**

**‘INNOVATIONS IN SCHOOL EDUCATION’**

**TOPIC**

**How Are Fake News Created and Who Creates Them? Behind the  
Scenes of Manipulation**  
**(Analysis of intentions – political, economic, ideological – and the  
mechanisms of creating fake news)**

**1. Lesson Objectives**

The student:

- understands who creates fake news and why,
- can identify motives (political, financial, ideological) behind disinformation,
- recognises manipulation mechanisms in the process of creating false content,
- knows common strategies for spreading disinformation,
- develops critical thinking and analyses sources of information.

**2. Target Group**

Primary school students.

**3. Teaching Methods**

- Brainstorming
- Mini-lecture with presentation
- Group work
- Case analysis
- Guided discussion
- Individual reflection

**4. Teaching Aids / Sources**

- Projector / interactive whiteboard

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- Cards describing fake news creation scenarios
- Infographic: “Who Creates Fake News and Why?”
- Examples of disinformation campaigns (simplified descriptions)
- Flipchart + markers
- Fact-checking platforms:
  - **Poland:** [Demagog.org.pl](https://demagog.org.pl) – largest Polish fact-checking portal, analyses false narratives and manipulation mechanisms;
  - **EU:** [EUvsDisinfo.eu](https://euvsdisinfo.eu) – European External Action Service project with analyses, typology of manipulation, and educational tools.

## **5. Lesson Procedure (45 minutes)**

### **1. Introduction – Who Creates Fake News and Why? (5 min)**

**Form:** Brainstorming

#### **Introductory questions:**

- Who do you think might create fake news?
- Why would someone want to spread falsehoods?
- Are all fake news stories made “just for fun”?

#### **Teacher’s explanation:**

Fake news is not accidental. They are not random mistakes or harmless jokes. Very often, they are created deliberately, with a specific purpose and a well-thought-out plan. Behind them are individuals, groups, or even entire organisations aiming to influence audiences – their emotions, thinking, decisions, or behaviour.

Creators of fake news usually have a vested interest – political, financial, or ideological. It’s not just about “stirring trouble” – it’s about gaining benefits at the expense of truth and informational integrity.

#### **Example intentions of fake news creators:**

- **Political:**  
Seeking power, weakening opponents, creating fear towards a specific group (e.g., migrants, politicians, international organisations).  
*Example:* Before elections, someone publishes false information discrediting a candidate.
- **Economic (profit-driven):**  
Websites earn from clicks. The more sensational the story, the more people share, read, and click – meaning more ad revenue.  
*Example:* A fabricated article about a “new miracle cure” linking to a supplement shop.



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- **Ideological or worldview-based:**  
Some fake news promotes religious, nationalist, anti-science, or conspiracy beliefs.  
*Example:* Disinformation about a “global doctors’ conspiracy” undermining trust in vaccines.
- **Propaganda and destabilisation:**  
Sometimes fake news is created by foreign “troll factories” or governments to sow chaos, distrust, and social conflict in a country.  
*Example:* Stories questioning election integrity, fuelling social division.
- **Provocative or “for fun”:**  
Some people create fake news for “jokes” or provocation, or to test how easily others can be fooled. These can start as memes or jokes but quickly spread and cause real harm.

### Basic fake news creation mechanism:

1. Invented or manipulated content – often emotionally charged.
2. Catchy headline – e.g., sensational, shocking, threatening, conspiracy-themed.
3. Lack of sources or “false authority” – e.g., a made-up expert or non-existent report.
4. Rapid distribution – via social media, discussion groups, chain messages.
5. Emotional and cognitive impact – audiences react emotionally, share without verifying.

### Why does it work?

Because fake news appeals to emotions, not facts. The more we *feel* (fear, anger, admiration), the less we analyse. Creators know this – and use it.

## 2. Definitions and Examples (10 min)

1. **Fake News**  
A false story made to look like real information — e.g., article, social media post, photo, or video. Purpose: mislead, provoke emotions (fear, anger), or prompt action — click, share, or change opinion.  
*Example:* “From 2026 the EU bans paper books” — entirely false, intended to cause concern.
2. **Disinformation**  
Broader than fake news. The deliberate spread of false, manipulated, or incomplete information to create a specific effect — e.g., confuse audiences, cause chaos, sow discord, destroy reputations.  
*Example:* A genuine protest photo from another country captioned “Riots in Warsaw” — believable, but false.
3. **Propaganda**  
Media or political messaging designed to convince people of a certain idea, belief, or person, often omitting inconvenient facts or showing reality one-sidedly.  
*Example:* During war, portraying the enemy as purely evil and “our side” as flawless.



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**4. Internet Troll**

A person who deliberately posts provocative, offensive, or misleading comments online to provoke emotional reactions (anger, arguments). Sometimes used as disinformation.

*Example:* “Vaccines are a scam to control us with chips!” — posted with no evidence to spark conflict.

**5. Troll Factory**

An organised group (sometimes state-funded) producing and distributing fake news, manipulated comments, and memes en masse to influence elections, public opinion, or create chaos abroad.

**6. Internet Bot**

A software program performing online actions automatically — e.g., posting comments, liking, sharing content. Looks human but isn't. Often spreads fake news en masse.

**7. Information Manipulation**

Presenting information to influence audiences in a certain way, often without telling the whole truth — omitting facts, using strong emotions, showing only one side.

**8. Clicks / Clickability**

The number of clicks a piece of content gets online. More clicks = more ad revenue. Drives some creators to make fake news.

**9. Sensational Headline / Clickbait**

An exaggerated, emotional title meant to “hook” and get clicks, often unrelated to the actual content.

**10. Ideology**

A set of beliefs and values shaping someone's worldview. Fake news may be created to promote or attack an ideology.

**11. Emotional Effect (Emotional Manipulation)**

Fake news works by evoking strong feelings — anger, fear, compassion, outrage — making us less critical and more likely to share.

**3. Group Exercise – “Who and Why Made This?”**

**Duration:** 15–20 minutes

**Form:** Groups of 3–5 students

**Exercise Goals:**

- Understand that fake news is created intentionally,
- Identify the creators' intentions (political, economic, ideological),
- Develop skills in analysis, reasoning, and argumentation.

**Teacher Instructions:**

1. Divide the class into 4–6 groups of 3–5 students.
2. Give each group one or two cards with a simplified fake news example.

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**Group Task:**

- Read the fake news description carefully.
- Answer three questions together:
  1. Who might have created it?
  2. Why was it created?
  3. What manipulation technique was used?

**Support for students:** Teacher may write prompts in three columns on the board:

- **WHO?** (e.g., troll, bot, website owner, interest group...)
- **WHY?** (e.g., for profit, political influence, ideology, chaos...)
- **HOW?** (e.g., strong emotions, sensationalism, clickbait, no sources...)

**Presentation:** Each group presents their analysis in a short 1–2 minute summary.

**Example Fake News Cards for Analysis:**

**Card 1**

**Headline:** “Polish government plans to ban home bread baking – it drains energy from the grid!”

**Description:** A rumour circulating on social media. No source provided. Attached is a doctored image of a bill.

**Goal:** Ridicule the government, create distrust.

**Mechanism:** Disinformation + emotional appeal + no source.

**Card 2**

**Headline:** “New miracle cancer cure – 100% effective, hidden by pharma companies”

**Description:** Article on a website full of supplement ads. “Expert” quoted without a name, no scientific sources.

**Goal:** Financial gain, spark hope and conspiracy thinking.

**Mechanism:** Clickbait, false authority, emotional appeal.

**Card 3**

**Headline:** “Immigrants from Syria get free houses – we get nothing!”

**Description:** Image meme with no links or sources, widely shared in local groups.

**Goal:** Polarisation, anger, social division.

**Mechanism:** Exaggeration, absurdity, exploiting emotions.

**Card 4**

**Headline:** “EU bans dog ownership in cities – new regulation from 2026!”

**Description:** Graphic with EU logo and caption. Clicking leads to ad-heavy site.



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**Goal:** Stir resentment towards the EU, play on pet owners' emotions.

**Mechanism:** Symbol manipulation, disinformation.

#### **Card 5**

**Headline:** "Famous actor admits: 'The Earth is flat!' – watch the video"

**Description:** AI-generated deepfake. Actor never said this.

**Goal:** Manipulation, disinformation, spread of conspiracy.

**Mechanism:** Deepfake, false source, authority effect.

#### **Card 6**

**Headline:** "Contaminated supermarket bread – 14 people hospitalised!"

**Description:** Local group post. Unverified claim later debunked by health services.

**Goal:** Panic, local disinformation.

**Mechanism:** Fear, false alarms, no sources.

#### **Follow-up questions for students:**

- Does the information sound plausible?
- What emotions could this evoke?
- Who benefits if people believe it?
- Are sources given? Are they credible?
- What persuasion techniques might be used here?

#### **Optional closing activities:**

- **Ranking:** Which fake news seems most dangerous? Why?
- **Conclusion board:** Groups record answers in a table on the board (columns: Who / Why / How).
- **Class vote:** Most convincing fake news (the one most likely to be mistaken for truth).

#### **4. Discussion – How to Spot Manipulation? (8 min)**

**Form:** Guided discussion (whole-class or in a circle)

#### **Educational goals:**

- Make students aware that manipulation often works unnoticed but can have real consequences,
- Develop reflection skills, questioning, emotional awareness, and intent analysis,
- Differentiate facts from opinions and evaluate content in context.

#### **Teacher's tips:**

- Arrange seats in a circle for a safe, equal atmosphere.
- Encourage open sharing – avoid judging answers.

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- Use prompts like “What do you mean?”, “Why do you think so?”, “Does anyone see it differently?”
- Write down key ideas under headings such as *Emotions*, *Intentions*, *Warning Signs*, *Facts or Opinions*.

**Example discussion questions (with teacher notes):**

1. **What emotions are most often linked to fake news?**  
Fake news often triggers fear, anger, surprise, compassion, or injustice – emotions that push us to click and share without thinking. Strong emotion can be a warning sign.
2. **How can manipulation affect our decisions or behaviour?**  
It can lead to rash decisions (buying something, sharing a post, signing a petition) or reinforce false beliefs, mistrust, hostility.
3. **How to tell if information is made for a specific purpose?**  
Look for:
  - lack of sources or vague attributions (“scientists say”, “experts warn”),
  - emotional language,
  - one-sided framing,
  - phrases like “they’re hiding the truth”, “the media won’t tell you this”.
4. **Is every controversial piece of information fake news?**  
No. True news can also be shocking or uncomfortable. The key is whether it’s fact-based, shows multiple perspectives, and is verifiable.
5. **How to distinguish facts from opinions?**  
Facts can be checked and proven; opinions are beliefs often laced with emotion. Fake news often mixes the two to influence perception.

**5. Summary and Reflection (7–10 min)**

**Form:** Individual work + group wrap-up

**Instructions:**

- Students complete sentences such as:
  - “I was surprised that fake news can be created by...”
  - “From now on I will pay more attention to...”
  - “The most dangerous goal of fake news is...”
  - “I realised that manipulation is not only lying, but also...”
  - “Before sharing information, I will check...”

**Optional formats:**

- **Reflection wall:** Students post sticky notes with their takeaways on a “What I’ll Remember” board.

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- **Class map of motivations:** Teacher draws three main motives: Power / Money / Ideology – students add examples.
- **Anonymous box:** Students drop notes into a “reflection box”; teacher reads a selection aloud.

### Teacher’s oral closing suggestion:

“Today we saw that fake news isn’t just weird online stories. There are often people behind it trying to control us – through emotions, fear, hope, or anger. We can now recognise when something might be manipulation. But knowing is not enough – we need to pause before we believe, share, or pass something on. What we choose online matters – for us and for others.”

### Glossary – Fake News: Creators, Goals, and Mechanisms

Term	Definition
<b>Fake news</b>	False or manipulated information that looks like real news. Intended to mislead or evoke emotions.
<b>Disinformation</b>	Deliberate spread of false or misleading information to achieve a specific effect – chaos, distrust, opinion manipulation.
<b>Manipulation</b>	Intentionally influencing thinking through emotions, selective facts, or suggestions to reach a goal.
<b>Propaganda</b>	Messaging promoting a specific idea, person, or belief, often using manipulation or hiding facts.
<b>Clickbait</b>	Sensational, exaggerated headline encouraging clicks – often misleading.
<b>Bot</b>	Software that automatically posts, likes, or shares content – appears to be a real user.
<b>Internet troll</b>	A person posting provocative or false content to provoke strong reactions or conflict.
<b>Troll factory</b>	Organised group (often funded) producing and spreading disinformation online.
<b>Deepfake</b>	Fake video/audio created with AI showing someone in events that never happened.
<b>Emotional effect</b>	When strong feelings make us believe content without verifying it.
<b>Clicks</b>	Number of visits a page gets; more clicks mean more profit – incentivising fake news creation.
<b>Ideology</b>	A set of beliefs/values shaping how someone sees the world; fake news may promote or impose it.
<b>Manipulation goal</b>	The reason someone creates fake news – e.g., power, money, influencing elections or society.

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### Teacher’s Methodological Guide



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**Lesson topic:** How are fake news created and who creates them?

**General goals:**

- Develop students' media and information awareness,
- Teach critical thinking skills,
- Show that fake news is made with specific intentions,
- Train recognition of manipulation and disinformation.

**Key points:**

- Who the creators are (individuals, groups, bots, troll factories),
- Possible motives: political, economic, ideological,
- Techniques: clickbait, emotional appeal, deepfake, false sources,
- Distinguishing credible from manipulated information.

**Adaptation for ages 11–15:**

- Avoid technical jargon without explanation,
- Use familiar examples (YouTube, TikTok, memes),
- Show that manipulation can look harmless (funny or sensational).

**Method tips:**

- Start with open questions, collect all ideas without judgement,
- Combine theory with examples (headlines, memes),
- Assign group tasks with varied motives,
- End with reflective questions ("What should we ask ourselves before believing something?").

**Materials to prepare:**

- Fake news cards (text, headline, meme, video),
- Warning signs chart,
- Reflection sheet ("I realised that..."),
- Quiz (Kahoot, Google Forms),
- Glossary handout.

**Extensions:**

- Class project: poster/infographic "How not to fall for online manipulation",
- Homework: find a suspicious story online and analyse *who*, *why*, *how*,
- Skits: act out a scene where a classmate shares fake news and others react.

**Scientific and Educational Sources**

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- **EDMO – European Digital Media Observatory** – <https://edmo.eu>  
EU research platform on monitoring disinformation, media literacy, and fact-checker cooperation.
- **EUvsDisinfo** – <https://euvsdisinfo.eu>  
Official database of disinformation campaigns targeting the EU, analysis of creators' intentions, typology of manipulation, educational tools.
- **UNESCO – “Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers”** – [link](#)  
Global approach to media and information education, including propaganda, deepfakes, information bubbles, and manipulation.
- **Poland:**
  - **Demagog.org.pl** – <https://demagog.org.pl> – largest Polish fact-checking portal, analysis of false narratives and manipulation mechanisms.
  - **Konkret24** – <https://konkret24.tvn24.pl> – verification newsroom of TVN24, reviews of controversial claims in politics, society, and science.
  - **Niebezpiecznik.pl** – <https://niebezpiecznik.pl> – portal on online security and digital education, AI-generated fake news, deepfakes, bots.
- **Czech Republic & Slovakia:**
  - **Manipulátoři.cz** – <https://manipulatori.cz> – Czech educational-analytical portal exposing disinformation and creators' motives.
  - **Demagog.cz / Demagog.sk** – <https://demagog.cz> / <https://demagog.sk> – Czech and Slovak equivalents of Polish Demagog.
  - **Infosecurity.sk** – <https://infosecurity.sk> – Slovak think tank on information security, focusing on disinformation threats.
  - **Radio Prague International – Eurovolby a fake news** – [link](#) – journalistic report on false narratives before European elections, with analysis of intentions.

