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The 4 page 60 minute ESL British English lesson – 05/03/17

Fake news – Why is it happening?

Today, we will discuss fake news. Why is it happening? Why are people creating fake news? Have they got nothing better to do?

To clarify, fake news is the deliberate spread of misinformation. It is a type of hoax. It is phoney news. It can also be biased news, to derail a situation or real story. Fake news is not factual news. So when people read a story, they struggle to know whether it is fact or fiction.

Like it or lump it, fake news is everywhere. The internet is flooded with fake news. It helps amplify someone's viewpoint and helps increase online readership and online sharing. This drives profits up, as payments are generated when ads are clicked. Fake news can go viral, thus increasing clicks and income, even more.

Right now, many people are discussing fake news. There are websites dedicated to this. Quite why fake news is allowed is beyond me, but these days, the internet allows this, as does social media. It makes it easy to spread fake or false news. This can also be government propaganda. TV channels have added their fake news, as well, which can also be for political reasons.

At a White House press conference recently, the new American president Donald Trump blasted CNN and the BBC for their fake news reporting on him. Both organisations were banned from the next White House press briefing.

Donald Trump said, "Fake news is the enemy of the people, and they are". He added, "They have no sources, they just make 'em up, when there are none." He has attacked The New York Times for their fake news. It sent readership subscriptions through the roof.

Russia, allegedly, has been accused of creating fake American news. Meanwhile, Facebook is supposedly fighting fake news. Really?

SPEAKING – WARM UP

What is fake news? Where does it come from? Go round the room swapping details with others.

LISTENING – WRITING - DICTATION

The teacher will read some lines of the article slowly to the class.

READING

Students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

SPEAKING - UNDERSTANDING

1) The article – Students check any unknown vocabulary or phrases with the teacher.

2) The article - Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- 1) What is the article about?
- 2) What do you think about the article?
- 3) Was this an easy or difficult article to understand?
- 4) Was this a boring or interesting article?
- 5) Discuss the article.

3) Article quiz - Students quiz each other in pairs. Score a point for each correct answer. Score half a point each time you have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

Student A questions

- 1) What is fake news?
- 2) Name the president.
- 3) What colour is the house?
- 4) Name the TV companies.
- 5) Name the newspaper.

Student B questions

- 1) What is Facebook doing?
- 2) What is Russia allegedly accused of?
- 3) What does 'viral' and 'amplify' mean?
- 4) Explain the meaning of 'hoax', 'fake' and 'phoney'.
- 5) Who spreads propaganda?

Category: USA / Fake News / Donald Trump
Level: Intermediate / Upper Intermediate

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WRITING / SPEAKING

In pairs. On the board write as many words about '**Fake news**'. *One-two minutes.* Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

WRITING / SPEAKING

In pairs – think of three fake news stories you heard about. Write their themes below. Discuss!

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

How did you know that they were fake news?

SPEAKING – GAME – TRUE OR FALSE

In groups/pairs - Prepare three short radio news stories. (approx. 20 words each). Give each a headline. Read them to the other team, who then have to guess if the news story is **true** or **false**. *Allow 5 mins prep and 5 mins to perform.*

SPEAKING – FAKE NEWS

In groups/pairs – list on the board the news organisations and newspapers that publish fake news. Add also any webpages, websites, blogs, other, that you know of. Discuss them. *5 mins.*

DISCUSSION

Student A questions

- 1) What do you think about what you've read?
- 2) Do you know any fake news?
- 3) Have you ever created any fake news?
- 4) Do you believe everything you read on the internet?
- 5) Why do we have fake news?
- 6) Does Facebook really try to block fake news?
- 7) Who is the winner when it comes to fake news?
- 8) Are your TV stations pumping out fake news? If yes, why?
- 9) Do your newspapers publish fake news? Explain. If yes, why?
- 10) Is American political rivalry between Republicans and Democrats creating all this fake news in the USA?

SPEAKING – ROLEPLAY 1

In groups. One of you is the interviewer. The others are one of the following people. You are in the *Discussion FM* radio studio in London. Today's interview is about: *Fake news – Why is it happening?*

- 1) Someone from CNN/BBC.
- 2) Someone from your government.
- 3) A blogger.
- 4) A journalist.

The teacher will choose some groups to roleplay their interview in front of the class.

SPEAKING - ROLEPLAY 2

Student A is a barman/barmaid in a café bar. *Student B* is at the bar. The conversation is about **fake news**. *2 mins.*

SPEAKING - DISCUSSION

Allow 10 minutes – As a class.

Fake news – Why is it happening?

The teacher can moderate the session.

DISCUSSION

Student B questions

- 1) Who might police what is true and isn't true?
- 2) Does your government pump out propaganda through fake news?
- 3) Do newspaper editors deliberately create fake news to generate readership?
- 4) Has the internet and social media amplified fake news?
- 5) Do you believe everything you read on social media?
- 6) Which TV organisation is the biggest culprit of fake news?
- 7) Was Donald Trump right when he accused the BBC and CNN of fake news? Explain.
- 8) Is fake news all about generating payments from clicks?
- 9) Is Russia really pumping out fake news or is it someone else?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

GAP FILL: READING

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Like it or lump it, fake news is everywhere. The internet is flooded with (5)___ news. It helps (6)___ someone's viewpoint and helps increase online readership and online sharing. This drives profits up, as (7)___ are generated when ads are clicked. Fake news can go (8)___, thus increasing clicks and income, even more.

viral / fake / phoney / hoax / payments / amplify / misinformation / deliberate

Right now, many people are discussing fake news. There are websites dedicated to this. Quite why fake news is allowed is beyond me, but these days, the internet allows this, as does social media. It makes it easy to spread fake or (1)___ news. This can also be government (2)__. TV channels have added their fake news, as well, which can also be for political reasons.

At a White House press conference recently, the new American president Donald Trump blasted CNN and the BBC for their fake news reporting on him. Both organisations were banned from the next White House press (3)___.

Donald Trump said, "Fake news is the (4)___ of the people, and they are". He added, "They have no sources, they just make `em up, when there are none." He has attacked The New York Times for their fake (5)__. It sent readership (6)___ through the roof. Russia, (7)___, has been accused of creating fake American news. Meanwhile, Facebook is (8)___ fighting fake news. Really?

supposedly / enemy / briefing / false / propaganda / allegedly / subscriptions / news

GAP FILL: GRAMMAR

Fake news – Why is it happening?

Today, (1)___ will discuss fake news. (2)___ is it happening? Why are people creating fake news? Have they got nothing better to do? To clarify, fake news is the deliberate spread of misinformation. It is (3)___ type of hoax. (4)___ is phoney news. It can also be biased news, to derail a situation or real story. Fake news is not factual news. (5)___ when people read a story, they struggle to know whether it is fact or fiction.

Like it (6)___ lump it, fake news is everywhere. The internet is flooded with fake news. It helps amplify someone's viewpoint and helps increase online readership (7)___ online sharing. This drives profits up, (7)___ payments are generated when ads are clicked. Fake news can go viral, thus increasing clicks and income, even more.

it / we / or / and / so / as / a / why

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just / through / which / also / these / quite / many / this

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GAP FILL: LISTENING

WRITING/SPELLING

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WRITING / SPEAKING

1) On the board - In pairs/As a class, list **10 different fake news stories**. Five minutes. Talk briefly about each of them.

2) Sentence starters - Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- 1) Fake news _____
- 2) I think _____
- 3) The internet _____

3) Write down 50 words about: Fake news – Why is it happening? Your words can be read out in class.

4) Homework - Write and send a 200 word email to your teacher about: **Fake news – Why is it happening?**

SPELLING

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards check your answers.

- 1) clicks
- 2) fake
- 3) lump
- 4) amplify
- 5) viral
- 6) whether
- 7) discuss
- 8) deliberate
- 9) phoney
- 10) hoax

SPELLING

Use the following ratings:

- Pass = 12**
- Good = 15**
- Very good = 18**
- Excellent = 20**

- 11) misinformation
- 12) false
- 13) factual
- 14) viewpoint
- 15) readership
- 16) quite
- 17) beyond
- 18) propaganda
- 19) organisations
- 20) allegedly

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