Helping students to tell fact from fiction

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Teacher Sarah Rubin (left) speaks to her class about their social studies lesson that was inspired by the Broadway hit "Hamilton: An American Musical" at Gorham Middle School on April 13, 2017, in Gorham, Maine. Photo by Gregory Rec/Portland Press Herald via Getty Images

Lawmakers are worried about fake news online. Now, they are writing laws to fight it.

They want schools to change their lessons. They want students to learn the difference between real and fake information.

Technology is changing fast. Some groups say schools have not kept up.

Not All Information Online Is The Truth

Studies show many children spend hours every day online. However, some struggle to understand all the information they get. Not all information is truthful. Some special groups are pushing schools to help kids with this.

These groups have pushed schools to create new lessons. The new lessons would teach students how to look at information. Students would learn to seek out where certain information comes from. Then, they can decide better if the story was true or false.

The Spread Of Fake News During Presidential Election

Fake news started getting more attention in 2016. Much of it was spreading during the U.S. presidential election. It was written by people who were looking to push certain ideas. They were not telling the truth. Even many adults were reading and sharing false information.

Some research was published last year by Stanford University. Some researchers there gave students different information. Students had to tell the difference between real and fake news. The research said that students were easily tricked. They often could not tell the difference.

The researchers worry about our government. People need good information about lawmakers. They rely on this information when they vote. This is how a democracy works.

"Appreciate The Importance Of Good Information"

Hans Zeiger is a lawmaker in Washington state. He helped support a new law like this in 2017. He thinks both Democrats and Republicans can agree on it. Both groups can "appreciate the importance of good information," he says.

Jennifer Rocca is a high school librarian in Brookfield, Connecticut. She also urged lawmakers to pass the new laws.

She teaches a course about online news stories. Students will do research. They collect information from different websites. As they do this, they must write down where all their information came from. They must explain why these sources would be truthful.

Quiz

1   Read the section "The Spread Of Fake News During Presidential Election."

Which sentence from the section gives one reason people think students need lessons on real and fake news?

(A)   It was written by people who were looking to push certain ideas.

(B)   Some research was published last year by Stanford University.

(C)   Students had to tell the difference between real and fake news.

(D)   The research said that students were easily tricked.

2   Which sentence from the article helps the reader understand that kids are not the only ones who are having trouble with fake news?

(A)   They want schools to change their lessons.

(B)   Now, they are writing laws to fight it.

(C)   Even many adults were reading and sharing false information.

(D)   He thinks both Democrats and Republicans can agree on it.

3   Which event happened first?

(A)   Hans Zeiger supported a fake news law.

(B)   Fake news was a problem during a presidential election.

(C)   Research on fake news was published by Stanford University.

(D)   Researchers said they worry about our government because of fake news.

4   How does Jennifer Rocca fight against fake news?

(A)   She teaches kids to look at where their information comes from.

(B)   She tells students which sources are fake and which are true.

(C)   She is a lawmaker who tries to pass laws so she can teach about fake news.

(D)   She helps students who visit her library to find truthful news sources.