

Truth or trick? Spotting lies and conspiracies

Part 1

Learning objectives

Recognise online tricks like clickbait, bots, and echo chambers.

Use fact-checking tools and ways to check if a source is trustworthy.

Ground rules

Do:

- Respect, listen, and let others finish
- Share ideas, not others' personal details
- Pass if you wish
- Raise any concerns with staff
- Use respectful language
- Keep things private unless safety is at risk
- Ask questions

Don't

- Interrupt
- Share private information about others
- Use offensive/extremist language



Starter Activity

Truth or trick? Spotting lies and conspiracies

Which of these images are real and which are fake?

**Fact check:
Real or fake?**

<https://www.dw.com/en/real-or-fake-fact-checking-quiz-fake-news-ai-fake-ai-image-detection-debunking-verification/a-72104848>



**Fact check:
Real or fake?**

How to do a Google reverse image search:

<https://www.howtogeek.com/352687/how-to-reverse-picture-search-with-google-images/>



Reflection

- Which images surprised you the most?
- Can you believe everything you see?
- Do you know how to do Google reverse image search?



Picture stimuli

Truth or trick? Spotting lies and conspiracies

Image 1:

What do you think is happening in this image?



Photo credit: [Dmytro Sheremeta](#)

Image 2:

What does this mean?

How does this affect you?

“If you're not careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed, and loving the people who are doing the oppressing.”
Malcolm x



Photo credit: Robert Templeton via Wikimedia Commons

Image 3:

What do you
think is
happening in
this image?



Photo by [Angel Sanchez](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Image 3:

What do you think is happening in this image?



AI generated image

Reflection

- Has the image activity made you think or feel differently about anything, or consider a different perspective?



Debate

Truth or trick? Spotting lies and conspiracies

Debate motion: It is better to challenge a friend's conspiracy beliefs rather than ignore them.

**Debate
motion**

FOR

It is better to challenge a friend's conspiracy beliefs rather than to ignore them.

AGAINST

It is better to ignore a friend's conspiracy beliefs rather than challenge them.

Debate roles and rules

- Be respectful of others' opinions
- Listen carefully to opposing views
- Ask questions to clarify or challenge ideas
- Only one person to speak at a time
- Support your arguments with examples or evidence

**Some
prompts
to help**

- Why might someone believe in conspiracy theories?
- Might ignoring their belief make the situation better or worse?
- What are the risks of challenging someone directly?



Some prompts to help

- How can you challenge someone respectfully?
- Is it ever OK to stay silent if you think a belief is harmful?
- Can you separate the person from the belief?



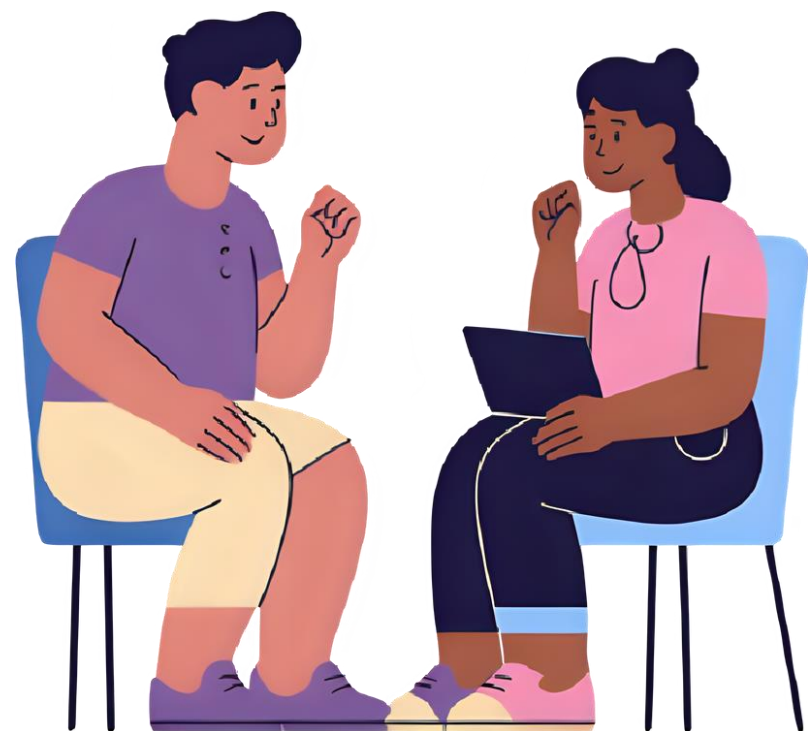
Reflection

- What went well?
- What was challenging?
- What did you learn about the topic and about debating?



Let's discuss

- What are some online 'tricks' that we have discussed today?
- What will you do now to check if an image is real or fake?
- What will you do to check if something is misinformation or disinformation?
- How can help prevent fake news and disinformation from spreading?
- What one thing are you going to take away from today?



Truth or trick? Spotting lies and conspiracies

Part 2

Learning objectives

Explain the difference between misinformation and disinformation.

Recognise online tricks like clickbait, bots, and echo chambers.

Explain how online conspiracy theories can lead to radicalisation and recruitment into groups.

Use fact-checking tools and ways to check if a source is trustworthy.

Ground rules

Do:

- Respect, listen, and let others finish
- Share ideas, not others' personal details
- Pass if you wish
- Raise any concerns with staff
- Use respectful language
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Don't

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Quiz activity

Truth or trick? Spotting lies and conspiracies

Fact or fake?

- Clickbait headlines often use emotional words to grab attention. **FACT**
- A news report which starts with: 'Shocking video of aliens landing in London!' is reliable. **FAKE**
- A bot can automatically post fake news to thousands of accounts. **FACT**
- Echo chambers mean that you get to hear lots of different opinions. **FAKE**
- Reverse image searches can check if a photo is real. **FACT**



Fact or fake activity online

<https://wordwall.net/resource/94755240>



Video

Truth or trick? Spotting lies and conspiracies

Discuss the following quote and consider what it means in the context of how fast mis/disinformation spreads and why:

“A lie can travel half way around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes.”

Mark Twain



Video activity



<https://youtu.be/xCNtt6SqTq0?si=qswHJ6KZbyVHFEA9>

Video feedback

- What did you notice first?
- How did this video make you feel?
- What is the story behind this video?
- Who might be affected by what is shown here?



DRAFT

Video feedback

- Why might someone trust an influencer over a qualified professional?
- Can you be open minded if you always think you already know the truth?
- Why might someone believe something just because many others do?
- How can we check the source, evidence, and intent behind a post before trusting it?



How to understand Misinformation, Disinformation and Malinformation

Optional
video 1



<https://youtu.be/HD5MmuLDeFE?feature=shared>

How to spot Fake News

Optional
video 2



<https://youtu.be/Pj4w0J6odJE?feature=shared>

Your brain on conspiracy theories

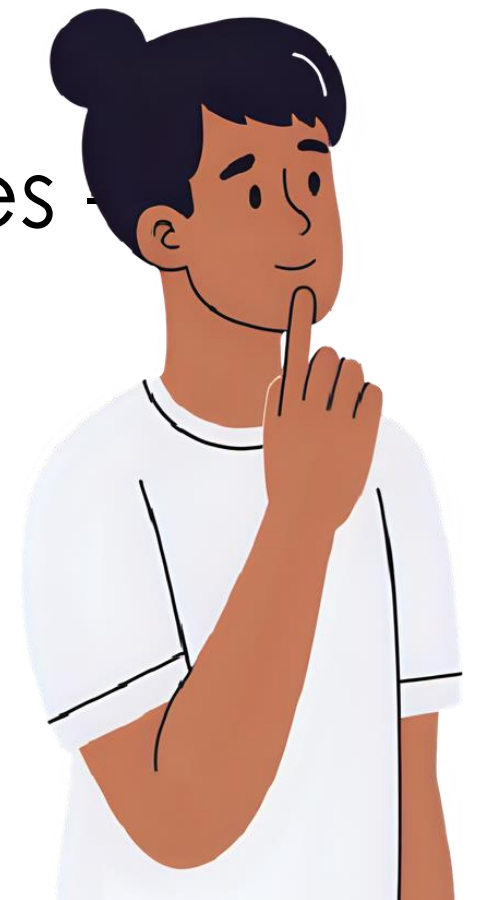
Optional
video 3



<https://youtu.be/z98U1nMFrJQ?si=gDE6AkZuhsFoy68b>

Video feedback

- What is the difference between misinformation and disinformation?
- What tactics did you notice (clickbait, emotional language, repetition)?
- Why do some people spread conspiracy theories and how do they become dangerous?



Case Study

Truth or trick? Spotting lies and conspiracies

Case study: Lee's story

Lee, 17, enjoyed listening to podcasts during college commutes. What started as comedy shows soon led to discovering channels focusing on 'hidden histories' and 'unfiltered news'. A favourite podcast host often accused mainstream outlets of censorship and claimed that organisations were changing information to suit them and those in power.

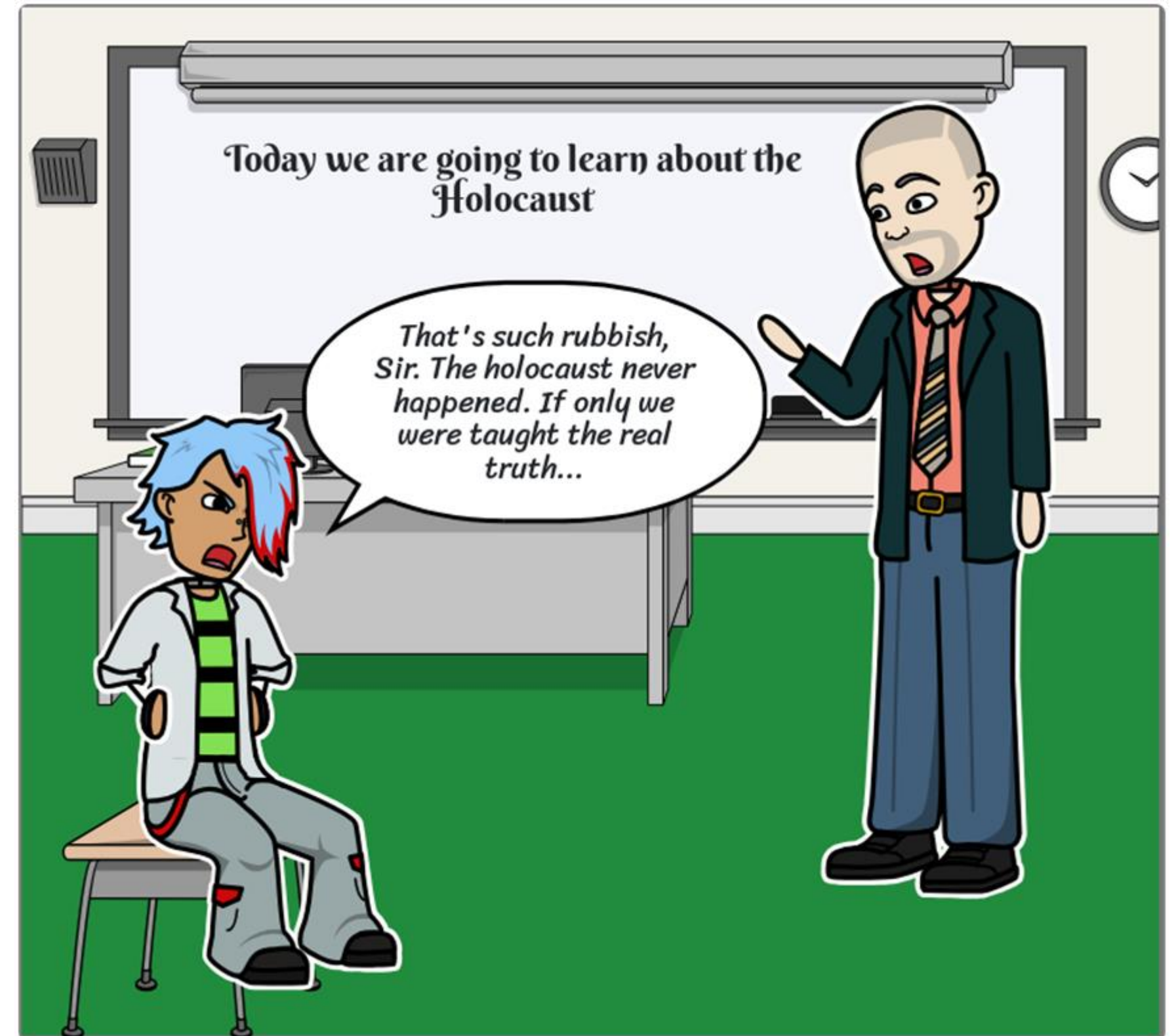
Lee wanted to know more so joined the listeners' group chat, where people recommended more radical podcasts, shared unverified claims, and posted misleading memes. The conversation regularly blurred fact and fiction, with some group members pushing conspiracy theories and disinformation about current and historical events. Lee started challenging teachers' lessons, claiming 'the real truth' isn't allowed in colleges, and reposting inappropriate soundbites across social media.

When Lee's friend questioned these posts or tried to recommend Lee fact check them first, Lee rejected them and argued, 'Open your mind – stop accepting everything as fact.'

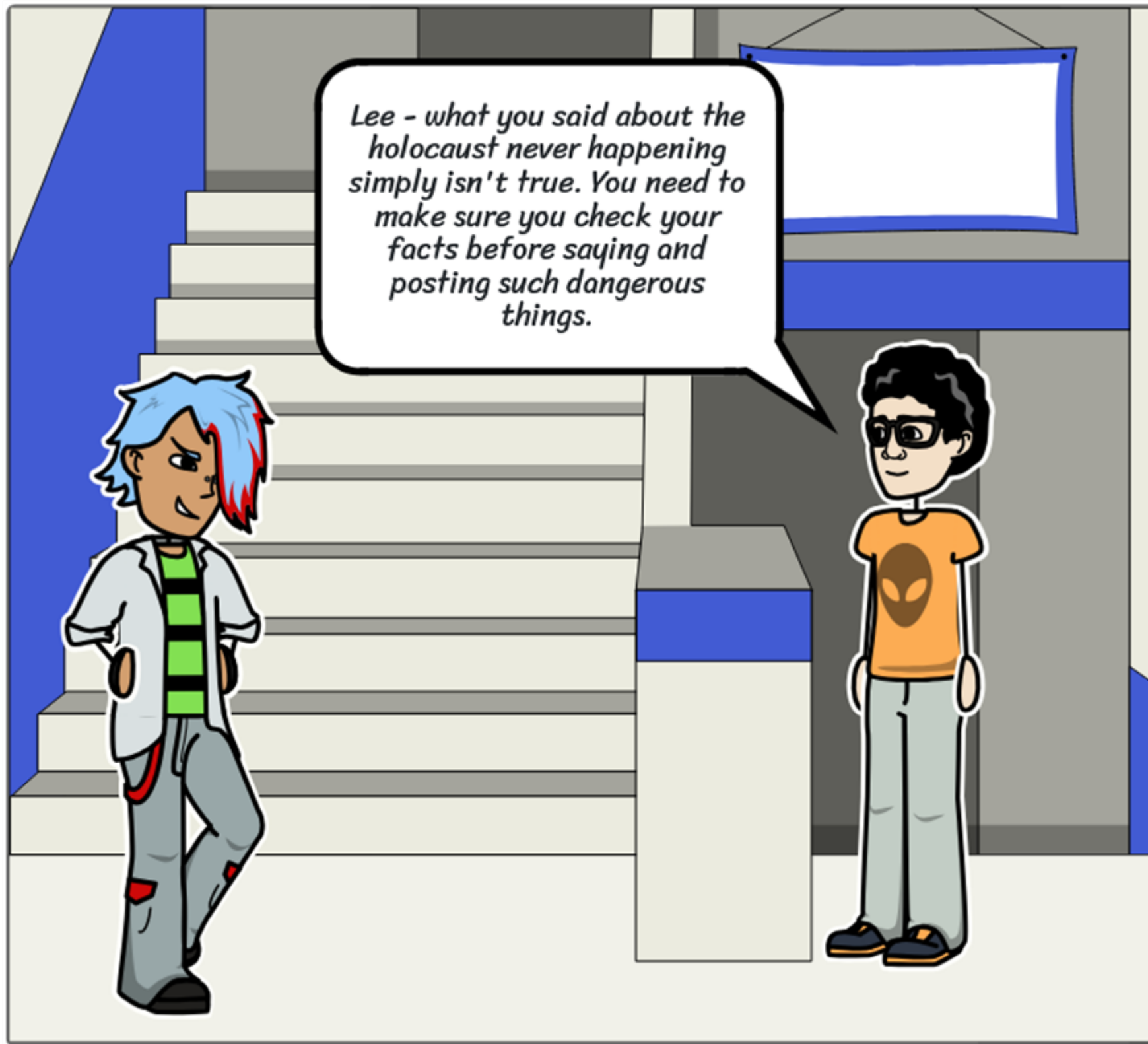
Case study: Lee's story



Case study: Lee's story



Case study: Lee's story



In your groups, discuss one of the questions below:

Case study: Lee's story

Understanding the content

- What's the difference between misinformation and disinformation in Lee's experience?
- What online tactics were used to pull Lee in (clickbait, bots, echo chambers)?

Spotting the link to extremism

- How did Lee's beliefs shift from alternative opinions to potential radicalisation?
- What warning signs can you spot?

Building resistance

- What could Lee or their friends have done differently?
- What fact-checking or source-checking strategies could have helped?
- How might echo chambers have affected their view?

Reflection

- Can you respect someone's right to an opinion while still calling them out?
- How might misinformation you see online affect your own beliefs or decisions?
- What can you do to make sure you're sharing information that is truthful?



Let's discuss

- How are misinformation and disinformation different?
- How can conspiracy theories lead to harm?
- What are some of the dangers of echo chambers?
- What are some ways you can use to 'fact check' information?
- What one thing are you going to take away from today?

