



How do you know what to believe?

A 2010 study funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, surveyed 11- to 18-year-olds -- 30 percent said “a lot” of what they found on the web was believable. Given the human tendency to embellish, especially when talking about oneself, does that number seem accurate?

Nearly all states have adopted [Common Core Standards](#) for K-12 education. They include the following:

“Students employ technology thoughtfully to enhance their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use. They tailor their searches online to acquire useful information efficiently, and they integrate what they learn using technology with what they learn offline. They are familiar with the strengths and limitations of various technological tools and mediums and can select and use those best suited to their communication goals.”

Class activities:

Flashlight: Study the main points of the [Common Sense Media](#) digital literacy curriculum. Discuss with the class: Does it align with the standards? Are high schools in your region teaching digital media literacy? Do you think the goal of the common core standards is being met?

Spotlight: Have students use the [News Trust](#) web site to rate news stories according to the [news review form provided there](#). Do you agree with the rating system? Are there other elements you would have included in your own system? Find a story that proved to be false and see if the students can spot it.

Searchlight: Download [Janet Cooke’s story in the Washington Post](#) about a child heroin addict. The story won a Pulitzer Prize but the prize was revoked when the story turned out to be fabricated. Alter details in the story to mask the identity of

writer and newspaper. Using either News Trust or your own rubric, ask your students to rate the story. Then reveal the story of the hoax. Did any of the students give the story low ratings? Why?