

YEAR 11 (AGE 15-16): CHALLENGING CONFIRMATION BIAS

Biased Brains

NAME _____

Part 1 Directions

In your group, choose **two** resources to review. As you review, track what each says about *confirmation bias* and *fake news*. Capture your thoughts in the notes section. Review additional resources if time allows.

Resource 1



Read: **Cover Up, Your Confirmation Bias Is Showing**

JESSIE SMITH, MEDIUM.COM, 07/11/2018 (10 MINS.)

Resource Notes

- This article surveys different situations in our lives where confirmation bias comes into play.
- It includes some challenging vocabulary that you may want to front-load for developing readers ("paradigm," "stereotype," "predisposition," etc.).
- Developing readers might benefit from reading just a short excerpt from the article, specifically from the last two sections.

Resource 2



Watch: **Defining Confirmation Bias**

FACING HISTORY AND OURSELVES, 2019 (2 MINS.)

- Short video summarising confirmation and disconfirmation bias and how they lead people to find news that only confirms their existing beliefs.

Resource 3



Read: **Scientists Discover Simple Psychological Tools to Battle Fake News**

PETER HESS, INVERSE.COM, 13/08/2018 (10 MINS.)

- This article shows the connection between childhood fantasy and confirmation bias, and includes three strategies for countering confirmation bias and fake news.



NEWS & MEDIA LITERACY

We are critical thinkers & creators.

commonsense.org/education/uk/digital-citizenship
Shareable with attribution for noncommercial use. Remixing is permitted.



YEAR 11 (AGE 15-16): CHALLENGING CONFIRMATION BIAS

Biased Brains

NAME _____

Notes Tracker:

| Resource # | What does this resource show about confirmation bias and fake news? | How can we challenge confirmation bias, especially with information we see online? |
|------------|---|---|
| 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People are more likely to spread news that has an emotional impact rather than news that is true. On social media, people are more likely to trust stories that have lots of likes and shares. But people like and share controversial stories because they have an emotional impact, not because they are true. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's important to recognise your own predispositions and values, and where they come from. People should play devil's advocate with their own beliefs and be open-minded about them. |
| 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmation and disconfirmation bias lead us to accept news that we want to believe and reject news we don't. Because of all the online news sources that exist, people can now seek out news stories that confirm their beliefs rather than ones that might call it into question. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National politics or moments of crisis are opportunities to "open our aperture" and go beyond our biases. |
| 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kids use fantasy and make-believe to impose order on a sometimes confusing and chaotic world, which can lead to similar behaviours in adults when we encounter news that doesn't fit our worldview. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Humour can help us feel less stressed about information that challenges what we believe. "Sublimation", or taking action in response to new information, can help make it less stressful. Exposure to different sources of information and viewpoints can help us be more accepting of different ideas. |



NEWS & MEDIA LITERACY

We are critical thinkers & creators.

commonsense.org/education/uk/digital-citizenship
Shareable with attribution for noncommercial use. Remixing is permitted.



YEAR 11 (AGE 15-16): CHALLENGING CONFIRMATION BIAS

Biased Brains

NAME _____

Part 2 Directions

In your group, create a **mnemonic** (ni-^l mā-nik) **device** that includes at least three strategies you learned about to help people confront their own confirmation bias when they read news and encounter information online. A **mnemonic device** is a word or series of letters that helps you remember steps or strategies for something. Examples of common mnemonic devices include:

| Mnemonic device | Description | Function |
|-----------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| PEMDAS | P arentheses, E xponent, M ultiplication, D ivision, A ddition, S ubtraction | Order of operations |
| STAND | S it up, T rack the speaker, A sk questions, N ote-take, D isagree respectfully | Classroom discussion expectations |
| ROY G. BIV | R ed, O range, Y ellow, G reen, B lue, I ndigo, V iolet | Color spectrum |

Use the space below to brainstorm and write your final mnemonic device.

Step 1: Brainstorm. Write down different words or strategies you could use to challenge your own confirmation bias and fake news.

Answers will vary. Strategies could include:

- recognising and questioning your own values and beliefs.
- checking the validity of news stories by Googling or otherwise looking for other sources.
- questioning news before you believe it.
- looking for news stories that challenge what you think,
- being open-minded, etc.

Step 2: Create a mnemonic device. Take the first letter of the ideas you wrote above and try to make a word or abbreviation out of them. Hint: Think of synonyms for the words in your brainstorm to give yourself more options.

Answers will vary. Sample answers include:

- CHEK (Consider other perspectives, Hold back from drawing conclusions, Keep asking questions).
- GAL (Google other sources, Ask if the story supports what you already believe, Look for articles that show the other side).
- COAL (Consider your biases, Open your mind, Ask questions, Look for other sources).



NEWS & MEDIA LITERACY

We are critical
thinkers & creators.

commonsense.org/education/uk/digital-citizenship
Shareable with attribution for noncommercial use. Remixing is permitted.

