Fact-check a headline

Ages 15 and up, media literacy and journalism

Students test a claim about two countries against evidence, spot absolute words, and say what the data cannot settle.

BEFORE THE LESSON

Bring one real headline that names two countries and says something about votes, trade or conflict. A starter list is on the handout.

STEPS

1. Read the headline aloud. Underline the claim and any absolute words such as never, always, biggest. (5 min)
2. Type the claim into the claim checker. List the numbers it shows and their confidence. (10 min)
   https://nationsrelations.org/check
3. Look at the 'Keep in mind' list and any 'Not in our data' line. Which part of the claim can the data not settle? (10 min)
4. Open the pair page for the full evidence and sources. Find one more fact that bears on the claim. (10 min)
5. Rewrite the headline so that it says only what the evidence supports. (10 min)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR WRITING

Which word in the original claim was hardest to support?

Is 'no evidence in this data' the same as 'false'? Explain.

Who should decide whether a claim is true: a tool, an editor, a reader?

KEEP IN MIND

The checker shows evidence and never says true or false. The judgement is the student's, and the exercise is to make it carefully.

Pages used: Check a claim https://nationsrelations.org/check; How it works https://nationsrelations.org/method

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