



# Credibility and Fact Checking

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With Dr Luke Zaphir and Professor Deb Brown

# Today's agenda

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Exploring media literacy



Media literacy as critical thinking



How essential it is today's context

# U.S. majors with the highest **UNEMPLOYMENT RATES**



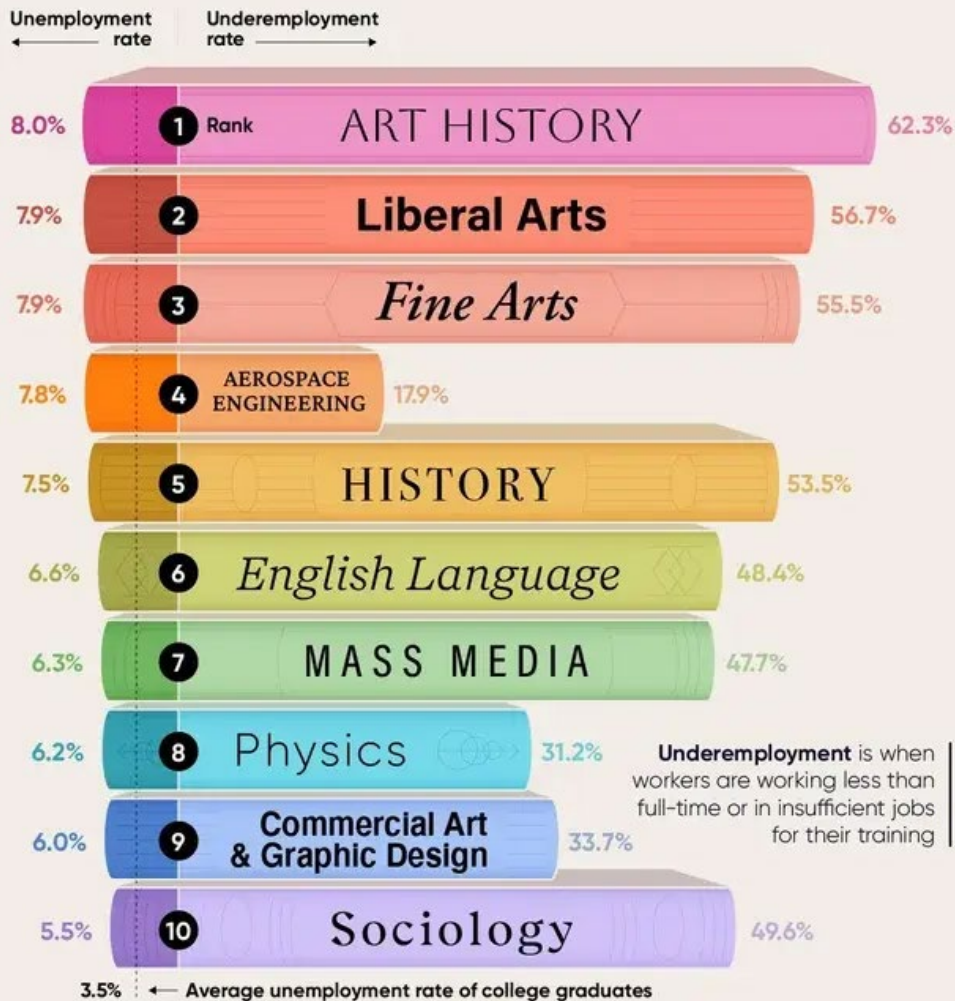
Unemployment and underemployment rates are for recent college graduates (those aged 22-27 with a bachelor's degree or higher).

Source: Federal Reserve Bank of New York (As of Feb 22, 2024)



What conclusions can you draw from this infographic?

# U.S. majors with the highest UNEMPLOYMENT RATES



Unemployment and underemployment rates are for recent college graduates (those aged 22-27 with a bachelor's degree or higher).

Source: Federal Reserve Bank of New York (As of Feb 22, 2024)



Objective facts, but interpretation is an issue. There are important questions to ask:

- What is the purpose of that degree?
- What is the reason for underemployment?
- What is a reasonable timeframe for full employment?
- Where is this infographic published? What is it being used to do?

Where do you think most  
kids get their news?

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# Media habits

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Types of media  
(traditional and  
digital)

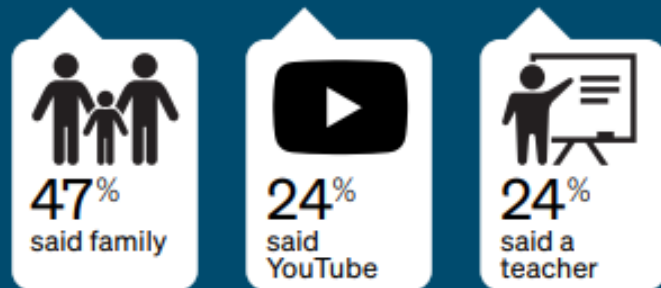
Differences  
between  
generations

Current media  
use trends

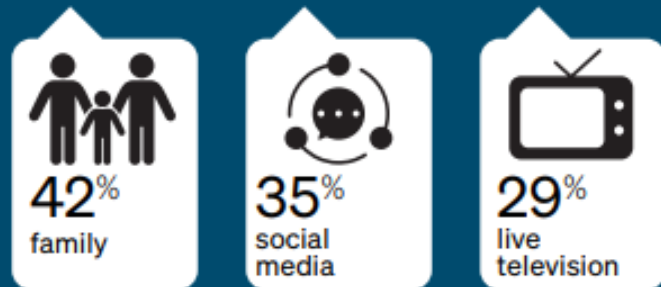
# News and Young Australians in 2023

## PREFERRED SOURCES

The **top 3** preferred news sources for children (8-12 yr olds):



The **top 3** preferred news sources for teens (13-16 yr olds):



## SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a source of news but **not as much** as you might think.

Children

10% 24%

Teens

27% 39%

OFTEN

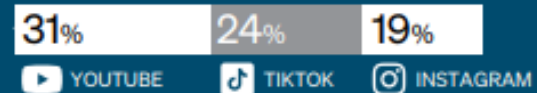
SOMETIMES

When **using social media** to get news:

Children prefer



Teens prefer



# Some important facts

- 74% of young people find news negative and distressing
- Young Australians believe overwhelmingly that they are neglected by the news media and that they are biased
- **2 in 5 young people never** check a news story for accuracy
- They do not believe they can identify misinformation or disinformation
- Young people proactively search out news (specifically where they get it)





What is an algorithm (in a digital media context) ?

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# Algorithms and media businesses

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- These are mathematical ways of curating and prioritising what content is placed in front of you in whatever platform you are using (e.g. Google, YouTube, TikTok)
- The algorithm evolves based on data points it collects on you
- These data points include watch time, videos clicked on, comments, sharing, device type, history, search queries, facial movement caught by camera, content you create...
- These algorithms are designed to keep you on the platform as long as possible
- These algorithms are black boxes which are deliberately hidden in terms of what they are doing for each of us
- Young people have very little understanding of how algorithms work (many never having even heard the term before)



Jason Björn  
@JasonBjorn5

Follow



She's a hero!



## Anti-vaxxer nurse who injected up to 8,600 elderly patients with saltwater instead of Covid vaccine walks FREE from court in Germany

By Christian Oliver For Mailonline  
14:23 01 Dec 2022, updated 15:17 01 Dec 2022



### Readers added context

She got 6 months on probation and lost her license as a nurse.

She is deeply sorry.  
Said she dropped a phial, panicked.  
Filled 6 syringes with saline solution.

The 8000+ refers to people who had to be re-vaxed.  
Since it was unknown who got the Solution.

[ndr.de/nachrichten/ni...](https://www.ndr.de/nachrichten/ni...)

Do you find this helpful?

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9:35 PM · 4/17/24 From Earth · **273K** Views

**1.3K** Reposts **119** Quotes

**8.3K** Likes **346** Bookmarks

Posted in r/GetNoted



All

News

Music

Thoughts

TED

Debates

Gaming

Live

Playlists

Neuroscience

Trailers

Truth

Studio Ghibli

Free music

Economics

AI

Dramedy

Meditation music



**Friedman vs 4 British Leftists** 16:28  
4 vs 1 | Milton Friedman faces FOUR British Leftists in HEATE...  
Diogo Tomé  
325K views · 6 months ago



**JUST LET GO** 12:46  
There's Nothing To Do But Let Go - Jim Carrey On Depression  
T&H - Inspiration & Motivation  
2.3M views · 8 months ago



**HOW STRETCHING ACTUALLY CHANGES YOUR MUSCLES** 5:03  
How stretching actually changes your muscles - Malachy McHugh  
TED-Ed  
5.9M views · 1 year ago



**What Nobody Tells You About Your Twenties** | Livi Redden |... 17:55  
TEDx Talks  
956K views · 8 months ago

My burner  
YouTube  
account



**FIRED BY MY SCHOOL** 6:54  
Getting Fired From My School - Warren Smith  
Warren Smith - Secret Scholar Society  
422K views · 7 days ago



**THOUGHT SHE ONE-UPPED HIM** 2:27  
Student Actually Thought She'd Outsmarted Shapiro, Until He...  
The Rubin Report  
1.8M views · 6 months ago



**TRY IT ONCE AND YOU'LL DO IT EVERY DAY** 7:08  
Neuroscientist: "This Simple Skill Will Keep You Motivated" |...  
RESPIRE  
3M views · 1 year ago



**'HOW DARE YOU!'** 12:47  
WATCH: Konstantin Kisin's speech to world leaders at ARC...  
Alliance for Responsible Citizenship  
1.3M views · 6 months ago



## Social media companies causing disasters

- Literal disasters caused this way such as the 2017 Myanmar genocides
- Echo chambers reinforcing racist and homophobic views
- The essential quality to media literacy in a way that has never existed before – radicalisation, mental degradation due to shortening attention spans, and isolation

## Rohingya sue Facebook for £150bn over Myanmar genocide

**Victims in US and UK legal action accuse social media firm of failing to prevent incitement of violence**



Residents of the Rohingya refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Photograph: Tanbirul Miraj Ripon/EPA

Facebook's negligence facilitated the **genocide of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar** after the social media network's algorithms amplified hate speech and the platform failed to take down inflammatory posts, according to legal action launched in the US and the UK.

# Identifying credible sources



Evaluating the reliability  
and credibility of  
sources



Cross-checking  
information from  
multiple sources



Recognizing  
authoritative and  
reputable sources

# Trustworthiness

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- Is there anyone in media that you trust?
- Why do you trust them?

What makes something or  
someone credible?

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Who should determine credibility?



# Which of these is credible headline??

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(1) LinkedIn post claiming “Elon Musk Is Being Prosecuted for Money Laundering Scheme”

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(2) ABC news article titled “Limit Screen Time to Reduce Anxiety in Teens”

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(3) The New York Times piece "Inside the Struggling Efforts to Regulate Cryptocurrencies"

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(4) Blog post on PersonalFinanceGuru.blog "Top 3 Stocks to Buy This Month for Guaranteed Returns!"

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(5) Reuters article "Ukraine Troops Raise Flag Over Retaken Village as Counterattack Makes Gains"

# Separating fact from opinion



“How would you distinguish a ‘theory’ from a ‘belief’?”



What’s the difference between facts and opinions?

Theory or  
belief?

Gravity

Evolution

Intelligent design

Climate change

Homeopathy

Acupuncture

# Theory vs belief



Mere belief simply means that you take it to be true



All knowledge is undergirded by some belief



Science is based on the belief that *the future will resemble the past*



Good quality science creates theories, which are testable, falsifiable and repeatable

# Identifying Fake News

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# Misinformation and disinformation

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01

It is easier and simpler than at any point in history to share false information

02

We don't even need to click SHARE anymore – “likes” and reactions will cause algorithms to display that information show up on social media feeds for friends and family

03

Sharing nonsense even if it isn't false also makes things worse – we erode the concepts of satire and blur the line between reality and fantasy

# Bias, Propaganda, and Manipulation

# Media literacy must include explicitly teaching skills in

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## **Deconstructing**

Deconstructing media messages



## **Understanding**

Understanding purpose, target audience, and techniques used



## **Identifying**

Identifying persuasive tactics and emotional appeals



# How emotional manipulation is taught in the Australian Curriculum

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- We do it by default
- Great for creative writing
- An absolute hazard for non-fiction

# Australian Curriculum English Year 10

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## **Creating Literature:**

*“creating a range of students’ own spoken, written or multimodal texts, experimenting with and manipulating language devices for particular audiences, purposes and contexts “*

## **Interacting with others –**

*“adapting voice effects, such as tone, volume, pitch, pauses and change of pace, for their specific effects such as putting forward a point of view or attempting to persuade an audience to a course of action”*

## **Texts in context**

*“analysing the ways socio-cultural values, attitudes and beliefs are presented in texts by comparing the ways news is reported in commercial media and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media”*

# Australian Curriculum Literacy Year 5-6

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## **Express opinion and point of view**

- use subjective, objective and evaluative language, and identify bias

**We make sure children can use language to manipulate early as well as to know when this is happening to them, but there is no precision to it.**

# Linguistic tools and manipulation for profit

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# Thompson Speaks Out Against "Cancel Culture" at Rally

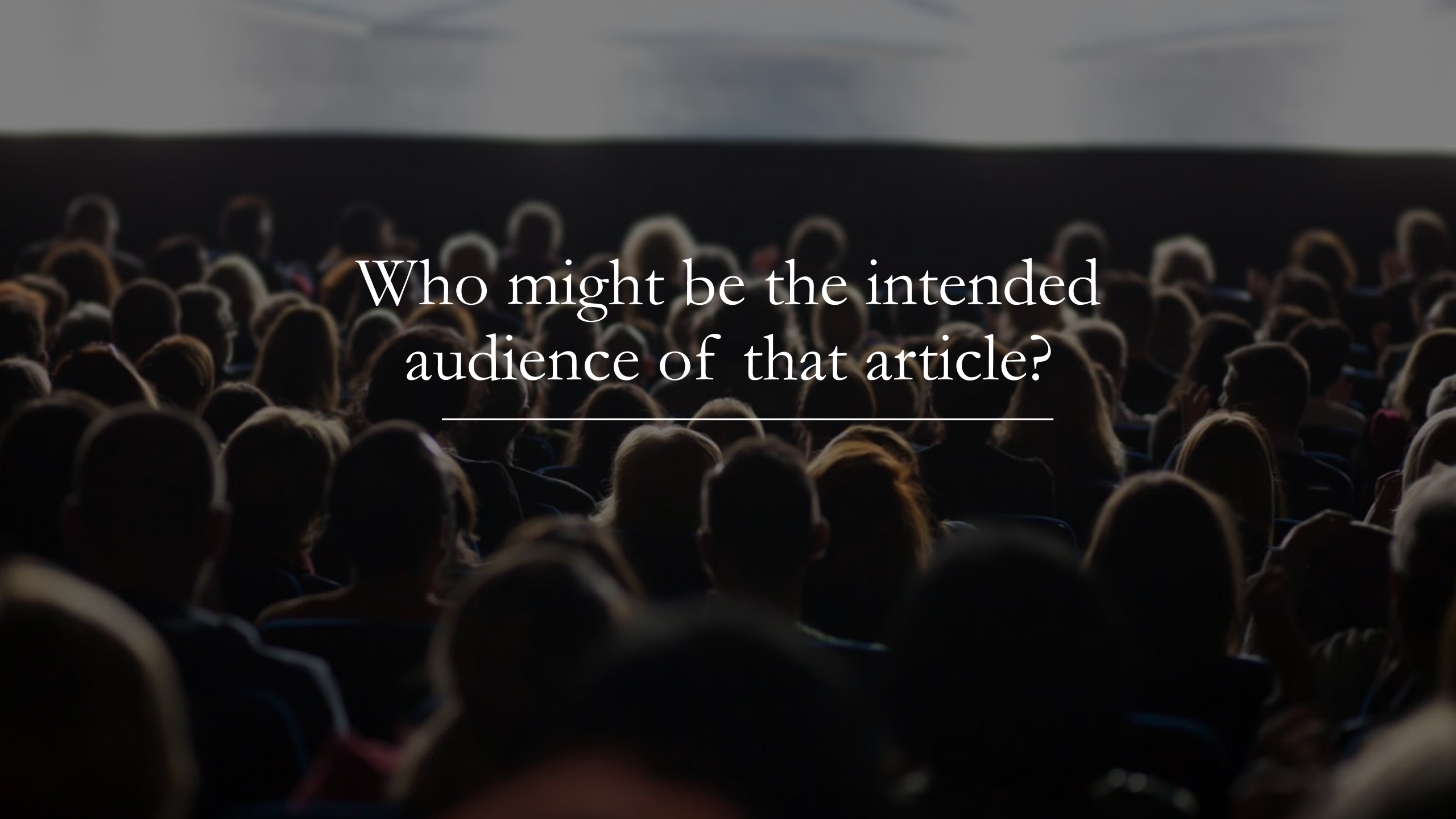
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Mount Gravatt, QLD - In a move hailed by supporters as a brave stand for free speech, conservative city council candidate Sarah Thompson took the stage at a rally yesterday and defiantly declared she would not be silenced by the "woke mob" of cancel culture social justice warriors.

The controversial comments came after a video surfaced last week showing Thompson making disparaging remarks about her opponent's ethnic background at a private fundraiser. Local progressives quickly condemned the statements as racist and hateful.

But rather than apologizing, the defiant political newcomer doubled down in front of a roaring crowd of hundreds.

"The radical left wants to cancel anyone who doesn't agree with their agenda of indoctrinating our kids and erasing our values," Thompson proclaimed, her voice booming through the convention center speakers. "But I'm here to tell you today - Sarah Thompson will not be canceled!"

A large, dark crowd of people is seen from behind, filling the frame. The image is dimly lit, with the crowd appearing as a sea of dark silhouettes against a lighter, hazy background. The text is centered over the crowd.

Who might be the intended  
audience of that article?

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We can intuit the tone and biases  
but having specific language makes  
the analysis rational and coherent.

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# The complexity of bias

Bias is a non-rational influence on our thinking. Sometimes they may be harmless and even useful (e.g. an optimistic leader creates a positive work culture in their organization).

But “non-rational” and “critical thinker” go together like oil and water.

All people are biased – we are in cultures and have experiences and make sense of the world through narratives that make sense to us.

**Bias is only a problem if we:**

**(1) aren't aware of this perspective and**

**(2) aren't willing to incorporate information that opposes our point of view.**



# Thompson Speaks Out Against "Cancel Culture" at Rally

Framing

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Single perspective

## What about implicit biases?

1. What were the biases in play?
2. In what ways did bias affect the interview?
3. What was the purpose of this interview?
4. What would be a more balanced way of conducting this interview?



What does this term mean to you?

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*Politically  
correct*

What does this term mean to you?

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**W O K E**

# Dog whistles

- These are coded language terms that signify a belonging to certain groups
- The most dangerous nazi is the one who is smart enough to avoid letting most people know they're a nazi or risk losing power and credibility
- These terms have ambiguous or vague meanings to most people, but clearly mean "I am one of you"
- Children may use terms, memes or other iconography inadvertently and normalise these things



# Some common dog whistles

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Traditional /  
family values

Law and order

Silent majority

Real Australian

Cultural  
Marxism

Environmental  
extremists

# Propaganda

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DEFINING BIAS,  
STEREOTYPES, AND  
PROPAGANDA



IDENTIFYING  
EXAMPLES IN MEDIA

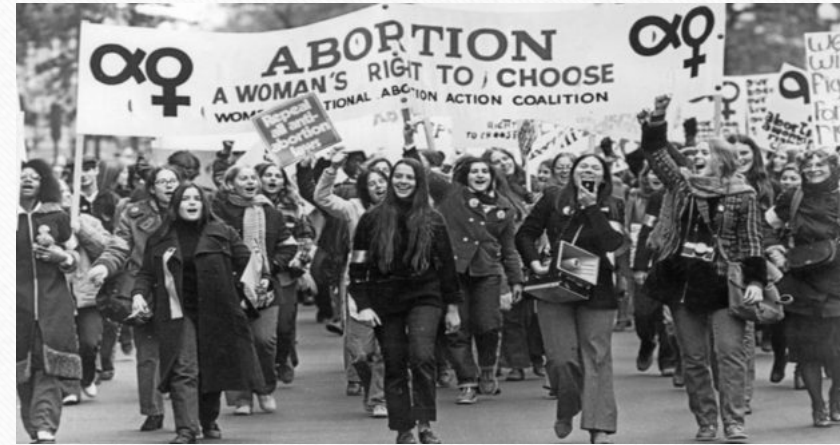


PROMOTING MEDIA  
REPRESENTATION  
AND DIVERSITY



DOG WHISTLES

# What are some issues that you have heard propaganda on?





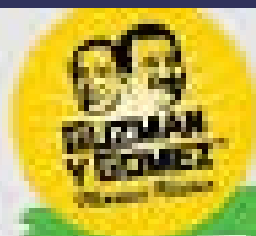
Does this count as  
propaganda?



Politics

## **'He's a walking disaster': Dutton skewers Immigration Minister**

Peter Dutton has hit out at Immigration Minister Andrew Giles as the Opposition Leader outlined his plans to fix the housing market by tackling inflated migration levels.



**CLEAN** *IS THE NEW* **HEALTHY**



**NO ADDED PRESERVATIVES**

**NO ARTIFICIAL FLAVOURS**

**NO ADDED COLOURS**

**NO UNACCEPTABLE ADDITIVES**

**IN OUR FOOD.**

AS LONG AS YOU TWEET,



WE CAN'T FAIL!



Analysis by Matt Martino

## Labor has just broken its third major promise. Here's why it's unlikely to be the last

By RMIT ABC Fact Check's [Matt Martino](#)

The government's promise to maintain the Coalition's tax cuts is the third to be broken this cycle. But as RMIT ABC Fact Check's Matt Martino writes, there are others that are in trouble you may have missed.

29 Feb 2024





A stack of rolled-up newspapers is shown in a close-up, slightly blurred perspective. The papers are white with some blue and red accents. The word 'HERALD' is clearly visible on the side of one of the rolls. The overall tone is muted and professional.

What separates  
propaganda from news?

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# Protecting the kids – direct actions

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- Age-appropriate resources and activities
- Digital safety tools (e.g. wellbeing app limiting time on certain apps)
- Monitoring and guiding media consumption
- **These are less important than** the media literacy tools – they limited by your influence, your skill, and your willingness to invade their privacy





# Fostering media literacy

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01

Engaging children  
in discussions  
about news

02

Co-creating  
understanding  
rather than being  
prescriptive

03

Modelling good  
critical habits –  
especially about  
our own sources  
of information

04

Willingness to be  
wrong (fallibility)

# Curiosity as a value of inquirers

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It moves us to question received opinion and information

To seek new knowledge

It is a truth-seeking value

It can also be seen as an emotion

# Journalism and active production of media

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THE BEST INOCULANT  
IS TO MAKE IT



USING THE TOOLS



WRITING STORIES AND  
PRODUCING MEDIA



Q&A