> Grades K–5 Family Tips

# Help Kids Spot Fake News and Decode Media Messages

**NEWS & MEDIA LITERACY**

We are critical thinkers & creators.

With so much media and information coming at us through the television, phones, social media, and more, it's more important than ever for kids to understand the basics of media literacy. When kids can identify different types of news and media and the methods and meanings behind them, they're on their way to being critical thinkers and smart consumers.

## Check out these 5 tips ✍

**1   Encourage healthy skepticism.**
Help them analyze the messages around them -- from toy packaging to news headlines -- and question the purpose of the words and images they see.

**2   Play "spot the ad."**
When you see advertising on TV or on a billboard, ask kids to figure out what the ad is selling. Sometimes it's obvious, and sometimes it's not. Help them explore why certain pictures, sounds, or words are used to sell certain products.

**3   Explore different sides of a story.**
Use real-life examples to help kids understand how people can view the same situation with totally different perspectives. One child might experience a game on the playground as fun, while another might feel like the rules are unfair. When appropriate, tie this example to a news story.

**4   Discuss fact vs. opinion.**
Play around with ideas and decide which are facts and which are opinions. Ask: How tall are you? What's the best food in the world? Do rocks sink or float? Do you like dogs? Point out that both facts and opinions show up in the news, but opinion is usually labeled.

**5   Choose a variety of sources.**
Show kids how you get news and information from different places, and explain how you make your choices. Use words like "credible," "trustworthy," "respected," and "fair." As kids get older, introduce the ideas of bias, satire, and clickbait.

https://www.commonsense.org/education/family-tips/k-5-news-and-media-literacy