

Reading Eleven

Fake News

It is becoming more and more difficult to know if a story you are reading in a newspaper, website or on social network is true or not. This problem has become much bigger with the spread in use and popularity of social networks like Twitter, Facebook and Line.

These untrue stories are commonly called fake news. Just this morning, I read on Facebook about a famous British rock group called the Beatles who are popular all over the world. If you have never heard of them, you should ask your mother or father as I am sure they will know them. The author of the story wrote that Ringo Starr, the band's drummer, said that Paul McCartney, a leading member of the group, died in 1966 and was secretly replaced by another man. This man, who is still living, continues to pretend to be the real Paul McCartney. If this story is true, it would be one of the biggest stories in most of our lifetime.

When you first read the story, it does look real. It was reported on a website called worldnewsdailyreport.com which appears to be a news site. This site reported that the 45-year old rumor that the original Paul of Beatle fame died in a car crash in 1966 and was replaced by a look-a-like was in fact true. It took only minutes for this story to start spreading on social networks. Many people expressed surprise, but a few smart internet surfers travelled over to sites like www.snopes.com to see if this story has already been reported as false. This morning, the website reported that this story is not true.

What can you do to prevent spreading or believing fake news? First of all, wait to see if it is reported on respected websites like the New York Times or the BBC. These are sites that you can trust. If these big news agencies haven't reported any thing on the "big news" than you should be suspicious.

Time: _____

339 words

1. According to the article, fake news is:
 - a. becoming easier and easier to read.
 - b. usually very surprising but true.
 - c. becoming more difficult to know if it is false.
 - d. fun to read and discuss on Twitter.

2. According to the article, fake news can be found:
 - a. in newspapers like the New York Times.
 - b. on websites like the British Broadcasting Company (BBC).
 - c. on social network systems.
 - d. in university textbooks.

3. What is **not** true according to this article?
 - a. Ringo Starr the Beatle drummer died recently.
 - b. the problem of fake news is becoming bigger.
 - c. fake news often looks real on social networks.
 - d. the rumour of Paul's death started 45 years ago.

4. The website snopes.com is good for:
 - a. reading about celebrities.
 - b. finding out if a story is true or not.
 - c. finding good deals on smart phones.
 - d. information about good websites for news.

5. The main idea of this article is:
 - a. people need to be careful about the news they read.
 - b. there is a lot of useful information on the internet.
 - c. the Beatles are a world famous rock band.
 - d. Ringo Starr doesn't really like his band mates.

Score out of five: _____