

## 3.1 MISINFORMATION

### Whose responsibility is it to protect citizens from misinformation on social media?

<b>C3 Framework Indicator</b>	<p><b>D2.Civ.1.3-5.</b> Distinguish the responsibilities and powers of government officials at various levels and branches of government and in different times and places.</p> <p><b>D2.Civ.3.3-5.</b> Examine the origins and purposes of rules, laws, and key U.S. constitutional provisions.</p> <p><b>D2.Civ.6.3-5.</b> Describe ways in which people benefit from and are challenged by working together, including through government, workplaces, voluntary organizations, and families.</p>	
<b>Staging the Compelling Question</b>	After reviewing Germany's Network Enforcement Act (or Facebook Law), students will be able to identify the consequences of fake news and take a position on whether government intervention is needed to help minimize misinformation.	
<b>Supporting Question 1</b>	<b>Supporting Question 2</b>	<b>Supporting Question 3</b>
What are the consequences of fake news?	What actions has Germany taken to protect its citizens from online misinformation?	Should we use Germany's Network Enforcement Law as a model in the United States?
<b>Formative Performance Task</b>	<b>Formative Performance Task</b>	<b>Formative Performance Task</b>
Students will view a video that highlights teenagers sharing their views on fake news and their role in it, and then respond to questions.	Students will watch the BBC video on how Germany has addressed fake news as a country, then interpret and summarize the information.	Students will review the three key components of Germany's Network Enforcement Act.
<b>Featured Sources</b>	<b>Featured Sources</b>	<b>Featured Sources</b>
<b>Source A:</b> This Is What Students Think About 'Fake News' and the Media	<p><b>Source A:</b> Handout 3.1.1</p> <p><b>Source B:</b> Facebook Could Be Fined In Germany, If It Refuses To Remove Stories Which Are Proved False</p>	<b>Source A:</b> Handout 3.1.2
<b>Summative Performance Task</b>	<p><b>Argument:</b> Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that addresses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical or contemporary sources, while acknowledging competing views.</p> <p><b>Extension:</b> Examine the history of fake news and yellow journalism in the United States. Create a slide deck on how today's fake news may be different from that of the past.</p>	
<b>Taking Informed Action</b>	<p><b>Understand:</b> Fake news can have lasting impacts on democratic institutions.</p> <p><b>Assess:</b> Examine how fake news potentially affected the U.S. 2016 election.</p> <p><b>Act:</b> Create a poster that shows the consequences of spreading misinformation.</p>	

## ? COMPELLING QUESTION

- Whose responsibility is it to protect citizens from misinformation on social media?

### INQUIRY OVERVIEW

Students will examine their thoughts and attitudes about online misinformation and their role as citizens. They will review key components of Germany’s Network Enforcement Act (or Facebook Law) to determine if this type of law would be helpful or harmful in the United States. By the end of the inquiry, students will be able to identify the consequences of fake news and take a position on whether government intervention is needed to help minimize misinformation.

### TEACHER BACKGROUND

Common Sense Media found that students (ages 8–12) spend an average of 6 hours a day using various forms of media. Hence the necessity for media literacy skills to recognize and combat online misinformation, which can have harmful consequences in everyday life. As students engage on the internet, they must be able to think critically, recognize bias, understand how to evaluate sources, and be an advocate for media justice.

Reports about the dissemination of fake news during the 2016 U.S. election increased fears that the same could happen during the 2017 German federal elections. As a result, to protect its citizens, Germany enacted a number of civil and criminal law provisions to safeguard individuals and the public from fake news in social networks. Specifically, in 2017 the Network Enforcement Act (*Netzwerkdurchsetzungsgesetz*) was passed with the aim of fighting fake news on social networks by improving the enforcement of the current laws. Social networks that do not remove illegal content within 24 hours may

be fined up to €50 million (about U.S. \$57.8 million). Illegal content includes dissemination of propaganda materials of unconstitutional organizations, use of symbols of unconstitutional organizations, preparation of a serious act of violence threatening the state, instruction to commit a serious act of violence threatening the state, falsification of the state, public incitement to commit a crime, disturbing the public peace by threatening to commit criminal acts, formation of criminal organizations and terrorist organizations, depiction of violence or child pornography, and insulting confessions, religious societies and ideological associations, among others.

Under the law, which came into effect on January 1, 2018, online platforms face fines of up to €50 million for systemic failure to delete illegal content. In this context, the law refers to commercial social networks on the internet with at least two million members. Providers of these social networks must check complaints immediately and delete any illegal content.

#### ► Sources

- Federal Office of Justice. (n.d.). *Häufig gestellte Fragen – Welche rechtswidrigen Inhalte (Straftatbestände) werde vom NetzDg erfasst?* Retrieved October 28, 2021, from [https://www.bundesjustizamt.de/DE/Themen/Buergerdienste/NetzDG/Fragen/FAQ\\_node.html;jsessionid=12F2AD4361A19E64B4593882B6983A75.2\\_cid503#faq10018912](https://www.bundesjustizamt.de/DE/Themen/Buergerdienste/NetzDG/Fragen/FAQ_node.html;jsessionid=12F2AD4361A19E64B4593882B6983A75.2_cid503#faq10018912).
- Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection. (2017). Act to Improve Enforcement of the Law in Social Networks (Network Enforcement Act, NetzDG) – Basic Information (2017). [https://www.bmjv.de/DE/Themen/FokusThemen/NetzDG/NetzDG\\_EN\\_node.html](https://www.bmjv.de/DE/Themen/FokusThemen/NetzDG/NetzDG_EN_node.html).



© Lie Detectors

- Gesley, Jenny. (2019, April 1). *Germany*. Library of Congress Digital Collections. [www.loc.gov/law/help/fake-news/germany.php](http://www.loc.gov/law/help/fake-news/germany.php).
- Thrive Foundation. (2015). *The Common Sense Census: Media Use by Tweens and Teens*. [PDF]. [https://www.common sense media.org/sites/default/files/uploads/research/census\\_researchreport.pdf](https://www.common sense media.org/sites/default/files/uploads/research/census_researchreport.pdf).

 **TIME:** Two to three 45-minute class periods

## INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

- AEIOU Graphic Organizer (**Handout 3.1.1**)
- Network Enforcement Law (**Handout 3.1.2**)
- BBC News. (2017). Facebook Could Be Fined in Germany, If It Refuses to Remove Stories Which Are Proved False. <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/entertainment-arts-39003341>. (2:59)
- Lie Detectors News Challenges
- Lie Detectors. (2021). Lie Detectors Website. <https://lie-detectors.org>.
- PBS. (2017). This Is What Students Think About “Fake News” and the Media. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/this-is-what-students-think-about-fake-news-and-the-media>. (2:18)



## INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

Ask: “Have you ever spotted fake news on social media? What was the story and how did you determine that it wasn’t true?”

Explain to students that there are organizations, like Lie Detectors, that are educating students and teachers about how to discern fake news. Lie Detectors is an independent organization that works to empower students and their teachers in Europe “to act as powerful lie detectors and critical thinkers” in a world increasingly populated by misinformation. Have students form pairs and complete the Lie Detectors News Challenges.

### ► Resource

- Lie Detectors News Challenges

## ? SUPPORTING QUESTION 1

### *What are the consequences of fake news?*

#### ► Formative Performance Task

Students will watch the PBS News video, This Is What Students Think About ‘Fake News’ and the Media, which highlights teenagers sharing their views on fake news and their role in it. Either pause the video in segments or view the video twice to allow students to watch the video, think about what they viewed, and then respond to questions. Students should respond in writing to the following questions:

1. What are some consequences of fake news?
2. Do you believe it is your responsibility or the government’s role to stop fake news from spreading? Why or why not?”

After each student has thought about these questions and written their response, students can share their answers with their classmates.

### ► Resource

- PBS. (2017). This Is What Students Think About ‘Fake News’ and the Media. Retrieved from: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/this-is-what-students-think-about-fake-news-and-the-media>. (2:18)

## ❓ SUPPORTING QUESTION 2

### *What actions has Germany taken to protect its citizens from online misinformation?*

#### ► Formative Performance Task

Students will watch the BBC video *Facebook Should Be Fined in Germany* on how Germany has addressed fake news as a country. Ask students to interpret and summarize information from the video in five descriptive categories using the AEIOU strategy. The AEIOU strategy provides multiple paths for students to express what they see, know, and wonder about the content, and it challenges students to summarize their reactions.

Explain to students that they will watch a news story from Germany about misinformation and their task will be to summarize the video using the acronym AEIOU:

- A = Adjective: One or two words that describe something you saw or learned.
- E = Emotion: One word that describes how you feel after watching the video.
- I = Interesting: Write something that you found interesting about the topic.
- O = Oh!: Describe something that surprised you from the video.
- U = Um?: Write a question that you still have after watching the video.

The teacher may have students write their answers on paper or use the AEIOU Graphic Organizer (**Handout 3.1.1**). Ask students if they have any questions about the AEIOU task, prior to starting the video.

If needed, pause the video in intervals to remind and prompt students to write down their answers. Once the video has been shown and responses have been recorded, have the students share their responses as a class. Teachers may want to curate the list of questions students generated and challenge students to find answers to their questions as extra, extension activities.

#### ► Resources

- AEIOU Graphic Organizer (**Handout 3.1.1**)
- BBC News. (2017). *Facebook Could Be Fined in Germany, If It Refuses to Remove Stories Which Are Proved False*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/entertainment-arts-39003341>. (2:59)

## ❓ SUPPORTING QUESTION 3

### *Should we use Germany's Network Enforcement Law as a model in the United States?*

#### ► Formative Performance Task

After a discussion on the German news story from **Formative Performance Task 2**, students will examine this topic further by reviewing three key components of Germany's Network Enforcement Act (**Handout 3.1.2**), also known as the Facebook Law.

Explain to students that Germany has created a law to protect its citizens from misinformation, and that the German Network Enforcement Act shared in class is not the entire law, but three key parts of the law. Review the document as a class and answer any student questions.

Once the reading is completed, encourage students to reflect on what they have learned and complete a 5-minute quick write to answer the following question: "Do you think Germany's Network Enforcement Act would be helpful or harmful in the United States? Why?"

If needed, students may work in pairs to develop a brief oral or written argument using the information from the document as evidence for their claim.

#### ► Resource

- Network Enforcement Law (**Handout 3.1.2**)

### ✓ SUMMATIVE PERFORMANCE TASK

#### *Whose responsibility is it to protect citizens from misinformation on social media?*

Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that addresses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from contemporary sources, while acknowledging competing views.

### ⊕ EXTENSION (OPTIONAL) TASK

The idea of made-up or fake news is not a new concept. Examine the history of fake news and yellow journalism in the United States. Create a slide deck on how today's fake news may be different from that of the past.

### ★ TAKING INFORMED ACTION

**Understand:** Fake news can have lasting impacts on democratic institutions.

**Assess:** Examine how fake news potentially affected the U.S. 2016 election.

**Act:** Create a poster that shows the consequences of spreading misinformation.

### CONCEPTS LIST

- Internet
- Social media
- Misinformation
- Act
- Fines
- Content
- Reliability
- Credibility
- Evidence
- Bias
- Digital literacy
- Fake news
- *Netzwerkdurchsetzungsgesetz*
- Network Enforcement Act
- Facebook Law
- Yellow journalism