

TEACHER ANSWER KEY · GRADES 9-12

# Real or fake?

## Worksheet 1: Verify first, Red flag scam or Likely legitimate?

| CARD                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | BELONGS IN               | WHY                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A voice message from an unknown number that sounds exactly like your older brother. He is crying, says he is in trouble, needs \$300 sent through a payment app in the next 20 minutes and begs you not to tell your parents.                             | <b>Red flag scam</b>     | Urgency, secrecy, an unknown number and a money request. Voices can be cloned from short clips. Hang up and call your brother or a parent on a saved number.                              |
| Text from scholarships@future-scholars-award.example: 'Congratulations, you have been selected for a guaranteed \$5,000 scholarship. Pay a \$49 processing fee by Friday to claim it.'                                                                    | <b>Red flag scam</b>     | Real scholarships do not charge fees to claim them, and nobody can guarantee one. Ask your school counselor about real scholarships.                                                      |
| Text from 555-0123: 'Hi, this is Tara from HR. Remote online assessor job, \$45 per hour, no experience needed. Reply YES to start. We will mail you a check to buy your equipment.'                                                                      | <b>Red flag scam</b>     | An unexpected job text, vague role, high pay, 'reply YES' and a check for equipment are all signs of job and fake-check scams.                                                            |
| An email that looks like it is from a bank you do not have an account with. It is perfectly written, uses your first name and says, 'Unusual activity detected. Verify your identity here within 24 hours.'                                               | <b>Red flag scam</b>     | You have no account there, it has a deadline and a link to 'verify'. Perfect grammar is not proof; AI writes clean scam messages.                                                         |
| A stranger you met in a game chat has flawless selfies and says they are 16. Within a day they ask you to move to a private messaging app and send photos of yourself.                                                                                    | <b>Red flag scam</b>     | Fake profiles often use AI-made or stolen photos, and moving fast to a private app and asking for photos is a known pattern before threats. Stop, block, report and tell a trusted adult. |
| A video of your principal announcing 'school is canceled tomorrow because of a gas leak' is posted by an account you do not follow and shared 4,000 times. Nothing appears on the district website or app.                                                | <b>Verify first</b>      | It may be a deepfake or an old clip. Check the district website or app you open yourself, or the school's official message system, before sharing.                                        |
| A viral photo shows a famous singer shopping at your local mall. The posting account is a meme page, one hand in the photo looks blurry and no local news outlet mentions it.                                                                             | <b>Verify first</b>      | It could be AI-made. Read laterally: search the claim and see whether trusted news outlets or the singer's official accounts report it. Do not share until it checks out.                 |
| A screenshot of a 'news article' says a new state law bans all phones in high schools starting Monday. It shows no outlet name, no author and no link.                                                                                                    | <b>Verify first</b>      | No source to check. Search the claim in a new tab and look for the official government site or established news outlets before believing or sharing.                                      |
| An anonymous account posts a clip of a classmate 'saying' something offensive. The voice sounds slightly flat, and the classmate says they never said it.                                                                                                 | <b>Verify first</b>      | It may be AI-made. Do not share it, because spreading it harms a real person either way. Report it to a teacher, counselor or the platform.                                               |
| An email from your school counselor's district address, which is already in your contacts, reminds seniors about a scholarship deadline that is also listed on the counselor's page in the learning management system. It asks for no money and no login. | <b>Likely legitimate</b> | A known sender, information you can confirm in a second official place and no request for money, codes or passwords.                                                                      |
| You went to a local grocery store's website yourself, found a part-time cashier opening on its careers page and applied. A store manager calls the number you listed to set up an in-person interview. No fees were requested.                            | <b>Likely legitimate</b> | You found the job through the employer's own site, the next step is an in-person interview and nobody asked for money or bank details up front.                                           |
| A text from your coach's number that is saved in your phone: 'Bus leaves at 6:15 tomorrow. Bring your physical form.' The same note is posted in the team's official app.                                                                                 | <b>Likely legitimate</b> | A known contact, an expected message and it matches a second official channel. No link, code or money request.                                                                            |

## Worksheet 2: My verification routine

### Step 1 — Pause

Which feelings or pressure words tell you to slow down? (for example: urgent, secret, guaranteed, act now, don't tell anyone)

### Step 2 — Who says so?

Write three questions you will ask about where this came from and what it wants you to do.

### Step 3 — Read laterally

Where will you search, and which kinds of sources will you trust (official sites, established news outlets, fact-checkers)? What will you do if every post traces back to the same single source?

### Step 4 — Verify by a known route

List your known routes: how you would reach family (saved numbers, safe word), school (website or app you open yourself, counselor) and any account or money issue (official app).

### Step 5 — Decide and report

When will you share, not share or report? Who is the trusted adult you would tell if a message threatened you or someone you know?

### Step 6 — My rule for AI media

Write your personal rule about creating or sharing AI images, voices or videos of real people.

### What good answers look like

- Step 1: strong answers name urgency, secrecy, fear, excitement, money and code requests.
- Step 2: questions such as 'Who posted this first?', 'What do they want me to do?', 'What would happen if I waited an hour?'
- Step 3: strong answers name official sites typed in directly, established news outlets and fact-checkers, and recognize that many copies of one post are still one source.
- Step 4: strong answers list actual saved contacts, a family safe word, the official school website or app and the counselor; never the number or link in the message.
- Step 5: strong answers include not sharing unverified media of real people and naming a specific trusted adult.
- Step 6: strong answers commit to not making or sharing deceptive media of real people without consent, and to reporting it instead of spreading it.

## Scenario cards

| CARD                               | MODEL ANSWER                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. The crying call</b>          | Hang up and call your mom on her saved number, or ask for the family safe word. If you cannot reach her, call another family member.<br>Voices can be cloned from short clips. A known route beats a familiar voice.                                                                                              |
| <b>2. The dream internship</b>     | Treat it as a scam. Look up the company's real careers page yourself and see whether the internship exists there. Never send bank or ID details before a real interview.<br>Fake recruiters ask for personal and banking information early and contact you out of nowhere.                                        |
| <b>3. Guaranteed scholarship</b>   | Fees and 'finalist for something you never entered' are red flags. Ask your school counselor, who can help you find real scholarships for free.<br>Real scholarships do not charge you to receive them.                                                                                                           |
| <b>4. The joke edit</b>            | Tell your friend not to post it and do not share it. If it is already out, report it to a trusted adult or counselor.<br>Fake media of real people can humiliate and harm them, spreads beyond the group and can break school conduct rules.                                                                      |
| <b>5. Breaking news screenshot</b> | Look for the announcement on the district website or app you open yourself, and search the claim in a new tab for local news coverage. Do not forward it until it checks out.<br>Screenshots are easy to fake, and many shares do not make something true.                                                        |
| <b>6. The video call friend</b>    | The video may be AI-generated in real time. Do not share personal information or images. End contact, block, report and tell a trusted adult if they pressure you.<br>Real-time fake video is used to make fake profiles seem real.                                                                               |
| <b>7. The threat</b>               | Do not pay and do not send anything more. Stop replying, save the messages, block, and tell a trusted adult or the counselor today. Take It Down (takeitdown.ncmec.org) and the NCMEC CyberTipline can help.<br>Paying rarely ends threats. It is not your fault, and adults and these services can help stop it. |
| <b>8. The fact-check fight</b>     | Leave the site and search its name in a new tab. See what established news outlets, fact-checkers or reference sites say about who runs it.<br>A site describing itself is not evidence. Lateral reading checks what others say.                                                                                  |
| <b>9. Too-perfect profile</b>      | Gift card payment, an unrequested offer and photos that may be AI-made. Do not pay; block and report.<br>No real business asks to be paid in gift cards, and follower counts can be bought.                                                                                                                       |
| <b>10. Real update, real route</b> | Open the district app yourself and look for the same notice. If it is there, it is legitimate.<br>Legitimate messages hold up when you check them by a route you already trust.                                                                                                                                   |

## Exit ticket

| QUESTION                                                                                              | ANSWER                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What does 'verify by a known route' mean? Give one example.                                           | <b>Check by contacting the person or organization through a number, app or website you already had, not the one in the message. Example: hanging up and calling a parent's saved number, or typing the district website address yourself.</b>  |
| Name two red flags of a fake job or scholarship offer.                                                | <b>Any two of: you must pay a fee, it is guaranteed, they want bank or Social Security details before any interview, they send a check and ask you to send money back, they contacted you out of nowhere by text, the deadline is extreme.</b> |
| If someone threatens to share an image of you unless you pay or send more, what are your first moves? | <b>Do not pay and do not send more, stop replying, save the messages, block and tell a trusted adult or the counselor. It is not your fault. Take It Down and the NCMEC CyberTipline can help.</b>                                             |