



## HEARD! Lesson Two

### An Introduction to Real Fake News

**Time: 45 Minutes**

#### Overview:

The class will begin to investigate their first HEARD! topic- *Fake News* and its history. In this class students will learn that Fake News is not a new phenomenon. They will review the effects of one piece of fake news written by Ben Franklin hundreds of years ago, in 1782.

#### Essential Questions:

- Is it possible we are assuming the information in stories we read or hear in the media are fact, and not not investigating details that are mentioned?

#### Learning Goals:

##### Students will be able to:

- analyze their decision making process on why they choose specific news sources to read or watch.
- work in groups to investigate and identify Franklin's reasons and intentions for creating a fake newspaper.
- work together as a class to define Fake News.
- investigate justifications and the effects of creating Fake News.

#### Heard! Glossary

The class will work together to create their own definitions but here are the accepted dictionary definitions if you choose to share them with the class after they have created their definitions:

**Fake News:** false stories that appear to be news, spread on the internet or using other media, usually created to influence political views or as a joke:

There is concern about the power of fake news to affect election results.

Propaganda: Derogatory information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote or publicize a particular political cause or point of view.

Influence: The capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behavior of someone or something, or the effect itself.

### Materials for Instructor:

- Have the media sources chart from the last class up on the board.
- Propaganda Warfare: Benjamin Franklin Fakes a Newspaper [article](#)

### Materials for Student:

- Homework surveys

## I. Intro: Where'd You Hear That? Or, How Do We Know What We Know? (10 min.)

Begin with a discussion about where their information about the world comes from. Start by asking the class to report what they wrote in their surveys.

As students to name examples of media they most commonly use (FB, Fox, The Washington Post), ask them to identify the category each example belongs to.

- Ask to students to identify how many of the listed information sources they use and explain **why they choose them.**

## II. Intro to Fake News: "So This Just Happened..." (10-12 min.)

Now that students have identified their news sources and have seen or heard their peers' sources, it is time to move onto the first HEARD! topic: Fake News

There's a big discussion in the country about the role of media (print, online, social media, radio) in creating and hardening the divisions that HEARD! wants to address. We've all heard a lot about "fake news," so start by asking students: what is "fake news?"

- Have the students "popcorn" the term "fake news"
- Ask if anyone knows the history of "fake news"...how far does it go back? Let them know that examples of "fake news" can be traced back to the time of the American Revolution. In fact, Ben Franklin created a fake newspaper in 1782 to sway the opinion of British citizens.

### III. Group Investigation (20-30 min.)

**Teacher note: Adjust timing to your class period.**

Have students form groups of three to four. In this activity students will identify Ben Franklin's intentions for creating a fake newspaper issue and analyze its effects.

Step One:

- Hand out Ben Franklin's fake news about the fake news issue he wrote in 1782.
- Let students know they have ten minutes to read through the article. Suggest they take turns reading it out loud.

Step Two:

- Write the following questions on the board that students should be thinking about and discussing as they read the article :
  1. If and how this very old piece of "fake news" is surprising in any way...
  2. What were Franklin's intentions with this piece?
  3. What were Franklin's desired effects of this piece in his time? What were the actual effects of the piece?

### Closing discussion (Till the end of class)

Have the students remain in their group configuration but lead a closing discussion with the following entry points:

- Discuss students' feelings/reactions to this "fake news" item as a piece of history, our American history.
- Ask students if they can identify current examples of "Fake News" that you've heard about or seen.
- What do you do when you read something that seems false or suspicious?
- What steps could you take to check the credibility of a news report?

Have the class define Fake News in their **HEARD! Glossary**

End the discussion with a parting question: Having considered this example of "fake news," what do you see as the dangers that can result from it?

### Homework:

- Find a current "fake news" story and try to identify its effects in the world. Research how this particular "fake news" story originally spread, i.e. through which media sources.

