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## BEING ACCURATE, RELYING ON THE FACTS

### REVIEW

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1. What does the term “gatekeeping” mean, and how does it relate to the role of media professionals?
2. List some of the ways in which “fake news” can be defined. What are some ways you can avoid getting faked out when it comes to potentially false content?
3. What are some of the processes you should conduct in a basic fact check?
4. What is the difference between a primary and a secondary source?
5. What does the line “If your mother says she loves you, go check it out” mean in the context of fact checking?

## WRITING EXERCISES

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1. Below is a list of 10 “facts” that might or might not be true. Determine if they are true or false through research, and include a source for each fact. If you find it to be false, explain why this is the case and cite your source.
  - a. On Dec. 19, 1998, the House of Representatives impeached President Bill Clinton, making him the first president to be impeached since Richard Nixon.
  - b. Children in the early 1900s who got lead poisoning often contracted the illness from the tips of their pencils.
  - c. During the trial for the shooting death of San Francisco politicians George Moscone and Harvey Milk, Dan White’s legal team coined the “Twinkie defense,” arguing that White’s judgment had been impaired by a heavy consumption of junk food.
  - d. Singer Ozzy Osbourne bit the head off a bat while in concert and subsequently was given rabies shots at a nearby hospital.
  - e. The capes used in bullfighting are red because the color enrages the animal and creates more active fights.
  - f. The football team with the most NFL championships is the Pittsburgh Steelers, winners of six Super Bowls.
  - g. A diet rich in carrots will improve a person’s eyesight.

- h. In the Open era, which began in 1968, the person with the most Wimbledon singles titles is Roger Federer with eight.
  
  - i. A penny dropped from the top of the Empire State Building will kill a person if it strikes him or her in the head.
  
  - j. Less than a month after Lynette “Squeaky” Fromme attempted to assassinate him, President Gerald Ford was shot by Sara Jane Moore in downtown San Francisco.
2. Conduct a “basic fact check” on the following sentences, examining them for spelling, numerical issues and other minor glitches.
- a. The president of America lives and works at the White House, located at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NE, Washington, D.C.
  
  - b. Judge Neal Gorsuch was nominated to the Supreme Court of the United States to replace Justice Anthony Scalia, who died in 2015.
  
  - c. Marissa Tomei won the Emmy for Best Actress in 1992 for her role in “My Cousin Vinny.”
  
  - d. Visitors to Manet’s Gardens at Giverney can see the types of plants that inspired his paintings.

- e. Pittsburgh Pirates infielder Daryl Ward hit for the cycle May 25, 2004, going 3 for 5 and driving in six runs.
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3. Select a published news story, press release or other media report and fact-check it. Examine the piece for all of the “basic” issues, such as spelling, proper nouns, geographic elements and numerical concerns. In addition, assess the degree to which you can verify the broader issues with other sources. Finally, examine it for any vague terms or the use of hyperbole. Write a short essay that outlines what you found and how credible you find this piece of content to be as a result of your analysis.

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