

COVID-19

Child-led learning resource



ABOUT

This activity helps you investigate the coronavirus pandemic and lets you explore really interesting questions like:

- How do we know what information to trust?
- Why do people do things that they know are wrong?
- Whose views do we need to see the whole picture?

You can give this a go on your own, but if there's someone at home who can join you, why not work together? You could also connect with someone by telephone or video.

We'll practise some critical-thinking skills which are important for understanding and discussing the news.



Ready? Let's go!

THE STORY

Covid-19 (the coronavirus) has been classified as a pandemic, which means it's a new disease that people aren't immune to and it's spreading around the world.

As the spread speeds up, so does the news about it. Stories are shared with a click of a button. This makes it difficult to keep up with the information and even harder to know what to think.



LOOKING CLOSER

What information is true?

What should I be concerned about?

How should I respond?

These might be some of the questions you asked yourself over the past few months. In this activity, we'll think about lots more questions - ones that will help us to think about the news. We'll also practise some critical-thinking skills which will be useful for these activities and beyond!



SCEPTICISM

Questioning information
to find the truth



REASONING

Justifying a
viewpoint



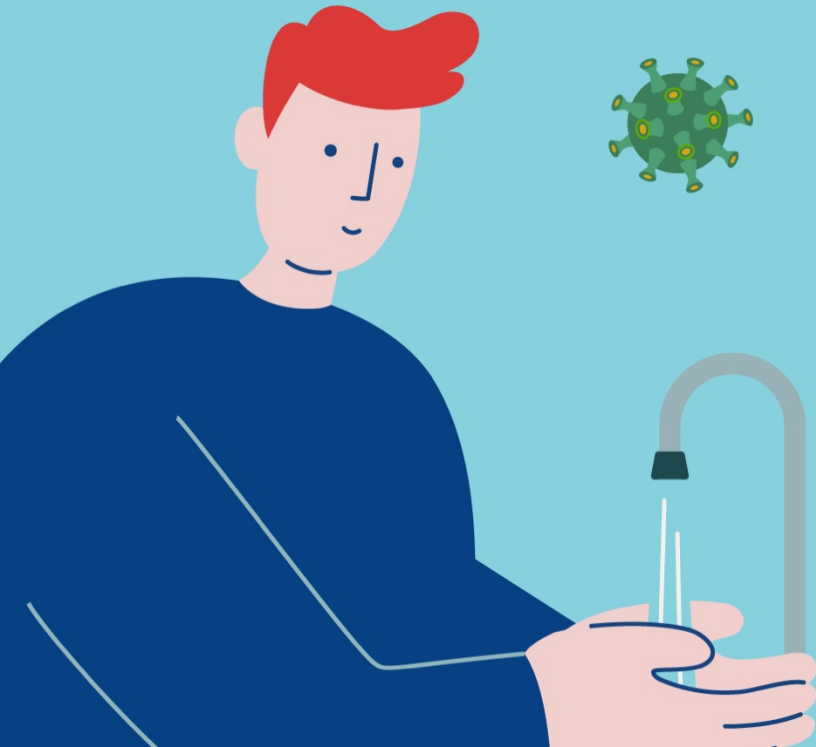
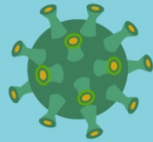
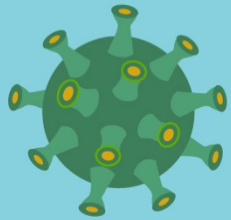
SPEAKING UP

Confidently communicating
a viewpoint



OPEN-MINDEDNESS

Listening to other
viewpoints



SPEAKING UP



Read the statements in yellow.
Pair up the statements that...

1. You are doubtful about
2. Give reasons
3. Show open-mindedness

Can you use the “speaking up” skill and say **why** you have paired them?

Hint: in each pair, there should be one statement that relates to the coronavirus and one that doesn't.



We should study pandemics from the past to learn how to treat the coronavirus



I ate ten whole pizzas for breakfast this morning



I like to watch lots of different news channels to hear as many perspectives as possible



I think panic-buying is dangerous because it leaves less food for elderly or vulnerable people



Onions can stop you from getting coronavirus



Everyone should try dancing because it is proven to make you happy!

SPEAKING UP



Check your answers!

Statements to be doubtful about



Onions can stop you from getting coronavirus



I ate ten whole pizzas for breakfast this morning

Statements that give reasons



I think panic-buying is dangerous because it leaves less food for elderly or vulnerable people



Everyone should try dancing because it is proven to make you happy!

Statements that show open-mindedness



We should study pandemics from the past to learn how to treat the coronavirus



I like to watch lots of different news channels to hear as many perspectives as possible



SCEPTICISM



Scepticism means questioning information to find the truth.

To be sceptical means you don't believe something straight away.

If someone told you they had eaten ten whole pizzas that morning, would you be sceptical?

What questions would you want to ask them to find out if they were telling the truth?

SCEPTICISM

How can we test this headline to see whether it is trustworthy?

Daily News

MONDAY MARCH 23, 2020



BREAKING NEWS

THE HUMBLE ONION

CAN STOP YOU
FROM GETTING

**CORONA
VIRUS**



SCEPTICISM

Here are some questions you could ask:

- How do we know if we can trust this?
We don't know, we've just read it online
- What part of this is fact, and what part is opinion?
I've never heard it before so I think it's opinion
- What evidence is there to prove this?
I've done my research, and I can't find any evidence
- Who is this information intended for?
Anyone reading the newspaper or sharing the story online
- What may have influenced what the author/reporter was thinking?
I'm not sure. Maybe they were being paid to write it
- Why might we doubt this?
Because I've never heard that onions or other vegetables can stop diseases
- Has this evidence been used correctly?
There isn't any evidence
- Looking at the answers above, is the headline trustworthy?
No, there's no evidence and we don't know why it was written or who wrote it



SCEPTICISM



Your turn!

Think of a piece of information, or headline about the coronavirus, that you have been unsure or sceptical about.

Ask yourself these questions about your piece of information to test whether or not you're right to be sceptical. The questions start off easy but get much harder.

QUESTIONS

- How do we know if we can trust this?
- What part of this is fact, and what part is opinion?
- What evidence is there to prove this?
- Who is this information intended for?
- What may have influenced what the author/reporter was thinking?
- Why might we doubt this?
- Has this evidence been used correctly?

Sometimes, there is a combination of facts and opinion in what we read, see or hear and it can be hard to separate these out and know what to trust.



SCEPTICISM



Reflection

- What conclusion did you come to about your piece of information? Was it factually correct?
- Should we be sceptical of the information we receive about the coronavirus? Why or why not?
- Can you ever be too sceptical?

Some news sources you can rely on:

bbc.co.uk/news

fullfact.org



REASONING

Reasoning means supporting your opinion with reasons and evidence. This is very important as it explains your thinking, and helps others understand your ideas.

Try to come up with as many reasons as possible for the following statements.

Going back to work in an office is a **good idea because...**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Going back to work in an office is a **bad idea because...**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

If you have someone to argue these points with, go for it!

REASONING



Interview time!

Ask somebody in your house for their opinion on going back to work in an office.

When they have told you, push their reasoning as far as you can, using the questions on the right.

QUESTIONS

- Can you back that up with a reason?
- Can you think of an example?
- What factual evidence supports your reason?
- Why have you chosen that evidence?
- Can you list the reasons to support your view?
- What's your strongest reason and why?
- What counter-arguments can you predict, and how will you respond?

If they need help, share the list of reasons you just came up with.

REASONING



Reflection

- Which side of the argument do you think has better reasons?
- Why do people do things that they know are wrong?
- When you're asking for someone's opinion, which questions can you always ask to make sure they give good reasons?





OPEN-MINDEDNESS



If you're open-minded, you listen to other people's viewpoints before coming to your own conclusion.

When this comes to the news, it could mean you watch lots of different news channels, listen to more than one radio station or read articles from different places. Being open-minded can be challenging - it often exposes us to opinions or information that we don't want to hear. But it can also be helpful - if we don't listen to people with different opinions, we can't learn new ideas or change our minds.

OPEN-MINDEDNESS



Your challenge:

Find a newspaper, radio station or television / online news channel that you wouldn't normally choose to read or watch (make sure you have permission from an adult first!)

Watch or listen to a news programme about the coronavirus for five minutes or read a news story about it.

Then think about, or discuss, the questions.

QUESTIONS

- Why do you think they feel that way?
- Can you sum up what you've heard so far?
- Can you connect your ideas to what you have heard or read?
- Whose perspective do we need for the whole picture?
- What could we ask to help us understand?
- Have you changed your mind?
If so, how and why? If not, why not?
- What do you agree with in the other side's argument?



OPEN-MINDEDNESS



Reflection

- Why is it useful to be open-minded?
- Can you ever be too open-minded?



SUPER-REFLECTION

- Which of the skills that you used today is most important in life?
- Which skill is most important when watching or reading the news?
- Which questions will you ask now about coronavirus news, that you wouldn't have asked before?

NOW...



Do some research

Find out more about the coronavirus, using the skills and questions in these activities to dig deeper



Have a discussion

Talk to some else about the issues covered in these activities



Become the teacher!

See if you can go through these activities again, as the teacher, with somebody else in your household

It's normal to feel anxious or worried about a pandemic. Knowing the facts is one way to help deal with this. Check out [youngminds.org.uk](https://www.youngminds.org.uk) for further support.