

AI for Information, News & Misinformation

Using AI as a Helper While Staying Skeptical

What We'll Cover Today

1

Using AI to
Explain
Complex
News

2

Spotting an
Hallucination

3

Deepfakes &
Synthetic
Media

4

Verifying
Claims
& Sources

5

Hands-On
Activity



Approximately 60–90 minutes

AI as Your Research Helper

AI Can Help You...

- Translate confusing medical or legal language into plain English
- Summarize long news stories in a few sentences
- Explain how a new law might affect your benefits
- Answer follow-up questions in a conversation

Try Asking AI:

Explain in plain language how the Medicare Part D coverage gap works.

"Summarize this article about Social Security changes in 3 simple sentences."

"What does 'inflation-adjusted' mean and why does it matter for my retirement?"

Great Tool — But Always Cross-Check!

⚠️ AI is a starting point, NOT a final authority. Always verify with a trusted source.



Step 1

Ask AI to explain
or summarize



Step 2

Find the original
news article or official
website to confirm



Step 3

Compare —
does AI match
the real source?

What Are AI Hallucinations?

When AI confidently states something that is completely made up — a fake fact, a wrong date, a doctor who doesn't exist — that's a hallucination.



Fake Citation

AI says "According to a 2023 Mayo Clinic study..." but the study never existed.



Wrong Person

AI names a local doctor as the head of a hospital — but it's the wrong person.



Outdated Law

AI describes a Medicare rule that changed two years ago as if it's current.

AI does NOT know when it's wrong — it sounds confident regardless!

Your 3 Magic Challenge Phrases

Politely push back — AI responds well to these requests:

1

"Show me your sources"

Ask AI to list where it got the information.
Then check those sources yourself.

2

"Explain it step by step"

Breaks down complex reasoning so you can
spot where something doesn't make sense.

3

"Are there other views on this?"

Prompts AI to share different perspectives
so you get a more balanced picture.

Deepfakes & Synthetic Media

Deepfakes are AI-generated images, audio, or video that make it look or sound like a real person said or did something they never actually said or did.



Fake Images

- Photos of events that never happened
- Famous people placed in fake situations
- AI-generated faces that look completely real



Fake Audio

- Voice cloning — sounds exactly like a real person
- Scam calls that mimic a grandchild's voice
- Fake political speeches or statements



Fake Video

- Faces swapped onto other people's bodies
- Video of a politician saying things they never said
- Fake news clips from real-looking studios

Warning Signs — How to Spot a Deepfake



Images & Video

- Blurry or wavy edges around the face or hair
- Eyes that don't blink naturally or look glassy
- Teeth, ears, or jewelry that look distorted
- Lighting doesn't match — face brighter than background
- Lip movements that are slightly off from the words
- Unnatural skin texture — too smooth or too blotchy



Audio & Phone Calls

- Flat or robotic tone — lacks normal emotion
- Unusual pauses or unnatural rhythm
- Background sounds that seem added artificially
- Caller says it's urgent and asks for money or info
- If unsure: hang up and call back on a number YOU know
- "Does it feel right?" — trust your gut and verify

Deepfakes in the Real World — What to Watch For



The Grandchild Scam

You get a frantic call: "Grandma, I'm in jail, please wire \$2,000."

AI can clone a voice from just 3 seconds of audio found online.

Rule: Hang up. Call your grandchild directly on their real number.



Fake Political Video

A video circulates showing a senator "confessing" to a crime.

Check: Is this on the senator's official site? Reported by AP, Reuters, or PBS?

Rule: If you only see it shared on social media -- be very skeptical.



Fake Health Advice

An image of a famous doctor promotes a miracle supplement.

AI can create convincing photos of people in lab coats.

Rule: Check the actual hospital or clinic website. Real doctors don't advertise this way.

The SIFT Method — Your 4-Step Fact-Check

S

STOP

Don't react or share immediately.
Take a breath — pause before you forward.

I

INVESTIGATE the Source

Who wrote this? Is this a real news organization?
Look up the website's "About" page.

F

FIND Better Coverage

Search for the same story on two or three different trusted news sites.

T

TRACE Claims to the Origin

Where did this start? Find the original source — not just someone sharing it.

Your Verification Toolkit

Use Multiple Sources

If only ONE outlet is reporting it — wait.

Major real stories are covered by many news organizations.

Check the Date

Old stories sometimes recirculate as if they're new.

Always look for the publication date.

Look for the Original

Don't stop at someone's Facebook post.

Find the actual article, study, or official announcement.

Seek Reputable Organizations

AP News, Reuters, PBS NewsHour, NPR, AARP, Mayo Clinic, CDC — these have editorial standards.

Reverse Image Search

Right-click any image on a computer → "Search image."
Finds if the photo is being used out of context.

Ask a Librarian!

Public libraries offer free media literacy help.
Librarians are trained researchers — use them!

Trusted Sources Worth Bookmarking



General News

AP News
(apnews.com)

Reuters
(reuters.com)

PBS NewsHour
(pbs.org/newshour)

NPR (npr.org)



Health

Information

Mayo Clinic
(mayoclinic.org)

NIH MedlinePlus
(medlineplus.gov)

CDC (cdc.gov)

AARP Health
(aarp.org/health)



Fact-Checking

Sites

Snopes
(snopes.com)

FactCheck.org

PolitiFact
(politifact.com)

AP Fact Check



Senior-Specific

AARP (aarp.org)

Social Security
(ssa.gov)

Medicare
(medicare.gov)

Benefits.gov



Activity Time!

Use AI to make something useful

- Click on this link ([explanation](#)) and copy/paste into Artificial Intelligence
- Working in pairs, paste the context into Chat (open another browser tab and type in Chatgpt. Tell it to simplify for use on your website.
- Observe how Amazon's terms are made useful for something else. Also observe that Chat offers guidance.
- We'll share our findings as a group (approx. 20 minutes)

Activity: Your Comparison Worksheet



MATCHES

Information that appears in BOTH the AI version and the real article.

Dates and facts that agree

People named correctly

Main topic described the same way



DIFFERS

Information that appears in both but in a different or contradictory way.

Statistics that don't match

Quotes that are paraphrased or changed

Different timeline or sequence



MISSING

Important information in the real article that the AI LEFT OUT.

Context or background not included

Expert opinions omitted

Caveats or warnings skipped

Group Discussion



What surprised you most about the AI version?

Was it more accurate than you expected — or less?



What was missing from the AI's explanation?

Did the real article include important context or warnings the AI skipped?



Would you share the AI version with a friend?

After this comparison, what would you want to double-check first?



How might you use AI differently now?

What's one thing you'll do next time before trusting an AI explanation?

Key Takeaways

✓ AI is a helpful research assistant — not a replacement for trusted sources

✓ Challenge AI with: Show sources • Step by step • Other views

✓ AI can hallucinate — it sounds confident even when it's wrong

✓ Deepfakes can fake images, audio, and video of real people

✓ Use SIFT: Stop • Investigate • Find better coverage • Trace origins

✓ Bookmark fact-checkers: Snopes, FactCheck.org, AP Fact Check

Questions & Open Discussion

No question is too basic — that's why we're here!

Remember:

- Being skeptical is a SKILL — and you're already developing it
- It's OK to say "I'm not sure — let me check that"
- You don't have to use AI — knowing what it is helps you recognize it

Module 3 Complete • See you next class!