

Is Breaking News Broken on Social Media

 15
minutes

What You'll Need: [Video](#) • [Student Handout \(optional\)](#)

Note: At one point in the video, it refers to the 2020 election but these skills can be applied to any election cycle or any breaking news event. Please make that connection for students in the discussion.

Activity Steps

1. **Ask:** How do you usually find out about breaking news?

Invite students to share their prior knowledge. If your students are already familiar with how breaking news works on social media, you can ask these follow-up questions:

- How can breaking news be verified on social media?
- What are ways that breaking news can be manipulated?

2. **Say:** *Today we're going to explore the challenges of finding credible and accurate news on social media.*

3. **Define "breaking news"** as *information being reported about an event that has just happened or is occurring now.*

4. **(optional) Distribute** the [Should We Trust Breaking News on Social Media? handout](#) and ask students to use it to take notes as they watch the video.

Explain that they can answer the handout questions at any point in the video.

5. **Show** the [Is Your Breaking News Broken? video](#). Consider pausing at various points throughout and/or screening the video more than once to aid in students' understanding.

6. After watching the video, have students **share** what they wrote in their notes. **Lead** a discussion that focuses on how people find out about breaking news during an election season using any or all of the questions below:

- What are some ways that social media helps spread the word about important issues that people might not otherwise find out about?
- When people share false or misleading information online, it's often by accident. Why do you think this happens?



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News & Media Literacy

Adapted from <https://commonsense.com/education>.

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- What do you think motivates some people to intentionally create or share false information online? Do you think social media platforms have a responsibility to stop this from happening?
- Even when they're shared by credible news outlets, breaking news stories on social media don't tend to have all the facts at first, and can sometimes include inaccuracies. How can social media users deal with this problem?

7. **Say:** *As the video noted, we need to be patient, avoid rushing to judgment, think before we share, be skeptical of sensationalism, and, of course, consider the source.*

