Topic

Conversation for Advanced

Lesson 8
Misinformation

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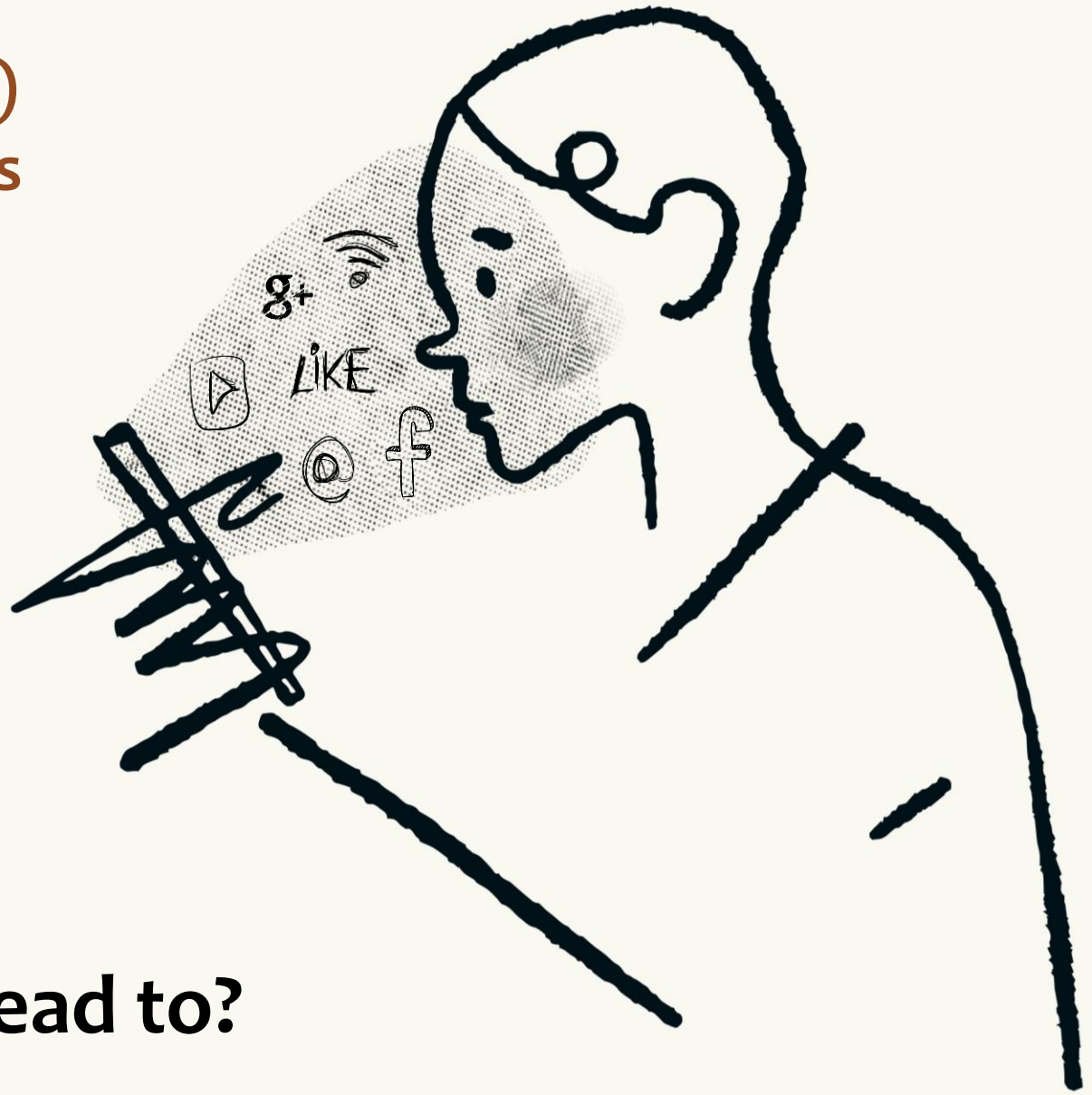
The World Economic Forum (WEF) lists massive digital information as one of the greatest threats to the modern society.

- WEF, 2013



What can misinformation lead to?

Target Language

Introduce the learning goals to the student.

In this lesson, we will learn about **misinformation**:

- read an article about misinformation in the digital age;
- learn words and expressions about the misinformation in the passage;
- share your opinions about misinformation.

Key words:

1. user-generated content
2. paved the way
3. deceive
4. unverified
5. credulous
6. algorithm
7. flag
8. credible
9. skepticism

Reading

Read the passage and pay attention to the key words.

Advancements in communication technology have had extensive benefits in spreading information to people. For instance, user-generated content in online social media has made it easier for people who share common interests, worldviews, and stories to come together. However, this freedom of information has also paved the way for the spread of misinformation.

As defined, "misinformation" is false information, regardless of whether or not it's intended to mislead or deceive people. Recent studies show that increased exposure to unverified rumors increases the likelihood of people being credulous. Moreover, people's desire for instant answers may also overpower their desire to be certain of their validity.

Comprehension Check:

1. What is the disadvantage of freedom of information?
2. According to the passage, what is misinformation?
3. How does increased exposure to unverified rumors affect people?

Reading

Read the passage and pay attention to the key words.

To counter digital misinformation, some popular websites have proposed different solutions. Google is developing an algorithm that ranks the result of questions through a trustworthiness score. Facebook has also suggested a community-driven approach, in which users can flag false content to correct the newsfeed algorithm. But do you think these efforts are enough to combat one of the main threats to our digital society?

In an era of misinformation, questioning everything you read must be the standard. Is it the most up-to-date information? Is the author credible? Are there any other sources that confirm the information? Is the information too good to be true? At the end of the day, skepticism goes a long way to combat misinformation.

Comprehension Check:

4. *Cite some proposed solutions of some popular websites to counter digital misinformation. Do you think these solutions are enough? Why?*
5. *Why do we need to be skeptical when reading information?*

Respond to Reading

Complete the task.

Identify if the following statements agree with the information given in the passage. Write TRUE, FALSE, or NOT GIVEN.

_____ 1. User-generated content in social media has made it easier for people who have the same interests to come together.

_____ 2. Freedom of information has both advantages and disadvantages.

_____ 3. Misinformation refers to information that may or may not be true depending on who spreads the information.

_____ 4. Google and Facebook have been successful in removing misinformation in their websites.

_____ 5. Facebook has a feature in which users are able to flag false information to correct the newsfeed algorithm.

_____ 6. Being skeptical and questioning information we read on social media will increase the chances of misinformation.

Free Talk

Give some ways to avoid misinformation.

How can you protect yourself from misinformation?

1. consider the source of the information
2.
3.
4.
5.

Summary

Make a short summary of the topic you have learned today.

In an era of misinformation, questioning everything you read must be the standard. At the end of the day, skepticism goes a long way to combat misinformation.

- Talk about misinformation and how to prevent it.

  You may use some of the words you've learned.

1. user-generated content
2. paved the way
3. deceive
4. unverified
5. credulous
6. algorithm
7. flag
8. credible
9. skepticism

Your opinion…

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