

Internet Photo Hoaxes

Materials/Resources:

Photographic deception has been common since the advent of photography. However, the Internet has catapulted this medium to an unprecedented level with many of these photographic hoaxes playing a significant role in modern day politics, attitudes, and belief systems. With that being said, teaching our students to better identify deception within this media forum is critical. A great way to introduce this broad topic is by starting with photographic hoaxes. This activity underscores the lesson that “you can’t believe everything you see, read, and learn about on the Internet.”

Some excellent references for this activity are:

[The Hoax Photo Archive](#)

[Crazy Critters](#)

[Urban Legends Slideshow](#)

Note: Since the majority of these pictures are in the public domain, I would recommend making a file of pre-selected pictures and store them on a flash drive for access during instruction. Remember to avoid using pictures that may be deemed insensitive or inappropriate to the school setting.

Skills Targeted:

- *Fact vs. Fiction
- *Compare & Contrast
- *Identification of clues and critical details
- *Vocabulary

Instruction:

1. Introduce this lesson by defining and discussing the terms of **hoax** and **urban legend**. Emphasize to the students, the importance of discerning false information presented on the Internet.
2. Therapist may facilitate a conversation as to how and why information is spread falsely. A discussion of **folklore** is appropriate to the conversation and can provide students with a deeper understanding of this topic.
3. Introduce pre-selected pictures of photographic trickery. Have students state whether they think the photos are real or fake and why.
4. Teach students to use clues to support their viewpoint.
5. Facilitate a discussion as to how a particular photograph may influence another’s belief system or views.