

Learning objectives

- Explain how artificial intelligence can create realistic fake video and audio.
- Identify the technical and contextual clues that reveal a deepfake.
- Evaluate the potential impact of manipulated media on public trust.

Starter

Imagine seeing a video of a famous leader saying something completely ridiculous, or hearing a voice note from a friend asking for money that was not actually them. This is now possible using technology called deepfakes and voice cloning. Today we will learn how to look closer and spot the tells.

Main activity

The most reliable check is not the video, it is the source. A good fake may show none of the clues below, so always start here: who posted it, do trusted news sites report the same thing, and does a reverse-image or reverse-video search show where it really came from?

Some clues can sometimes reveal a weaker fake, but a good fake may hide all of them:

- Unnatural blinking: Deepfake faces often blink too rarely, too frequently, or in an unnatural, jerky rhythm.
- Mismatched shadows and lighting: Look closely at the nose, eyes, and neck; the light sources on the face often do not match the background environment.
- Audio glitches and flat tone: Cloned voices can sound robotic, lack natural breathing sounds, or miss subtle emotional inflections.
- Lip-sync misalignment: The words being spoken do not quite match the natural movements of the mouth and jaw.
- Strange border details: Watch the edges of the face, hair, and ears, which may blur, flicker, or double-up against the background.

Pair activity:

Working in pairs, create a "Spotter's Checklist" poster. One person designs the checklist for video tells, and the other designs the checklist for audio tells, then combine your ideas to make a complete guide.

Discussion questions:

1. Why might someone want to create a realistic deepfake video of a politician or celebrity?
2. If you receive a strange voice note from a friend asking for urgent help, how can you verify it is really them?
3. How does the existence of deepfakes affect our ability to trust the news we see online?
4. What responsibilities do social media platforms have in labelling or removing manipulated

media?

Plenary

As technology improves, seeing and hearing should no longer be automatically believing. By staying curious and checking our sources, we can keep ourselves from being misled by clever fakes.

Curriculum links

PSHE Association (Living in the Wider World) / Education for a Connected World (Information Literacy)

For the teacher — this also covers:

Critical evaluation of sources (media and information literacy); paired collaboration and checklist/poster design (art and design); structured discussion (oracy).