

**Listening skills practice: How false information spreads – exercises**

Listen to the radio interview about how false information spreads and do the exercises to practise and improve your listening skills.

**Preparation**

Match the vocabulary with the correct definition and write a–j next to the numbers 1–10.

- |         |                          |    |   |
|---------|--------------------------|----|---|
| 1.....  | inaccuracies             | a. | to prove that something is true                                 |
| 2.....  | to vaccinate             | b. | to write or say the words of a writer, book, etc.               |
| 3.....  | to cite                  | c. | an African mammal with a long nose that eats ants               |
| 4.....  | measles                  | d. | a plan to trick or deceive someone                              |
| 5.....  | an aardvark              | e. | to intentionally damage property belonging to others            |
| 6.....  | a hoax                   | f. | to change something so that it doesn't work as intended         |
| 7.....  | to vandalise             | g. | statements that are not correct                                 |
| 8.....  | to verify                | h. | not based on facts or proof                                     |
| 9.....  | to tamper with something | i. | to give a person an injection to prevent them getting a disease |
| 10..... | unfounded                | j. | an infectious disease which covers the body in small red spots  |

**1. Check your understanding: multiple choice**

Circle the best answer to these questions.

- Which statement about circular reporting is true?
  - It is the spread of true information.
  - It is when false information is validated by one other source only.
  - It only occurs with information on Wikipedia.
  - It may involve several publications.
- Which statement is true about journalists?
  - They are not permitted to copy information from Wikipedia.
  - They refuse to copy information from Wikipedia.
  - As soon as they include information in an article, they verify the information.
  - Many journalists may publish inaccuracies in several articles.
- Which statement is correct?
  - Another name for a coati is a Brazilian aardvark.
  - The American student changed the information on Wikipedia to what he believed to be the truth.
  - Many people believed that a Brazilian aardvark was the same as a coati.
  - When writers wrote about the Brazilian aardvark they knew it was a joke.

4. Which statement is true about Wikipedia?
  - a. Some people add false content to a Wikipedia entry intentionally.
  - b. Updating information on Wikipedia is against the law.
  - c. There is hardly any true information on Wikipedia.
  - d. Many true facts on Wikipedia initially appear as false information.
5. What is true about childhood vaccines and autism?
  - a. There is a clear connection between childhood vaccines and autism.
  - b. Circular reporting incited many parents not to vaccinate their children.
  - c. The claims that they were connected first appeared on Wikipedia.
  - d. The media proved early on that the claims about vaccines and autism were false.
6. Which statement is correct?
  - a. Generally speaking, it's easy to identify false information.
  - b. If the original source is Wikipedia or the media, the information is almost always false.
  - c. Reflecting critically on what we read is something most people often do.
  - d. Lack of time to think and investigate can cause us to believe things that aren't true.

## 2. Check your understanding: gap fill

Complete the expressions from the audio with a phrase from the box.

take things at face value	by any means	spread like wildfire	In a nutshell
thought nothing more of it		in no way	

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (using as few words as possible), it's the confirmation of false information.
2. ... and \_\_\_\_\_ (not at all) is obvious as being false.
3. ... then he forgot about it and \_\_\_\_\_ (spent no time thinking about it).
4. That's not to say that all information on Wikipedia is false \_\_\_\_\_ (not at all).
5. ... unsupported claims were picked up by the media and \_\_\_\_\_ (became known by lots of people very quickly).
6. We often \_\_\_\_\_ (accept things as they appear, rather than thinking carefully about them).

### Discussion

Do you use Wikipedia? What's your opinion of it?

Have you ever believed information and later discovered it was false? What happened?