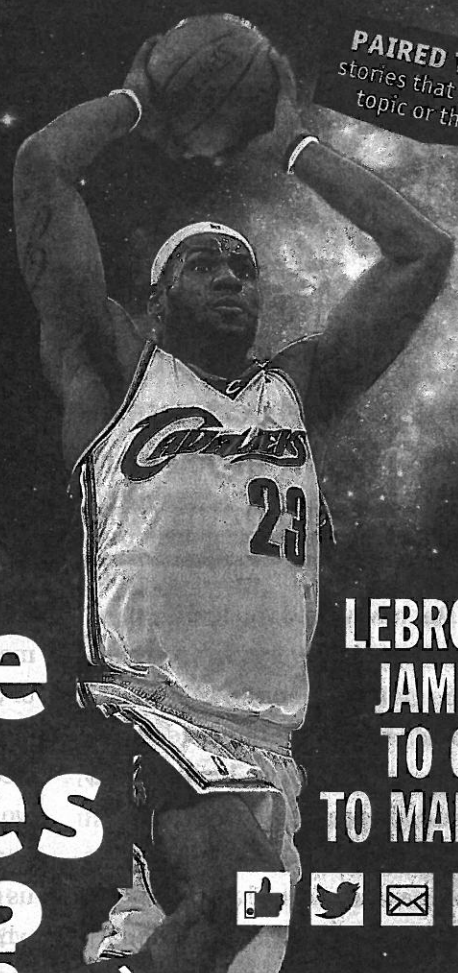


**TEEN GETS  
FINGER  
TRANSPLANT  
AFTER TOO  
MUCH TEXTING**

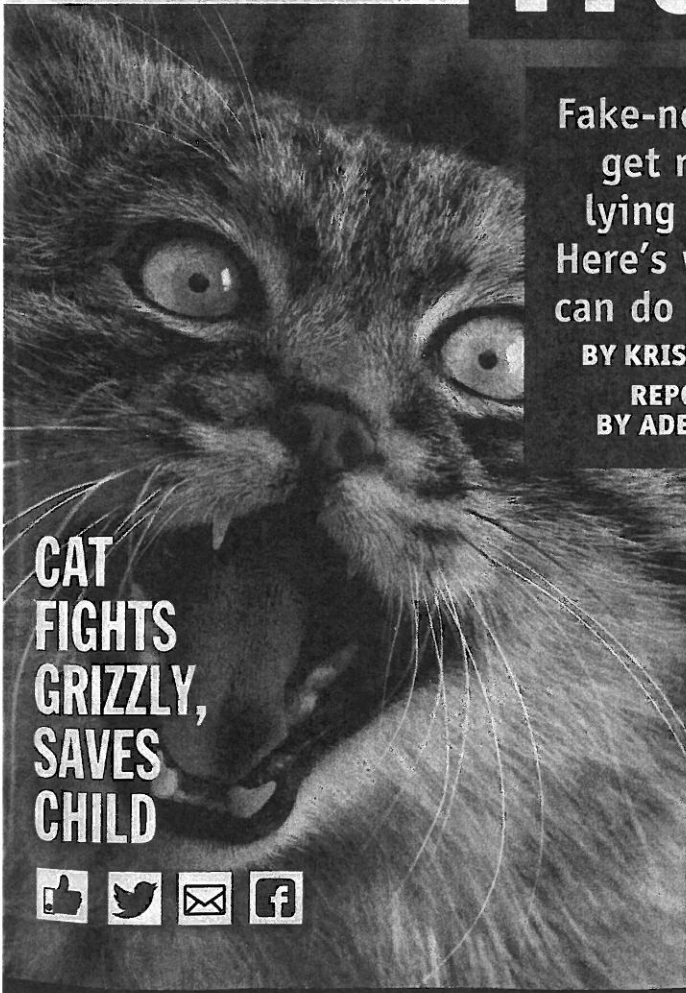


**PAIRED TEXTS**  
stories that share a  
topic or theme

**LEBRON  
JAMES  
TO GO  
TO MARS**



# Are These Stories True? (NOPE.)



**CAT  
FIGHTS  
GRIZZLY,  
SAVES  
CHILD**



Fake-news sites  
get rich by  
lying to you.  
Here's what you  
can do about it.

**BY KRISTIN LEWIS  
REPORTING  
BY ADEE BRAUN**



**LOCAL  
KID FINDS  
T. REX IN  
SWIMMING  
POOL**



Turn  
the page  
to find out more!

**O**ver the years, I have written dozens of articles for *Scope*. You trust me, I hope, to craft stories for you that are true and accurate. I take your trust very seriously. My articles are the result of weeks and sometimes months of research.

But how would you feel if you found out that everything you read in *Scope* this year was a lie? You would probably be outraged.

*Scope* would never publish a fake or misleading story, but right now, dozens of fake “news” sites are doing exactly that. They put out made-up stories with **sensational** headlines to lure people into clicking and sharing.

And it works.

During the past year, bogus stories have spread across the internet like wildfire. There was the one about presidential candidate Hillary Clinton selling weapons to terrorists. Then there was the one about people in Italy dying after getting flu shots.

Experts say the fake-news epidemic has created a crisis in our country. “We have news we can’t trust,” says Michael Spikes from the Center for News Literacy, an organization that provides training on how to critically evaluate information in the news. “We have no way to know what’s true and what’s not.”

The U.S. is a democracy. That means we aren’t ruled by a king or queen. Rather, our country is run by leaders we choose in our elections. But a democracy can work only if the people—you and I—are informed. This helps us make good decisions about whom to vote for and what issues to support. We rely on news organizations to help us *become* informed.

But what if many of us have the wrong information? How can we make good decisions?

### Duped

When your parents and grandparents were your age, most people got their news from established sources—from **reputable** newspapers like the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*

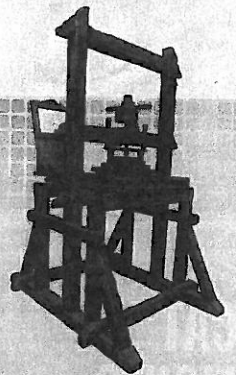
and from nightly news programs on major TV networks. Media companies employed professional journalists who conducted thorough research and composed fact-based articles to inform the public about the events and issues of the day. These journalists aimed to keep their personal feelings out of their stories. It was up to readers to form their own opinions.

Today, anyone with a Wi-Fi connection and a smartphone can write a “news” story and publish it online. And there’s no obligation to tell the truth or be **objective**.

Of course, sometimes it’s easy to spot fakes. You probably wouldn’t be duped by headlines like “Zombies Attack Super Bowl” or “Millions of Crocodiles Overtake Town.” But many fake-news articles don’t seem far-fetched—such as the one that said the Pope supported then-presidential candidate Donald Trump. (The Pope says he

**TRUE  
OR  
FALSE**

**News  
through  
the years**



**The Printing Press**  
Before 1439, everything had to be handwritten. The printing press made it easy to make copies quickly. Fake news took off.



does not endorse any politician.)

Fake stories may even come with photos and believable quotes.

And they may appear on sites with serious-sounding names like Empire News or Political Insider.

People **unwittingly** share these **legitimate**-looking fake stories—emailing, texting, posting, tweeting. The stories get shared hundreds of thousands of times.

That means big money for fake-news sites.

### Getting Rich

When you click or share a story, the person or company that created the site gets money. This money comes from advertisers who pay sites based on the number of views their ads get. That's the point of shocking or outrageous headlines: to get you to click.

Anyone can make a website and put ads on it using technology from companies like Google and Facebook. The more traffic to your site, the more money you can get.

### Founding Fathers Go Fake

John Adams and other patriots in Boston made up stories to turn people against the British, who then ruled the American Colonies. In 1769, Adams wrote in his diary that he was "cooking up paragraphs, articles, occurrences, etc."



"I make like \$10,000 a month from AdSense," fake-news writer Paul Horner told the *Washington Post*.

The bottom line? Fake-news sites get rich by telling you lies.

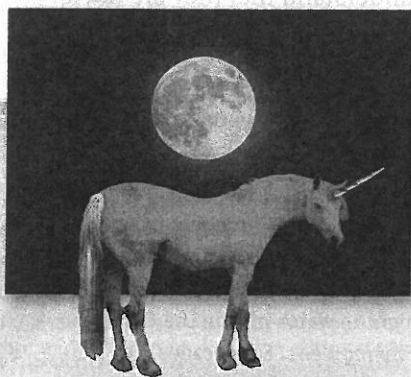
Last year, a teenager in the country of Macedonia churned out fake stories about the U.S. presidential candidates. He didn't care who won—he just wanted to make enough money to buy some fancy clothes and a new laptop (which he did). But his fake stories affected what Americans thought about the election and may have even influenced their votes.

That's a serious problem.

What we read shapes our view of the world. If our minds are filled with misinformation, our sense of what is real can become skewed.

### History of Lies

Fake news is not new. It has been a problem since the introduction of the printing press in Europe in



### The Great Moon Hoax

In 1835, the *New York Sun* reported that a famous scientist had used a powerful telescope to observe life on the moon—including blue unicorns and hairy flying moon people. The made-up story created much excitement.

1439. In the centuries that followed, outrageous stories preyed upon people's fears about the unknown and their grief after tragedies. There were nail-biting reports of monsters devouring sailors at sea and claims that sinners were to blame for natural disasters.

Wildly inaccurate stories were a problem in early America too. During the Revolutionary War, founding father Benjamin Franklin himself was guilty of peddling lies. He drummed up support for the war by writing made-up stories about Native Americans joining forces with the British to murder Americans.

After the Civil War, things got worse. The U.S. population was growing, and more people were learning how to read. At the same time, technologies like the telegraph and high-speed electric printing presses were making it possible to churn out stories faster than ever.

Suddenly, there were a lot more people with an appetite for written news.



### Zoo Animal Panic

In 1874, the *New York Herald* ran a story that claimed panthers, tigers, and other animals had escaped from the Central Park Zoo. A note at the end said the story was fake, but few readers noticed. Panic spread across New York City.



In response, many newspapers sprang up—some more honest than others. Like the fake-news sites of today, these papers made money by getting as many readers as possible.

Less-honest newspapers competed with each other by **overdramatizing** stories or flat-out making them up. Quotes came from interviews that were never conducted and “experts” who weren’t experts at all. This type of sensational reporting came to be known as “yellow journalism.”

### The Trusted Journalist

Eventually, the public developed a distaste for yellow journalism. Serious newspapers gained readers by building a reputation for fair and honest reporting. And by the mid-20th century, a golden era of journalism had begun.

News programs prided themselves on rigorous research and diligent fact-checking. Journalists became heroes for

uncovering the truth. TV anchors like Walter Cronkite were respected household names.

If a journalist lied or misrepresented the truth, the consequences were severe. The journalist’s reputation would be ruined and his or her career would be destroyed. This is still typically the case at serious news organizations today.

But the writers of fake news often face no consequences at all.

### Up to Us

Fake news continued throughout the 20th century, but for the most part, it appeared in tabloids, not in respected news sources. Tabloids, some of which are still around, often publish outlandish tales about aliens and Bigfoot along with **unsubstantiated** rumors and celebrity gossip. Most readers can easily identify tabloids, and understand that they are not a place to find real information.

But unlike tabloids, online fake news can be hard to identify.

In a recent study in the UK by YouGov, 1,684 adults were presented with six stories and asked to decide which ones were fake and which ones were real. Only 4 percent of participants could identify all three of the fake stories.

Fortunately, there is a lot we can do to help fight fake news.

Tech companies like Google and Facebook are working to restrict advertising from fake-news sites. Facebook is also working on a new feature that lets users mark questionable stories.

These measures can help, but they can’t completely stop the spread of fake stories. That responsibility is yours and mine.

“We all have to work a little bit harder to get accurate information—to know where to get it and how to spot it,” says Eugene Kiely from FactCheck.org.

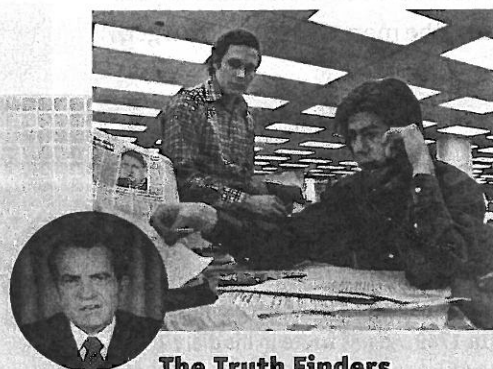


### Yellow Journalism

During the era of yellow journalism—from the late 1800s to the early 1900s—kids called “newsies” helped sell papers. The newsies walked city streets shouting out sensational headlines to get people to buy papers.

### The Trusted Anchor

Walter Cronkite was a trusted TV news anchor throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Americans gathered around their TVs each night to watch him on the *CBS Evening News*. For decades, he was the face of the news—and an icon of American journalism.



### The Truth Finders

Investigative journalists work hard to uncover the truth. In 1972, five men were arrested for breaking into the Democratic National Committee offices at the Watergate Hotel in D.C. Reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein (above) tied the break-in to President Richard Nixon (inset). Eventually, Nixon resigned and more than 30 people pleaded guilty or were convicted.



# HOW TO SPOT THE FAKES

## Be a Detective

So how do you spot a fake story?

Like a detective searching for evidence to solve a crime, you can search a story for clues to help you decide whether it is reliable.

Start by asking yourself these questions:

*Is the story well-researched?*

A reliable news story generally has multiple sources—such as interviews, eyewitness accounts, studies, and expert opinions.

*Are the sources reliable?* If a study is mentioned, its source should be included so you can look it up and make sure the organization that conducted the study is trustworthy. For example, let's say an article quotes a study that found marshmallows are healthier than broccoli. The study was conducted by a marshmallow company. Do you think that study can be trusted?

*If "experts" are quoted, who are they? Are they qualified to talk about the topic?* If a story about space quotes a scientist from NASA, it's

safe to assume you can trust that scientist.

*Can the information be verified by other sources?* Check what you read. FactCheck.org and PolitiFact.com are good places to start.

*And finally, who originally published the story?* You can usually rely on established news organizations that have been around for a long time. Everyone makes mistakes, but reputable news organizations will issue **retractions** or **corrections** when they do. These organizations do not want to mislead you, because their business is based on a reputation for **integrity**.

That is the difference between them and fake-news sites.

So what do you do if you suspect an online story is bogus? All you have to do is—nothing. That is to say, simply don't share it.

## The Truth

As I wrote this article, I kept a quote by TV news anchor Edward R. Murrow (1908-1965) above my desk: "To be persuasive we must be believable; to be believable we must be credible; to be credible we must be truthful."

## 1 Check the URL.

Don't assume that a site that looks legitimate actually is. Sites ending with .com.co should raise a red flag. For example, abcnews.com is legitimate, but abcnews.com.co is not.

## 2 Verify the quotes.

Sometimes quotes are taken out of context to support a point an author wants to make. A quote from, say, the president of the United States can be googled. Find a full transcript or video of what the president said.

## 3 Evaluate the sources.

A good news story has multiple quotes and/or sources—usually from professionals who know a lot about the topic. If a story has no quotes, or those quoted aren't qualified to have an expert opinion, the story likely isn't trustworthy.

## 4 Recognize satire.

Satire uses humor, exaggeration, or irony to make a point about something. The stories on satirical websites are not meant to be taken as fact. Check the "About Us" page if you aren't sure whether a site is satirical.

## Fake-News Sites

Today's digital technologies like smartphones and social media allow anyone to write anything and publish it online. Many fake stories are mistaken for real ones, creating confusion among the public.



Can a story be dangerous?  
Turn the page!

In this famous folktale, a harmless piece of gossip turns out to be not so harmless after all.

# The Story

In a small village lived a boy named Yankel, who loved to tell stories. Not his own stories, mind you. Yankel found other people's stories more interesting. And because his father owned the village store, and the store was where everyone gathered to trade news, Yankel overheard many stories, which he took pride in repeating.

One day in his father's store,

Yankel heard the baker Reb Wulff laughing. "Can you believe what I did? I lost my glasses! And so—" Reb Wulff let out a thunderous whoop "—I put salt in the rugelach, not sugar! Salt! Like stones those rugelach would have tasted!"

Everyone erupted in laughter.

Yankel slipped out to tell his friends, so he never heard Reb Wulff tell how his wife discovered his mistake and made him throw away the dough. "Even the chickens would not eat it," Reb Wulff had said.

At the schoolyard, Yankel told his friends his latest story. "Reb Wulff put salt in the rugelach. Not sugar! Salt! Imagine

that!" Yankel said. "Those rugelach tasted like stones!"

"Yech!" said Yankel's friends. "We'll never eat anything from Reb Wulff's bakery again!"

And then Yankel's friends ran off to repeat the story.

Later that day, as Yankel hurried back to his father's store, he did not notice that the bakery was empty, except for the rabbi, who was biting into rugelach so sweet and tender it melted in his mouth.

"Yankel," the rabbi called. "I have a job for you. Come with me." Yankel followed the rabbi to his house. There, the rabbi presented a brown sack to Yankel.

Yankel peered inside. "This sack is full of feathers."

"I want you to put one feather on

Rugelach (ROO-guh-luh) is a delicious pastry. The name means "little twists" in Yiddish.





# Got Away That

every doorstep in the village," the rabbi said.

"On every doorstep? Why?"

"You will see soon enough."

Yankel laid a feather on the doorstep of his father's store. He dropped the feather, not bothering to see where it landed. He did the same thing at the houses of Levi the tailor, Mendel the butcher, and Reb Wulff the baker. Yankel did not feel the gust of wind that sent a cloud of feathers swirling behind him. He kept dropping feathers until he'd gone to every house in the village.

## Back at the rabbi's house,

Yankel held out the empty sack.

"Now bring all the feathers back to me," the rabbi said. "But hurry,

for soon it will be dark."

Yankel felt queasy.

How would he find all the feathers before dark?

But off he went. At the house of Levi the tailor, he slipped and landed in a cold puddle. He didn't find a feather. At the house of Mendel the butcher, Yankel tripped on a loose cobblestone and tore his trousers. He didn't find a feather. At the house of Reb Wulff the baker, he didn't find a feather. But the window was open, and he heard Reb Wulff's wife say, "What bad luck you sold so little today. We barely make ends meet as it is. And after you had to throw out all that batter!"

**The sun had set** by the time Yankel returned to the rabbi's house. A full moon lit the sky. The silvery stars looked like the feathers he'd lost that afternoon. He was tired, hungry, and very unhappy.

"Show me what you have," the rabbi said.

"I found no feathers," Yankel

said. "They are gone. I cannot get them back."

"And so it is with the stories you spread," the rabbi said, motioning Yankel to the table, where a bowl of steaming soup, a thick slice of bread, and a plate of rugelach awaited. "Once you tell a story, you cannot take it back. It goes where it goes, and you cannot say where or how or when. Think of that next time you tell a story."

Yankel finished his bread and soup. Then he ate all the rugelach, which seemed unusually tender and sweet. He thanked the rabbi for the lesson and left.

**As he made his way home,** Yankel knew what stories he would tell his schoolmates the next day.

First, the story of Reb Wulff the baker, whose wife made him throw out the salty dough and who then baked the sweetest rugelach Yankel had ever tasted. Then he would tell his own story, the story of a boy who went looking for feathers that blew away in the wind. ●

## WRITING CONTEST

In this folktale, the rabbi teaches Yankel a lesson. Describe how that lesson applies to fake news. What can be done to protect against fake news? Use text evidence from both the article and the folktale to support your ideas. Send your essay to **STOP FAKE NEWS CONTEST**. Five winners will each get *The Cruisers* by Walter Dean Myers.

GET THIS  
ACTIVITY  
ONLINE

WALTER DEAN MYERS

THE  
CRUISERS





# Paired Texts Vocabulary Practice

**Directions:** Below are titles and summaries for imaginary books. Choose the best title for each book. Briefly explain your choices. (There is one title you will not use.)

## BOOK TITLES

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| A. <i>The Power of Integrity</i>         | C. <i>Sensational!</i>         |
| B. <i>Overdramatize No More: 10 Tips</i> | D. <i>Unsubstantiated</i>      |
|  | E. <i>Unwittingly Involved</i> |

1. Timothy Smith insists that he was visited by aliens, but he has no evidence of the visit, and no one believes him. . . yet.

Title (A-E): \_\_\_\_\_ Why I chose this title: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. You'll love this hilarious collection of over-the-top headlines and articles from the past 100 years of journalism.

Title (A-E): \_\_\_\_\_ Why I chose this title: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Historian Phil Flynn remembers five American presidents whose honesty and fairness made them some of the nation's greatest leaders.

Title (A-E): \_\_\_\_\_ Why I chose this title: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Dr. Kay Cook explains how writing in a daily journal can help you calm your emotions and resist the urge to exaggerate when talking to others.

Title (A-E): \_\_\_\_\_ Why I chose this title: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Fill in the circle next to the best answer to each question.

5. Which bicycle repair shop could be described as *reputable*?

- A Pedalers, which is well-known for its good service and fair prices
- B Full Cycle, which is known for overcharging its customers for low-quality work

6. For which of the following reasons might a newspaper issue a *retraction*?

- A to inform the public that the paper just won an award
- B to inform the public that a date in a recent article was incorrect

7. Which sentence uses *unwittingly* correctly?

- A Dave had unwittingly insulted Kara; he really never meant to hurt her feelings.
- B Kara unwittingly paid no attention to Dave; she ignored his phone calls for three days.

8. Which letter is *legitimate*?

- A a letter written by Abraham Lincoln
- B a letter that is supposed to fool people into thinking it was written by Abraham Lincoln, but was actually written by a comedian

9. Which sentence does not belong in an *objective review of a movie*?

- A "This is the director's third movie, and in my opinion, the most boring of them all."
- B "The movie was filmed in New Zealand in 2016."

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Central Ideas and Details

A central idea of a text is one of the main points the author is making.

(Sometimes a central idea is called a main idea.)

A central idea can always be supported with details from the text.

**Directions:** Follow the prompts below to explore the central ideas and supporting details in "Are These Stories True? (Nope.)"

**1. Read the central idea of the section "History of Lies" stated in the box below. Then check the boxes next to the THREE details that support the central idea.**

**Central Idea:**  
**Fake news is not a new problem.**

- "The U.S. population was growing, and more people were learning how to read." (p. 11)
- "[Fake news] has been a problem since the introduction of the printing press in Europe in 1439." (p. 11)
- "During the Revolutionary War, founding father Benjamin Franklin himself was guilty of peddling lies." (p. 11)
- "Less-honest newspapers competed with each other by overdramatizing stories or flat-out making them up." (p. 12)
- "Suddenly, there were a lot more people with an appetite for written news." (p. 11)

**2. Read the details from the section "Duped" listed below. In the box, complete the central idea that these details support.**

**Central Idea:**  
**Online fake news can be \_\_\_\_\_**

**Detail 1:** "Fake stories may even come with photos and believable quotes." (p. 11)

**Detail 2:** "[Fake news stories] may appear on sites with serious-sounding names like Empire News or Political Insider." (p. 11)

**Detail 3:** "But many fake-news articles don't seem far-fetched—such as the one that said the Pope supported then-presidential candidate Donald Trump." (p. 10)



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Exploring Text Structures

"Text structure" is the term for how an author organizes information. Authors use different text structures to achieve different purposes, and one piece of writing often has multiple text structures.

**Directions:** Common text structures are listed in the boxes on the right. Use the information in these boxes to help you answer the questions below about the text structures in "Are These Stories True? (Nope.)"

1. What does the author **compare and contrast** in the introduction?

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**Description or List**

Includes details to help you picture or get to know a person, a place, a thing, or an idea

**Cause and Effect**

Explains *why* something happened (cause) and *what* happened as a result (effect)

**Problem and Solution**

Presents a problem and explains how it is solved

**Compare and Contrast**

Presents the similarities and/or differences between two items, such as a pair of events, time periods, ideas, or places

**Sequence of Events**

Describes events in the order in which they happen (also called chronological order)

2. A. Underline the text structure the author uses in the section "History of Lies."

sequence of events

cause and effect

B. Explain how you know, using evidence from the text.

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3. In the sections "Duped" and "Getting Rich," the author uses **cause and effect** to explain how the internet and new ad technology have contributed to the explosion of fake news. Below, write one effect of this increase in fake news. (You may paraphrase or quote lines from the article.)

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4. A. Which text structure does the author use in the sections "Up to Us" and "Be a Detective"?

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B. Explain how you know, using evidence from the text.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Paired Texts Quiz

**Directions:** Read the article “Are These Stories True? (Nope.)” and the folktale “The Story That Got Away.” Then answer the questions below.

- On page 11, Kristin Lewis explains that a Macedonian teen wrote fake news stories about the 2016 U.S. presidential election. According to Lewis, why did the teen write the stories?
  - to entertain Americans
  - to influence the U.S. election
  - to become famous
  - to make money
- On page 11, Lewis writes that “... Benjamin Franklin himself was guilty of peddling lies.” The phrase *peddling lies* means
  - believing rumors.
  - spreading false information on purpose.
  - feeling confused.
  - accidentally repeating untrue stories.
- Choose the BEST answer to complete this sentence: The timeline “True or False” provides information about the history of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - reputable journalism.
  - fake news.
  - both reputable journalism and fake news.
  - news published during wars.
- In the folktale, the rabbi uses \_\_\_\_\_ to teach Yankel a lesson about gossip.
  - feathers
  - salt
  - rugelach
  - rumors
- Which line of dialogue (conversation) in the folktale best helps you understand that Yankel's story led to a decline in Reb Wulff's sales?
  - “This sack is full of feathers.”
  - “Once you tell a story, you cannot take it back.”
  - “Yech!’ said Yankel's friends. ‘We'll never eat anything from Reb Wulff's bakery again!’”
  - “I found no feathers.’”
- Which idea is supported by both the article and the folktale?
  - The internet has caused a rise in fake news.
  - If you accidentally spread false information, you should try to make up for your mistake by spreading the truth.
  - Most people won't repeat a story unless they are sure it's true.
  - False information can cause harm.

### Constructed-Response Questions

**Directions:** Write your answers to the questions below on the back of this paper or type them up on a computer.

- According to “Are These Stories True? (Nope.),” why is a story from an established news organization likely to be trustworthy? Use evidence from the article to support your answer.
- How does “The Story That Got Away” support the idea that false information can spread quickly? Use evidence from the folktale to support your answer.