Use the questions below to assess the likelihood that a piece of information is fake news. The more red flags you circle, the more skeptical you should be!

1. Gauge your emotional reaction:
   - Is it strong? Are you angry? Are you intensely hoping that the information turns out to be true? False? [YES] [NO]

2. Reflect on how you encountered this. Was it promoted on a website? Did it show up in a social media feed? Was it sent to you by someone you know?

3. Consider the headline or main message:
   - Does it use excessive punctuation(!) or ALL CAPS for emphasis? [YES] [NO]
   - Does it make a claim about containing a secret or telling you something that “the media” doesn’t want you to know? [YES] [NO]
   - Don’t stop at the headline! Keep exploring.

4. Is this information designed for easy sharing, like a meme? [YES] [NO]

5. Consider the source of the information:
   - Is it a well-known source? [YES] [NO]
   - Is there a byline (an author’s name) attached to this piece? [YES] [NO]
   - Go to the website’s “About” section: Does the site describe itself as a “fantasy news” or “satirical news” site? [YES] [NO]
   - Does the person or organization that produced the information have any editorial standards? [YES] [NO]
   - Does the “contact us” section include an email address that matches the domain (not a Gmail or Yahoo email address)? [YES] [NO]
   - Does a quick search for the name of the website raise any suspicions? [YES] [NO]

6. Does the example you’re evaluating have a current date on it? [YES] [NO]

7. Does the example cite a variety of sources, including official and expert sources? Does the information this example provides appear in reports from (other) news outlets? [YES] [NO]

8. Does the example hyperlink to other quality sources? In other words, they haven’t been altered or taken from another context? [YES] [NO]

9. Can you confirm, using a reverse image search, that any images in your example are authentic (in other words, sources that haven’t been altered or taken from another context)? [YES] [NO]

10. If you searched for this example on a fact-checking site such as Snopes.com, FactCheck.org or PolitiFact.com, is there a fact-check that labels it as less than true? [YES] [NO]

REMEMBER:
- It is easy to clone an existing website and create fake tweets to fool people.
- Bots are extremely active on social media and are designed to dominate conversations and spread propaganda.
- Fake news and other misinformation often use a real image from an unrelated event.
- Debunk examples of misinformation whenever you see them. It’s good for democracy!

Visit www.checkology.org for a comprehensive collection of news literacy e-learning experiences and other resources from NLP.