

The Checkology[®] virtual classroom: Giving facts a fighting chance

The Checkology virtual classroom, the News Literacy Project's online learning platform, teaches students to separate fact from fiction, to understand the vital role of a free press in a democracy, and to become informed and engaged participants in civic life.



Why Checkology?



Information Overload

In just one minute of information-sharing activity:



188 million
emails

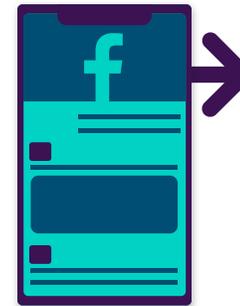


18.1 million
text messages

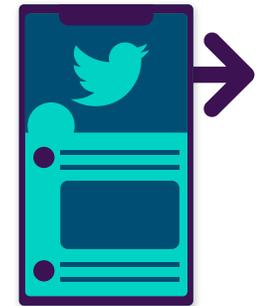
SEARCH



3.8 million
Google queries



1 million
Facebook logins

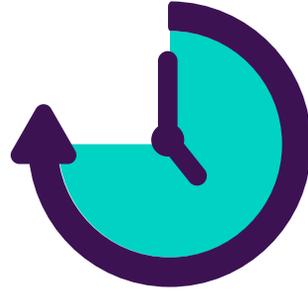


87,500
people tweeting ...

The Amplification of Misinformation



False news is
70%
more likely to be
tweeted than true
stories.



It takes true
stories about
6 times
as long as false stories
to reach 1,500 people.



True stories rarely reach
more than 1,000 people.
The **top 1%**
of false stories are
routinely shared by 1,000
to 100,000 people.

Young People Are Vulnerable



of middle school students **believed that sponsored content** was a real news story.



of high school students **questioned the credibility** of a misleading photo.



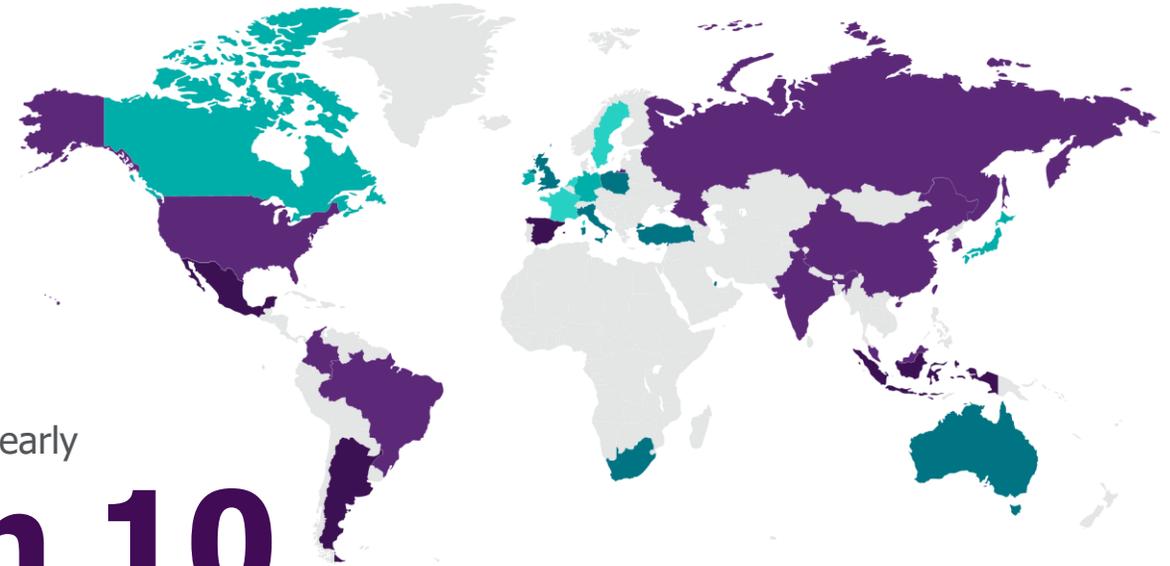
of college students could **identify the political agenda** of a lobbying group's tweet.

A Global Problem

Many Americans believe that **fake news** is sowing confusion.

23%

say they have shared a made-up news story — either knowingly or not.



Worldwide, nearly

7 in 10

worry about false information or “fake news” being used as a weapon

55-60%

France
Sweden
Netherlands

61-65%

Canada
Ireland
Japan
Germany

66-70%

Italy
Singapore
South Africa
UAE
U.K.
Australia
Hong Kong
Poland
Turkey

71-75%

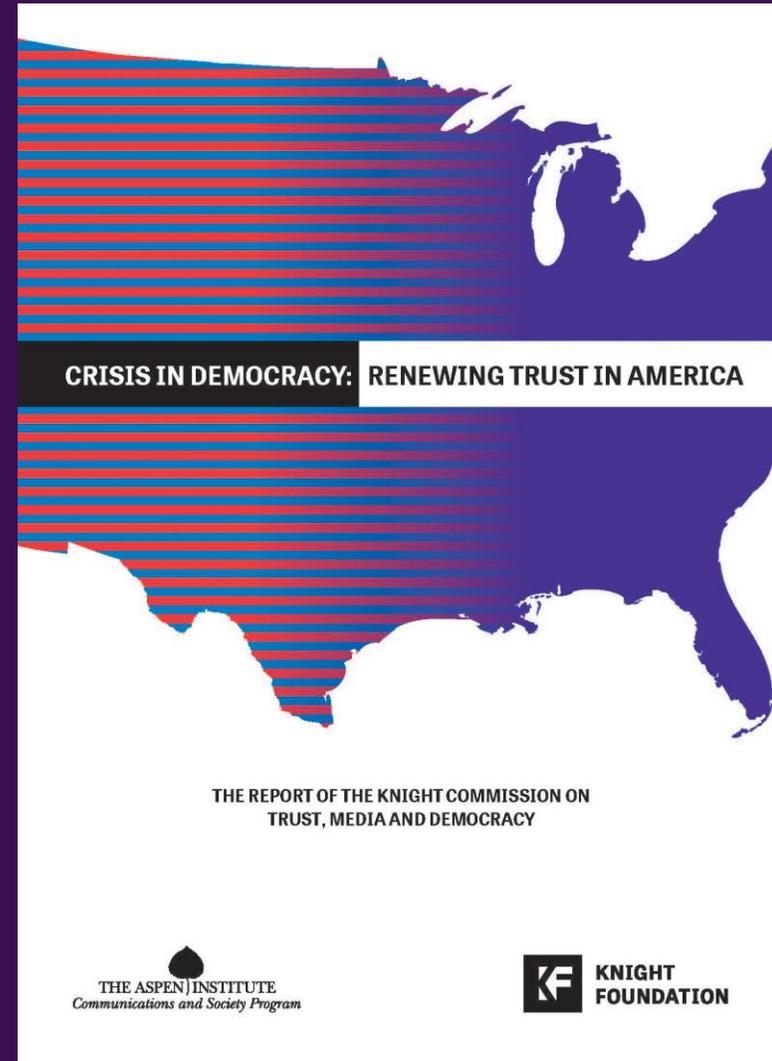
Brazil
India
Colombia
Malaysia
South Korea
U.S.
China
Russia

76-80%

Mexico
Argentina
Spain
Indonesia

“Having a literate public is critical to the health of the body politic. Abundant information does no good if users are not capable of using the information effectively.”

—*Crisis in Democracy: Renewing Trust in America*, Knight Commission on Trust, Media and Democracy (2019)



Creating Checkology



The News Literacy Project: Creator of Checkology

Our Mission

The News Literacy Project, a nonpartisan national education nonprofit, empowers educators to teach students the skills they need to become smart, active consumers of news and other information and engaged, informed participants in our democracy.

Our Vision

News literacy is embedded in the American middle school and high school education experience.



The News Literacy Project: Creator of Checkology

Alan Miller, Founder and CEO of The News Literacy Project

A Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, Miller was a reporter at the Los Angeles Times for 21 years before leaving in March 2008 to establish NLP. He spent nearly 19 years in the Times' Washington bureau, the last 14 as a charter member of its high-profile investigative team.



Key Project Personnel

The News Literacy Project staff

- Senior Vice President of Education
- Vice President of Production
- Director of Education
- Associate Director of Education
- Checkology Virtual Classroom Manager
- Visual Designer

Checkology's Financial Supporters

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FOUNDATION

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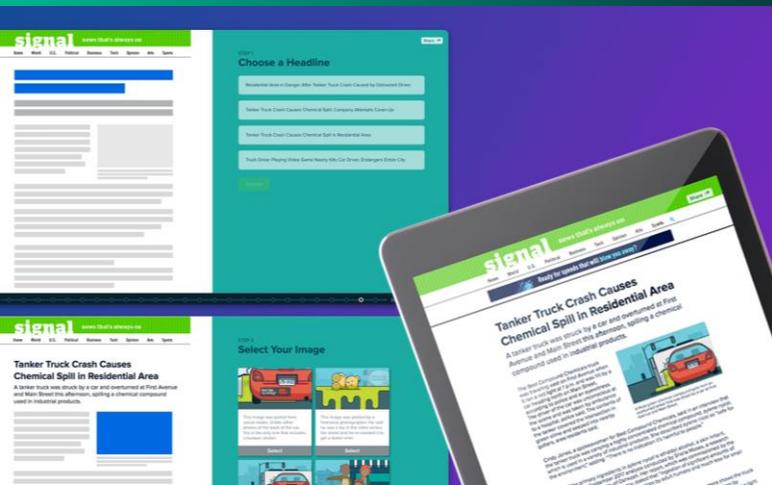
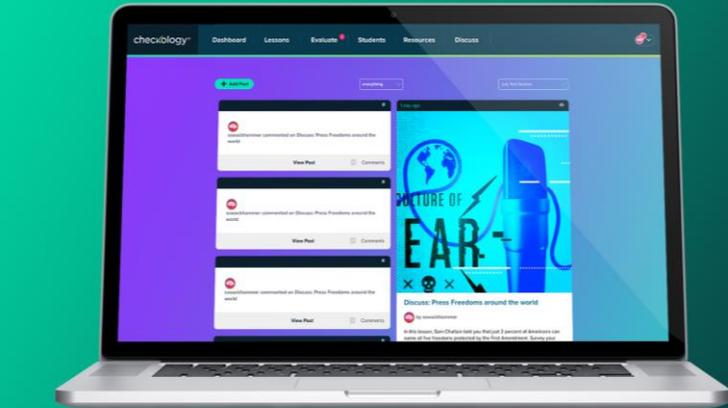
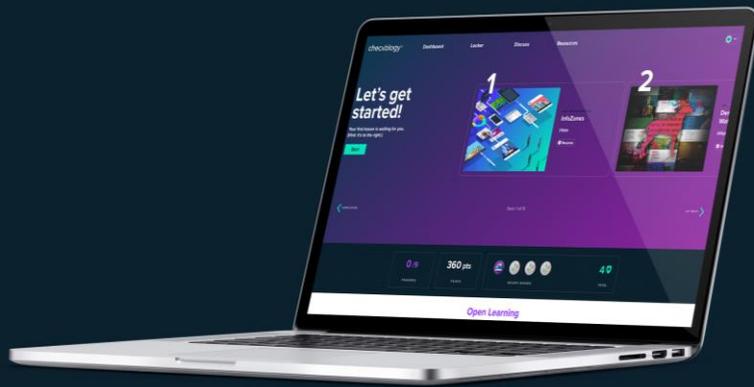
MacArthur
Foundation

The Virtual Classroom: checkology.org



Watch the video here: <https://youtu.be/Tf5rN45jCdk>

Checkology Virtual Classroom



Select what you would like to appear in the Learning Sequence

Learning Sequence Hide Details ^

[Browse / Add](#) [Reorder](#)

[Cancel](#) [Save](#)

	InfoZones 0 Ratings	LESSON	OFF <input type="checkbox"/> ON
	Democracy's Watchdog 0 Ratings	LESSON	OFF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ON
	Arguments & Evidence 0 Ratings	LESSON	OFF <input type="checkbox"/> ON
	Press Freedoms Around the World 0 Ratings	LESSON	OFF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ON

There are 3 ways to activate a Checkology Experience.

Checkology experiences are made up of a Learning Sequence and additional Open Learning. The Learning Sequence acts as a playlist of required lessons and challenges for students to complete in order. In addition to the Learning Sequence, you can make additional lessons and challenges available to students in the Open Learning section.


Custom
Start from scratch and build your own Checkology Experience!

[Build Your Own](#)


Semi-Custom
Start with a preset Checkology Experience, then add or remove items to make it your own.

[View Preset Checkology Experiences](#)


Preset
Activate one of NLP's suggested Checkology Experiences and get started.

[View Preset Checkology Experiences](#)

Lessons Taught by Journalism Subject Matter Experts

Each Checkology lesson features a subject matter expert. These include journalists from news outlets such as the Chicago Sun-Times, NPR, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post and Univision.



Lesson Themes: Filtering News and Other Information

Identifying the primary purpose of information; understanding how news judgments are made.

- InfoZones
- What Is News?
- Be the Editor



Lesson Themes: Exercising Civic Freedoms



Explaining the First Amendment, the watchdog role of a free press and the ability of ordinary people to act as watchdogs.

- The First Amendment
- Democracy's Watchdog
- Citizen Watchdogs
- Press Freedoms Around the World

Lesson Themes: Navigating the Information Landscape

Identifying branded content; understanding how algorithms personalize experiences and information online.

- Branded Content
- Introduction to Algorithms



Lesson Themes: Learning How to Know What to Believe

Differentiating among several types of misinformation; evaluating arguments and evidence and identifying logical fallacies; understanding the complexity of media bias; applying the standards of quality journalism.

- Practicing Quality Journalism
- Misinformation
- Arguments & Evidence
- Understanding Bias



Open Learning

The Open Learning area provides access to even more lessons, challenges and exercises beyond the Learning Sequence above.

Lessons

Challenges

Exercises

Contests

Exercises give you more practice so you can master the skills from your lessons.

All Lessons 



InfoZones: Immigration

Zone 10 examples of information about immigration that were published or broadcast in 2016 and 2017.



InfoZones: Ferguson, Missouri

Zone 14 real examples of information about the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri.



Bias Checker: Immigration

Use the bias sliders to evaluate the degree of bias or



What Is News?

Choose the most newsworthy item in five sets of



Enrichment: Checkology Exercises

These are activities that **repeat** lesson-level assessments to provide extra practice.

The screenshot shows the Checkology website's 'Open Learning' section. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Checkology logo and menu items: Dashboard, Lessons, Evaluate, Students, Resources, Discuss, Word Wall, and Journalists. Below the navigation bar, the 'Open Learning' title is displayed in purple, followed by a subtitle: 'The Open Learning area provides access to even more lessons, challenges and exercises beyond the Learning Sequence above.' A tabbed interface below the subtitle has four tabs: Lessons, Challenges (which is highlighted in green), Exercises, and Contests. Under the 'Challenges' tab, a text prompt reads: 'These challenges pick up where the lessons leave off.' Two challenge cards are shown. The first card is titled 'Watergate: An Iconic Investigation' and features a thumbnail with the text 'Nixon Res' and a portrait of Richard Nixon. It shows a progress bar and '130pts' with a 'Start' button. The second card is titled 'Are you A-1 on 1A?' and features a thumbnail with a quill and question marks. It shows a progress bar and '210pts' with a 'Start' button.

Enrichment: Checkology Challenges

These are activities that **extend and expand** on concepts and skills introduced in lessons.

Enrichment: Check Center (launching in fall 2019)

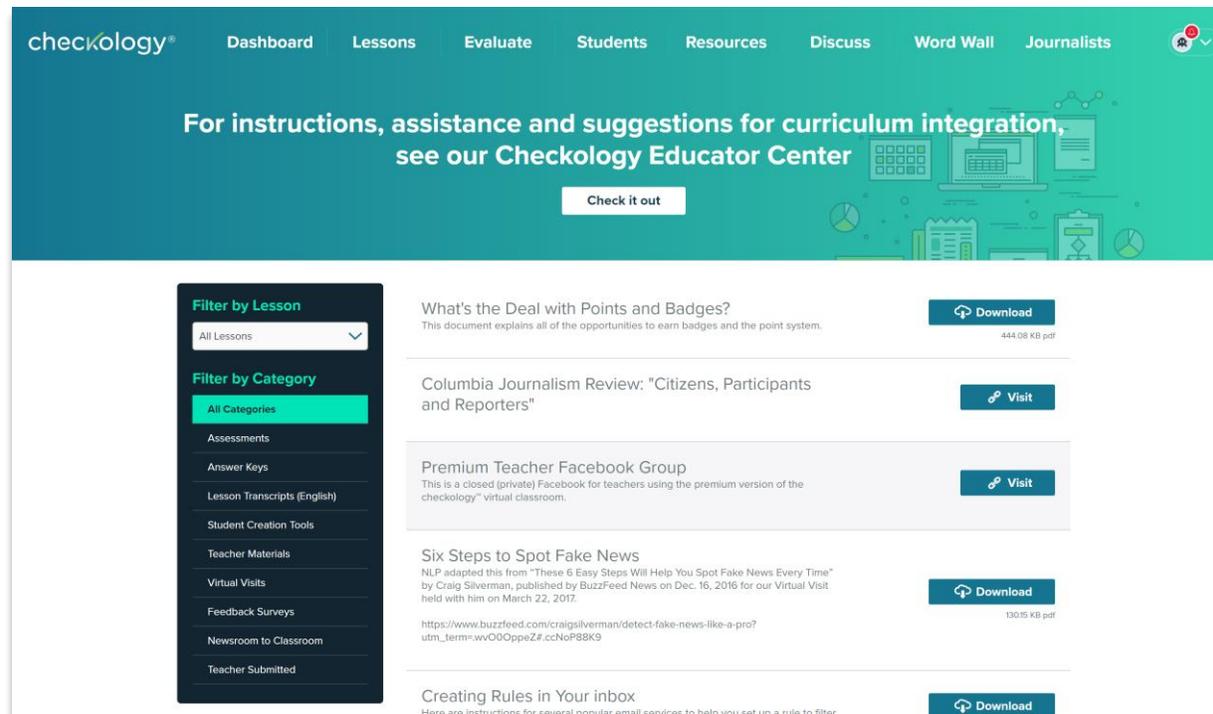
The Check Center is an evergreen “sandbox”-style section of the platform where students will find fact-checking resources, such as a verification tool that leads them through the questions they should ask as they fact-check different types of information. The questions they see are based on the content, so they will get different questions for a meme than for a news item.

The Check Center will also include a library of digital verification tools and skills tutorials that students can use to learn how to detect and debunk misinformation on their own (for example, by doing a reverse image search or using website archivers).

The Check Center will also include a series of verification challenges — some hosted by professional fact-checkers — in which students must deconstruct a meme or other example of viral content by finding the original source, examining the location or account that uploaded it, etc.

Enrichment: Checkology Resources

This is the area of the platform where both teachers and students go to find supplemental content, student creation tools, transcripts, assessment links and more.



The screenshot displays the Checkology website interface. At the top, a navigation bar includes links for Dashboard, Lessons, Evaluate, Students, Resources, Discuss, Word Wall, and Journalists. A central banner promotes the Checkology Educator Center with a 'Check it out' button. On the left, a dark sidebar offers filtering options: 'Filter by Lesson' (set to 'All Lessons') and 'Filter by Category' (with options like Assessments, Answer Keys, Lesson Transcripts, Student Creation Tools, Teacher Materials, Virtual Visits, Feedback Surveys, Newsroom to Classroom, and Teacher Submitted). The main content area features a list of resource cards, each with a title, description, and a 'Download' or 'Visit' button. The resources include: 'What's the Deal with Points and Badges?' (444.08 KB pdf), 'Columbia Journalism Review: "Citizens, Participants and Reporters"', 'Premium Teacher Facebook Group', 'Six Steps to Spot Fake News' (130.15 KB pdf), and 'Creating Rules in Your inbox'.

Enrichment: Newsroom to Classroom Program

The screenshot shows the Checkology website interface for the Newsroom to Classroom Program. The top navigation bar includes links for Dashboard, Lessons, Evaluate, Students, Resources, Discuss, Word Wall, and Journalists. A user profile icon is visible in the top right corner. The main heading reads: "Schedule a Classroom Connection, either in person or online, with one of our volunteer journalists." Below this, it states "You have 2 available Classroom Connection credits." There is a search bar labeled "Search (by journalist ZIP code, etc.)" and a "Filter by" dropdown menu. The main content area displays a grid of journalist profiles. The first row shows four profiles: Aisha Al-Muslim (The Wall Street Journal), Elaine Aradillas (People), Joni Hirsch Blackman (West Suburban Living Magazine/freelance), and Hannah Bloch (NPR). The second row shows four more profiles, which are partially cut off at the bottom of the image.

checkology® Dashboard Lessons Evaluate Students Resources Discuss Word Wall Journalists

Schedule a Classroom Connection, either in person or online, with one of our volunteer journalists.

You have 2 available Classroom Connection credits.

Search (by journalist ZIP code, etc.) Filter by

Aisha Al-Muslim
The Wall Street Journal

Elaine Aradillas
People

Joni Hirsch Blackman
West Suburban Living Magazine/freelance

Hannah Bloch
NPR

Enrichment: Newsroom to Classroom Program

Educators with a Checkology Premium account (paid licenses) can contact NLP's journalist volunteers directly to set up virtual or in-person Classroom Connections. The Newsroom to Classroom program expands on NLP's original classroom journalist volunteer program in a few exciting ways:

- Classroom Connection scheduling and preparation take place directly and online, minimizing wait times.
- Educators can filter the journalist directory by journalist location and areas of expertise to find the best fit for their classrooms.
- Classroom Connections can take place in person or virtually, which means there's no limit to the reach of each journalist volunteer.

Democracy's Watchdog

View: Teacher Evaluable

05. Solo Sentence: Watchdog Role

In one sentence, explain what the phrase "watchdog role" means and how it relates to a free press.

damaso's Response:

Journalists have the ability to expose wrongdoing and hold the power to account; in countries with a free press, journalists are able to perform this role safely and consistently.

Grade this question for all students

Download student answers

Full Credit

Half Credit

No Credit

Nailed It! Nice Work! 

Quick Feedback

Nailed It! Nice Work!

This answer could use further explanation. Please revise and resubmit it if you would like a chance at more credit.

This is good, but I want more! Please add details and ideas to this, then resubmit.

This is interesting, but not quite what I'm looking for here. Please try again to receive credit.

Love it, love it, love it. Great job!

Create your own quick feedback

Create your own quick feedback

Create your own quick feedback

09. Reflection Question

Why do you think Bly's editor told her to describe what she found no matter how positive or negative it may be?

damaso's Response:

Because Bly's job was to report on things as they were, not to spin the situation in a certain way.

Additional Features: Teacher Evaluation Tools

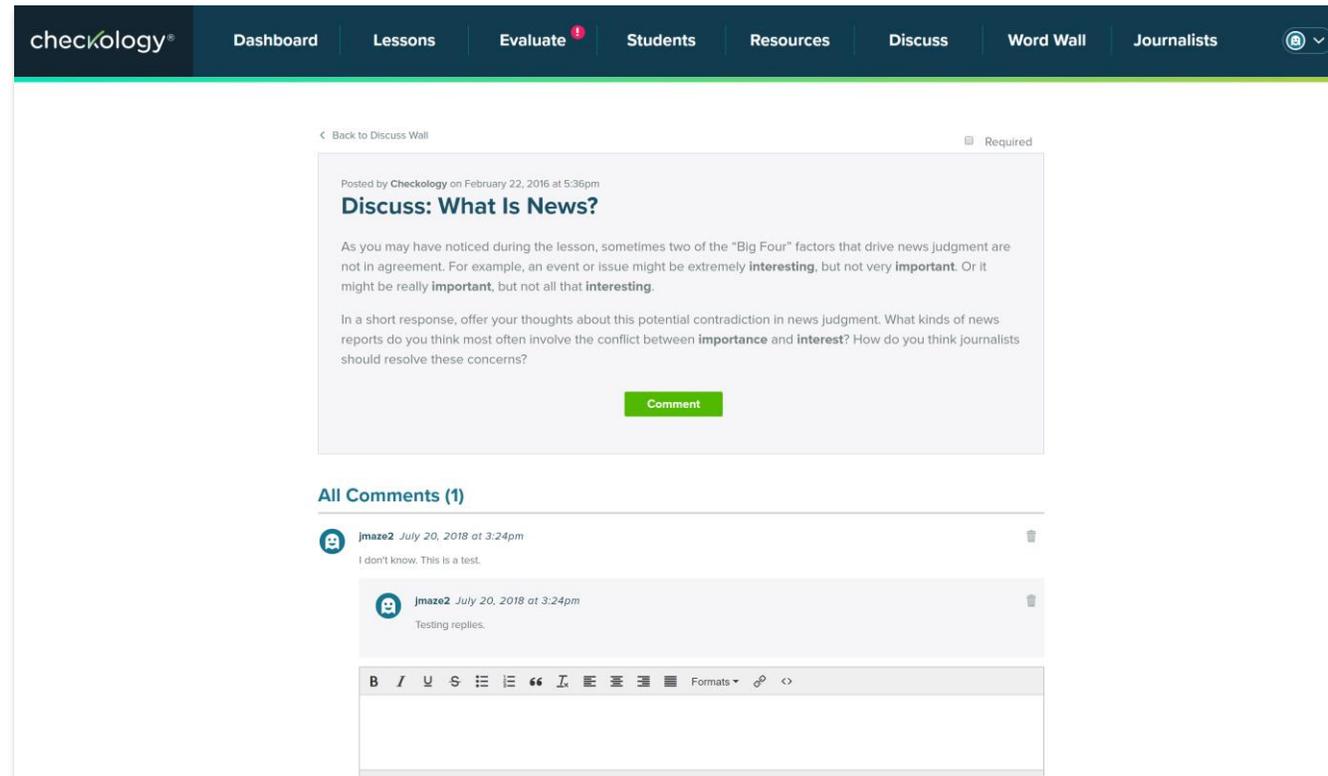
- Checkology provides lightweight learning management system (LMS) functionality to educators with a Premium account. They can see all work that a student submits.
- Multiple-choice and other pre-programmed assessments are automatically graded by the platform, while qualitative assessments, such as short-answer questions and file uploads, are graded by the teacher.

Additional Features: Teacher Evaluation Tools

- The Evaluate section allows educators to review, critique and give credit for the work submitted by students. Teachers can award full, half or no credit for short-answer questions, and can let students retry and resubmit their answers.
- When students complete and submit a lesson, it is delivered to their teacher's Evaluate section and triggers a notification in the menu bar. Inside the Evaluate section, the lesson(s) and sections that have student work ready for review are similarly flagged.

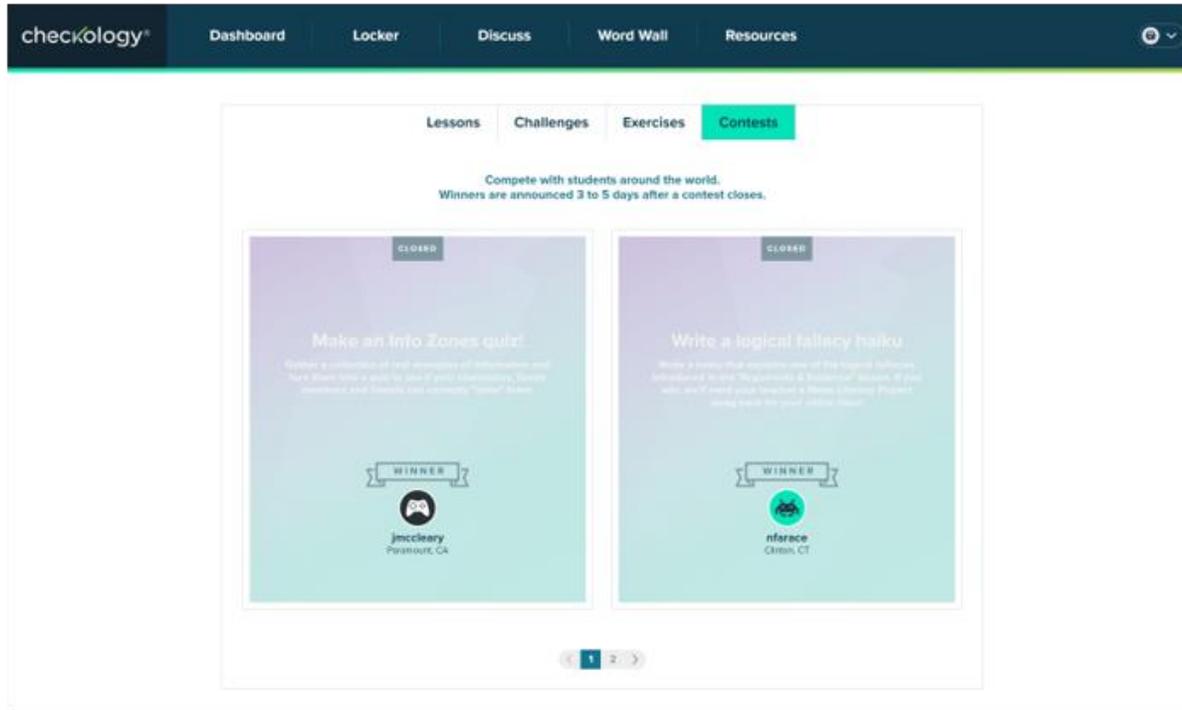
Additional Features: Discuss Wall

The Discuss Wall offers users within one section (one class, as organized by the teacher) an open forum for discussion.



The screenshot displays the Checkology Discuss Wall interface. At the top, a dark navigation bar contains the Checkology logo and menu items: Dashboard, Lessons, Evaluate (with a red notification icon), Students, Resources, Discuss, Word Wall, and Journalists. A user profile icon is visible on the right. Below the navigation bar, the main content area features a discussion post. The post is titled "Discuss: What Is News?" and is attributed to Checkology, dated February 22, 2016, at 5:36pm. The text of the post discusses the "Big Four" factors of news judgment (interest, importance, timeliness, and proximity) and asks for user input on the conflict between importance and interest. A green "Comment" button is located below the post. Underneath the post, there is a section for "All Comments (1)". Two comments are visible, both from user "jmaze2" on July 20, 2018, at 3:24pm. The first comment says "I don't know. This is a test." and the second says "Testing replies." Below the comments is a rich text editor with a toolbar containing icons for bold, italic, underline, link, list, quote, indent, and other formatting options.

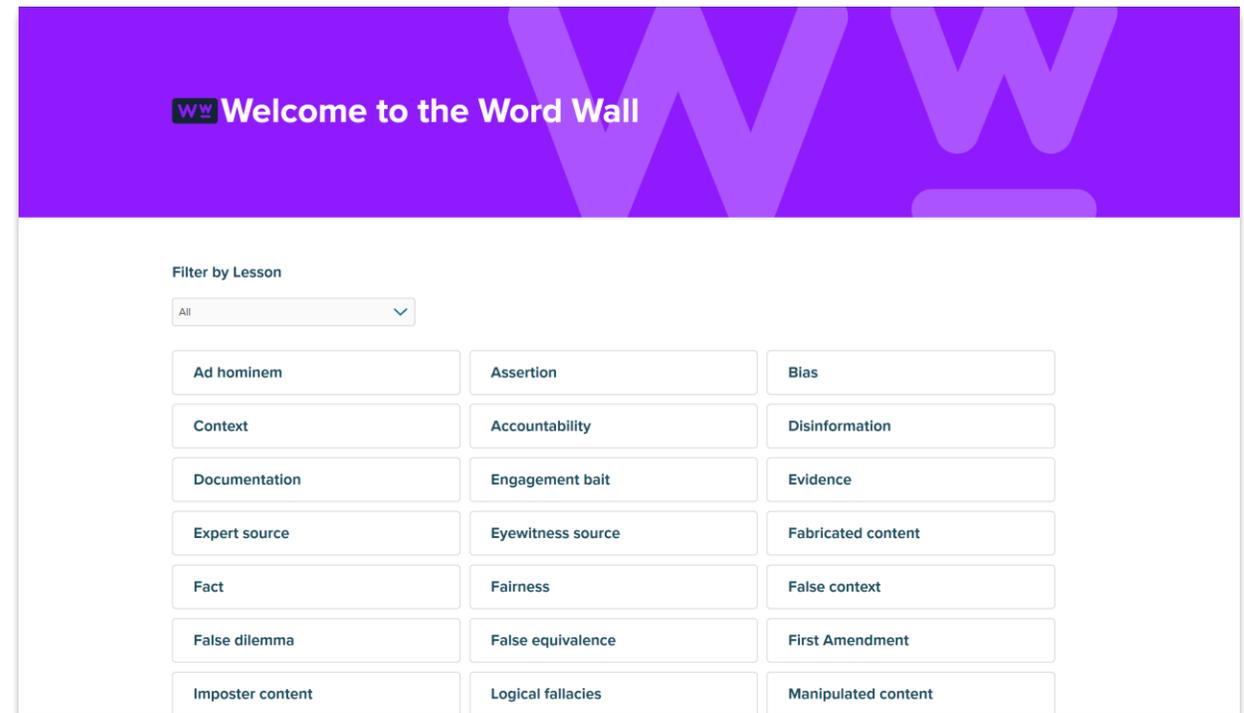
Additional Features: Contests



- NLP creates contests on the platform that are open to classrooms that use Checkology Premium.
- Teachers choose whether students can see these contests.
- Only site administrators can view contest entries.

Additional Features: Word Wall

- The Word Wall is an expandable vocabulary module (basically an online news literacy glossary).
- Students can access the entire Word Wall in their main navigation. They can also browse a selection of lesson-relevant words using a pop-out at the bottom right of each lesson.



Additional Features: Messaging

Checkology Premium educators can send three types of messages to their students:

- **Passive**
- **Text-response**
- **Multiple-choice and text-response**

The screenshot shows the 'Create Message' interface. It includes a 'Message Title' field with the text 'Extra Credit Quiz Question!'. The 'Message Body' field contains a rich text editor with the text 'Hi class, Want to grab some extra credit? Respond to this message before class tomorrow with a brief explanation on who Nellie Bly is and what she is known for.' The 'Message Type' dropdown is set to 'Text Response'. The 'Submission Message' field contains the text 'Thanks for your answer! Find out tomorrow if you got it right!'. The 'Section(s)' section has checkboxes for 'Second Period ELA', 'The Zoo', 'Test Section 1', 'Mano Amiga', 'All Lessons and Challenges', and 'All Lessons and Challenges', all of which are checked. The 'Push Expiry Date' field is empty, with a placeholder 'YYYY-MM-DD' and a note 'The last date that the message can be displayed as a push notification.' At the bottom, there are three buttons: 'Save', 'Send', and 'Cancel'.

Create Message

Message Title
Extra Credit Quiz Question!

Message Body
Hi class,
Want to grab some extra credit? Respond to this message before class tomorrow with a brief explanation on who Nellie Bly is and what she is known for.

Message Type
Text Response

Submission Message
Thanks for your answer! Find out tomorrow if you got it right!

Section(s)
 Second Period ELA The Zoo Test Section 1 Mano Amiga
 All Lessons and Challenges All Lessons and Challenges

Push Expiry Date YYYY-MM-DD
The last date that the message can be displayed as a push notification.

Save Send Cancel

Reach and Impact



Our Reach: 2016 to 2019



19,000
educators and counting



50
states and the
District of Columbia



108
other countries

Our Impact

A survey of 428 students who have used Checkology shows significant changes in the way they think about, share and respond to news and other information:



93% are more confident in their ability to spot misinformation.



80% are more likely to correct misinformation they see online.



81% are more confident in their ability to explain the role of the First Amendment in American democracy.



81% are more likely to be more civically engaged, such as voting when old enough to do so.

“

I think it's important for us to be critical, especially because we're the **next generation in the world.**

”

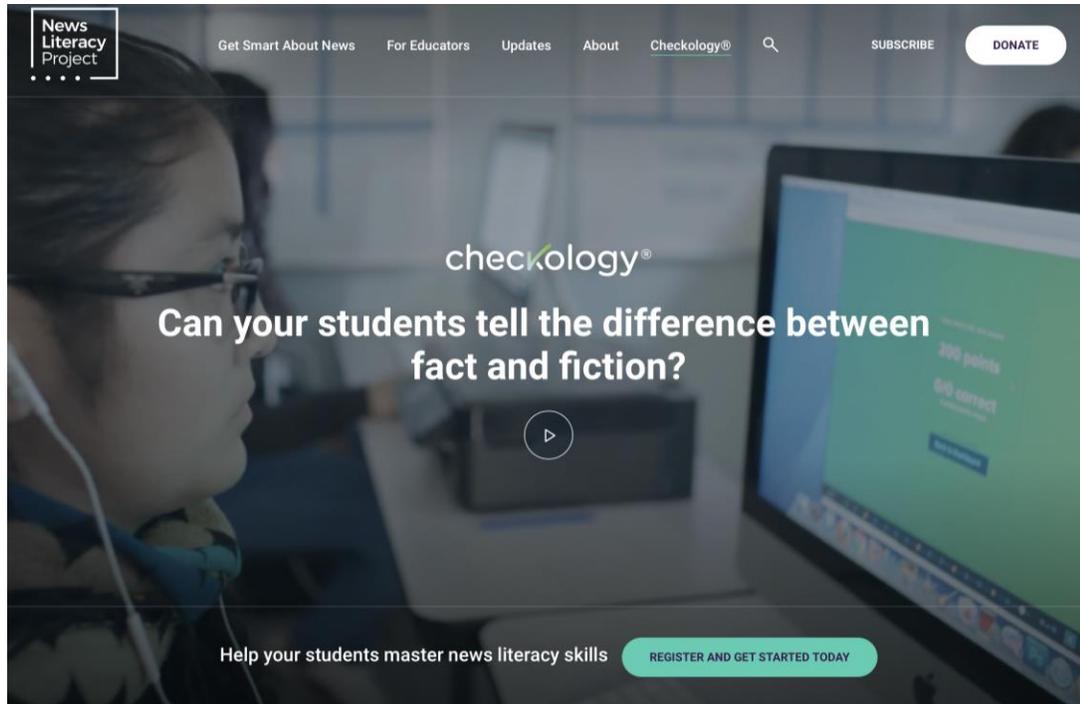
— Valeria Luquin, ninth-grade student,
Daniel Pearl Magnet High School,
Van Nuys, California

The News Literacy Project



Watch how Checkology has changed the way Luquin approaches news and other information:
<https://vimeo.com/339142980>

Create Your Free Checkology Account



- Visit checkology.org to register.
- A Checkology Basic account is free and provides access to four foundational lessons.

What's Next?



Plans for Growth and Scale

- Our goal is that **6,650 U.S. educators** across all 50 states will be actively using Checkology on an annual basis by 2022.
- The News Literacy Project will also consider contracting with organizations and governments outside the United States to develop a news literacy education platform with content tailored to a particular country.

Thank you.

News
Literacy
Project



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