



# NEWS IN EDUCATION

## NIE 4-Week Fake News Lesson Series

### Week 3: Satire and Clickbait

If you're like most of the population, you've been a victim of clickbait.

**What is it?** Merriam-Webster defines **clickbait** as: *“something (such as a headline) designed to make readers want to click on a hyperlink especially when the link leads to content of dubious value or interest.”*

Have you ever clicked on a link because you were curious or felt that you had to see just what the sensational-sounding headline was talking about, only to be disappointed that the actual content was less than exciting? That's a sure example of clickbait.

They draw you in with crazy and outlandish titles:

- *“You won't believe what this mother did to her child!”*
- *“Teen finds THIS in backpack after school!”*
- *“What happened next will shock you”*
- *“UNBELIEVABLE! Girl sees THIS in car at stoplight”*

These titles always over-promise stories that under-deliver what you were expecting. Often you'll have to click through a bunch of pages as small bits of the story are broken up so you keep clicking. Also, these domains often come with loads of ads and pop-ups and can crash your phone or computer.

News sites do this for *page views*. They need your views to make money. Most sites use traffic numbers like unique visits and clicks to generate funds from advertisers. Yet, the more a site does this, the less likely you are to trust it and keep clicking on their headlines, which ends up hurting them in the end. Clickbait is really just all around negative.

I'm sure you've gathered by now that clickbait is almost always *fake news*. Let's look at another source of fake news: satire.

**What is it? Satire** is the use of humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people's stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and other topical issues.

Satire is often used to spread false news to play on people's gullibility and lack of knowledge or common sense.

Have you ever read a news story that you believed was real, but later learned was entirely sarcastic and meant to make fun of, or criticize, something? It can be embarrassing and humbling when this happens. That's why it's important to know satire exists, and to be able to easily tell when something is satire.

Here is an **example of a satirical article**:

- [Seriously Satirical: Senior Stress](#)

And here are some examples of **satirical websites**:

- [ClickHole](#)
- [The Onion](#)
- [The Babylon Bee](#)

Can you think of other satirical sites that you know of?

**Week 3 Discussion Points:**

1. *What are a few sites that you visit regularly? Are any of them satire sites?*
  2. *Do you click on clickbait links often? Why or why not?*
  3. *Do you see a lot of satire and clickbait shared in your social media feeds? If yes, do you ever unfollow or hide these stories to clean up your feed?*
  4. *Do you regularly seek out viral posts? Why or why not?*
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