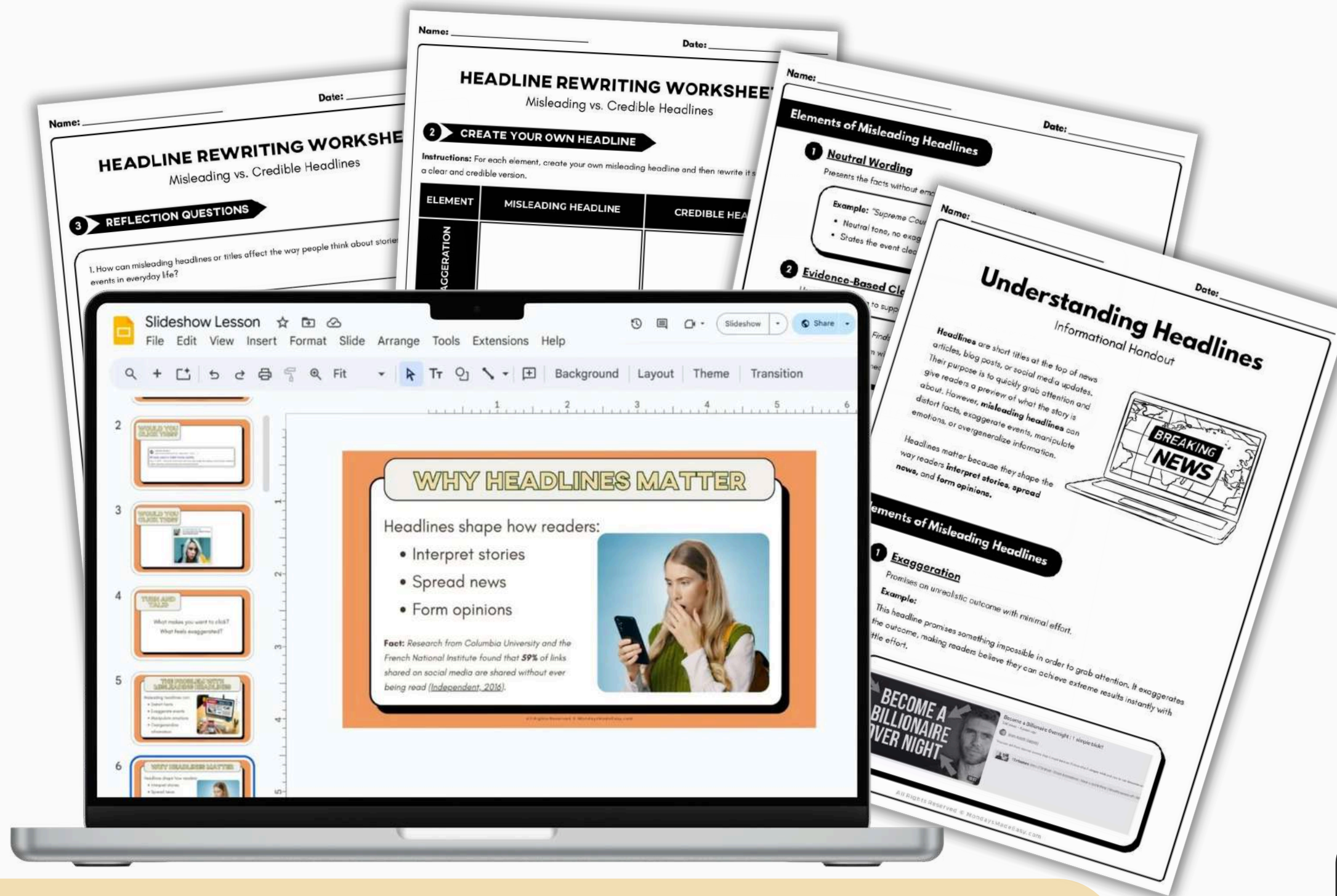


Exploring Bias in Headlines

Teach students how to recognize misinformation, apply media conventions, and evaluate headlines for bias and accuracy.



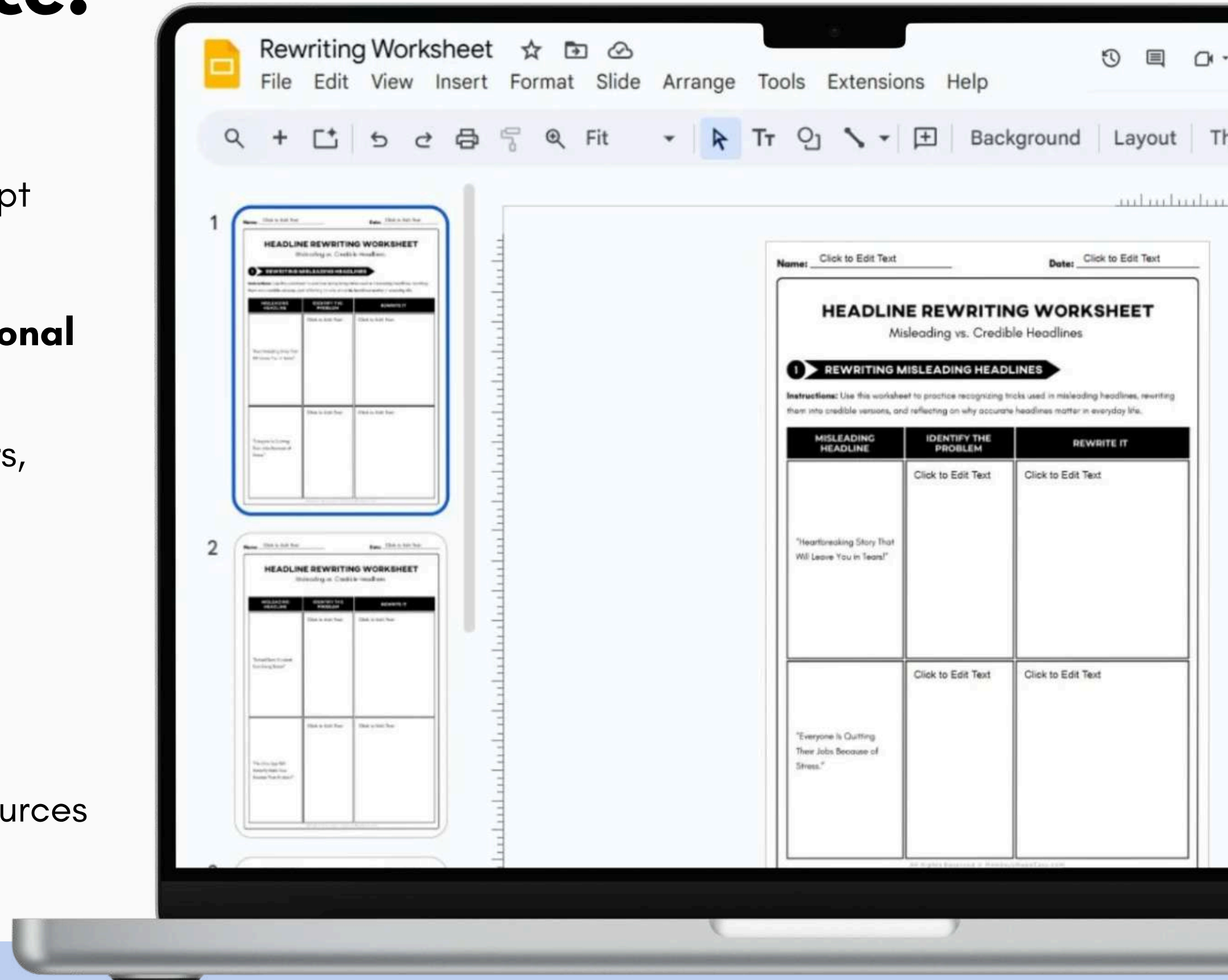
- **Teach students to spot misleading headlines** by analyzing tone, word choice, and media conventions affecting perception and bias.
- **Foster critical thinking** through a hands-on activity that transforms sensationalized news into accurate and credible reporting.
- **Use no-prep lesson materials**, including slides, handouts, and model responses, to facilitate discussion and independent media literacy application.

Help students identify misleading headlines and analyze bias in news reports

PURCHASE HERE

Included with this resource:

- ✓ **Understanding Headlines Slideshow Lesson**
 - Guide students through examples and prompt discussion
- ✓ **Media Conventions and News Bias Informational Handout**
 - Outlines various tactics used to sway readers, such as sensationalism, omission, and tone
- ✓ **Headline Rewriting Activity**
- ✓ **Sample Answers** to Model Student Responses
- ✓ **Teacher Instructions** for how to use these resources



Includes Digital Version for Google Drive®

Understanding Headlines Slideshow Lesson

This slideshow lesson introduces the concept of headline bias, clickbait strategies, and common conventions used in online journalism

THE PROBLEM WITH MISLEADING HEADLINES

Misleading headlines can:

- Distort facts
- Exaggerate events
- Manipulate emotions
- Overgeneralize information



ELEMENTS OF A MISLEADING HEADLINE

1. Exaggeration

Promises an unrealistic outcome with minimal effort.



becoming a billionaire overnight is unrealistic.

UNDERSTANDING HEADLINES

How to Spot Misleading vs. Credible Headlines

Practice changing these headlines into credible ones

MISLEADING

"Teens Today Don't Care About School Anymore."

"Survey Shows Some Teens Report Lower Motivation Toward Schoolwork After Pandemic."

Changing these misleading headlines into credible ones.

BALANCED

"Teens Today Don't Care About School Anymore."



Guide students through examples and prompt discussion around how headlines shape perception!

Media Conventions and News Bias Informational Handout


This resource outlines various tactics used to sway readers, such as sensationalism, omission, and tone

Students can annotate this handout or turn to it as a reference when analyzing headlines and articles!

Name: _____ Date: _____

2 Emotional Language

Provokes a strong emotional response to attract views.

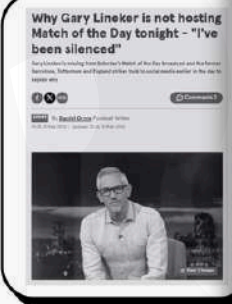


Example: This headline uses strong emotional words like "cry insanely" to spark a reaction. Instead of focusing on what the stories are really about, it tries to pull readers in by making them expect an extreme emotional experience.

3 Missing Context

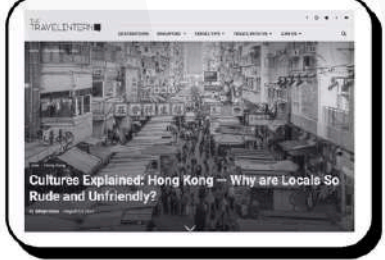
Omits key facts, misleading readers toward incorrect conclusions.

Example: This headline suggests Gary Lineker was silenced by the BBC, but it leaves out an important detail: he was actually sick. Without that context, the headline misleads readers into thinking there was controversy when there wasn't.



4 Overgeneralization

Takes a few examples and unfairly applies them to an entire group or situation.




Example: This headline unfairly labels an entire group of people as "rude and unfriendly." It takes the impressions of a few travelers and makes a sweeping claim about Hong Kong locals, which is misleading and inaccurate.

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Name: _____ Date: _____

Understanding Headlines

Informational Handout



Headlines are short titles at the top of news articles, blog posts, or social media updates. Their purpose is to quickly grab attention and give readers a preview of what the story is about. However, **misleading headlines** can distort facts, exaggerate events, manipulate emotions, or overgeneralize information.

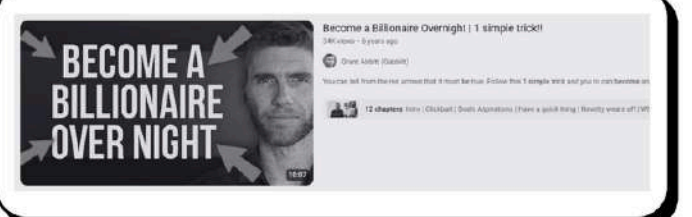
Headlines matter because they shape the way readers **interpret stories, spread news, and form opinions.**

Elements of Misleading Headlines

1 Exaggeration

Promises an unrealistic outcome with minimal effort.

Example: This headline promises something impossible in order to grab attention. It exaggerates the outcome, making readers believe they can achieve extreme results instantly with little effort.



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Elements of Misleading Headlines

1 Neutral Wording

Presents the facts without emotional or dramatic language.

Example: "Supreme Court to Hear Case on Student Loan Forgiveness Policy."

- Neutral tone, no exaggeration or loaded language
- States the event clearly without implying opinion or drama

2 Evidence-Based Claims

Uses research data to support the claim instead of vague promises.

Example: "Study Finds Daily Walking Reduces Risk of Heart Disease by 30%."

- Backs the claim with research
- Uses specific, measurable data instead of vague promises

3 Accurate Summary of Facts

Summarizes the event with precise, verifiable details.

Example: "Hurricane Idalia Makes Landfall in Florida with 125 mph Winds."

- Summarizes the verified event
- Includes precise details (location + speed)

4 No Clickbait Tricks

Clear, direct, and no curiosity gap or sensationalized "you won't believe..." phrasing.

Example: "Apple Announces New iPhone Model with Improved Camera and Battery Life."

- Straightforward
- Doesn't use curiosity traps like "You Won't Believe..."

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Headline Rewriting Activity

This activity challenges students to write their own examples, reinforcing their understanding of media literacy and digital citizenship

HEADLINE REWRITING WORKSHEET
Misleading vs. Credible Headlines

1 REWRITING MISLEADING HEADLINES
Instructions: Use this worksheet to practice recognizing tricks used in misleading headlines, rewriting them into credible versions, and reflecting on why accurate headlines matter in everyday life.

MISLEADING HEADLINE	IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM	REWRITE IT
"School Bans Students from Using Books!"		
"The One App Will Instantly Make You Smarter Than Einstein!"		

HEADLINE REWRITING WORKSHEET
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Instructions: Use this worksheet to practice recognizing tricks used in misleading headlines, rewriting them into credible versions, and reflecting on why accurate headlines matter in everyday life.

MISLEADING HEADLINE	IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM	REWRITE IT
"Heartbreaking Story That Will Leave You in Tears!"		
"Everyone Is Quitting Their Jobs Because of Stress."		

HEADLINE REWRITING WORKSHEET
Misleading vs. Credible Headlines

2 CREATE YOUR OWN HEADLINE
Instructions: For each element, create your own misleading headline and then rewrite it so it becomes a clear and credible version.

ELEMENT	MISLEADING HEADLINE	CREDIBLE HEADLINE
EXAGGERATION		
EMOTIONAL LANGUAGE		
MISSING CONTEXT		
OVERGENERALIZATION		

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How can misleading headlines or titles affect the way people think about stories, products, or events in everyday life?

2. Why is it important to recognize and rewrite misleading headlines beyond just the news?

3. What strategies can you use to avoid being misled online or in daily life?

INCLUDES ANSWER KEY!

Students will evaluate misleading headlines and identify issues such as exaggeration, emotional language, missing context, and overgeneralization!