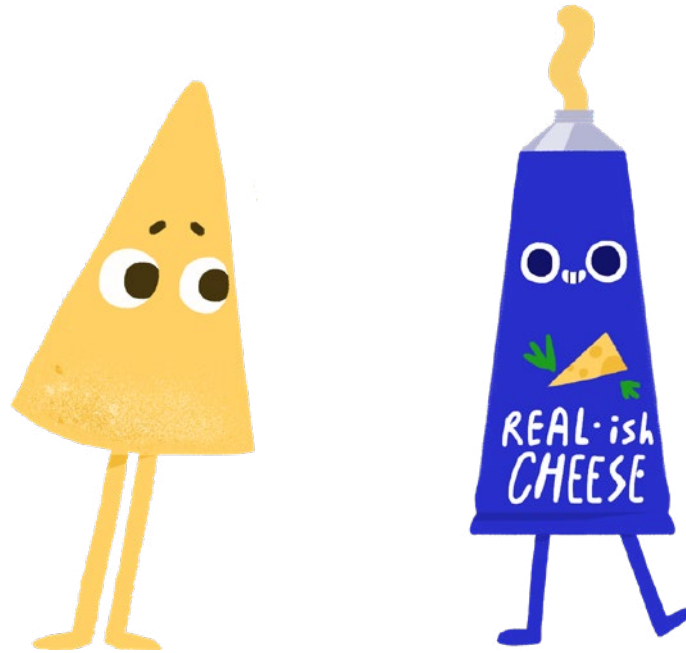


# Fake or Fact?

Year 6 – English; The Arts

Year 7 – The Arts

Year 8 – The Arts



**(English; Yr 6, ACELY1801)**

Analyse strategies authors use to influence readers

**(English; Yr 7, ACELY1721)**

Analyse and explain the ways text structures and language features shape meaning and vary according to audience and purpose

**(English; Yr 7, ACELY1722)**

Use prior knowledge and text processing strategies to interpret a range of types of texts

**(English; Yr 7, ACELY1723)**

Use comprehension strategies to interpret, analyse and synthesise ideas and information, critiquing ideas and issues from a variety of textual sources

**(English; Yr 8, ACELY1732)**

Analyse and evaluate the ways that text structures and language features vary according to the purpose of the text and the ways that referenced sources add authority to a text

**(English; Yr 8, ACELY1734)**

Use comprehension strategies to interpret and evaluate texts by reflecting on the validity of content and the credibility of sources, including finding evidence in the text for the author's point of view

**(Media Arts; Yrs 7 & 8, ACAMAR071)**

Analyse how technical and symbolic elements are used in media artworks to create representations influenced by story, genre, values and points of view of particular audiences

**(Media Arts; Yrs 7 & 8, ACAMAR072)**

Identify specific features and purposes of media artworks from contemporary and past times to explore viewpoints and enrich their media arts making, starting with Australian media artworks including of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media artworks

# Fake or Fact?

## Finding bias in media and tall tales in texts

From doctored bread to adulterated flour, fakes and frauds abound in food history. This gives us an opportunity to look at how media texts, including advertisements and even food labels – can distort the truth. Students learn a little about current advertising standards to better enable them to detect persuasion in packaging and promotion.

### Equipment:

A large quantity of food packaging including health foods, organic products, breakfast snacks and cereals, dried and processed fruit and vegetables

Alternatively, go to a supermarket and take LOTS of photos of the front, side and info panel on a wide variety of products – the health food aisle will be particularly fruitful for this unit

### Duration:

30-45 minutes

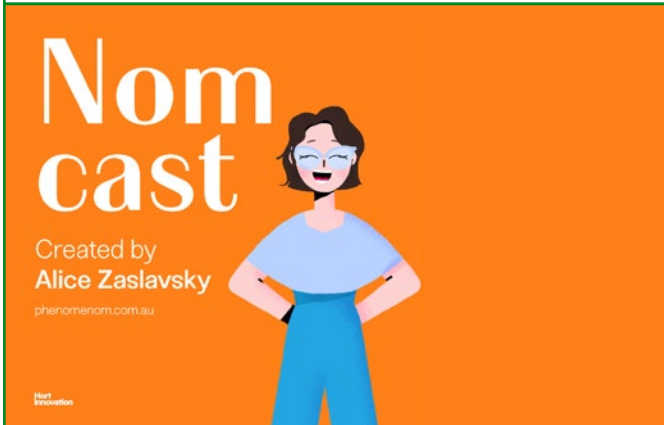
### Location:

The classroom

### Notes:

## Getting Started

🎧 Listen to **Nomcast Episode 6 – Fake or Fact: eating, drinking and living in the post-truth world**



? Discuss:

- ◇ Were students surprised by anything they heard in the podcast?
- ◇ Have they heard of any other false claims or food fights over advertising, recently or in past times? (A few are shared below for fun.)
- ◇ Why do they think the false claims made by Ribena, about the content of Vitamin C in their syrup, went undetected for so long?

### False advertising

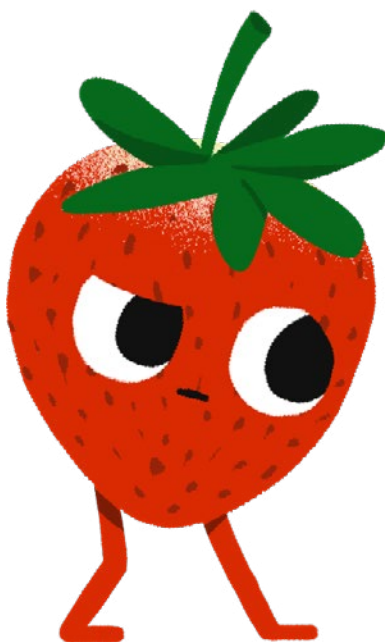
- ? Discuss the case of the missing Vitamin C in Ribena. Whose role should it be to moderate advertising and check for false advertising claims? Discuss students' thoughts and write down their suggestions.
- Students explore the material on the ACCC website about false claims in advertising:
  - ◇ ACCC – False or misleading claims: <https://www.accc.gov.au/consumers/misleading-claims-advertising/false-or-misleading-claims>
  - Ask students to use the information on the ACCC webpage to find out how false claims are discovered. Who checks every advert? Does the ACCC check every communication and marketing piece from every business in every town and city in Australia? Is this feasible?
  - If the responsibility is on consumers to point out false claims, do students think all false claims will be detected? Why or why not?
  - Read and discuss this article from the ACCC about real, recent false advertising claim.
  - ◇ ACCC – Fake food claims leave bitter aftertaste: <http://registers.accc.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/1047883>

### Food fakes in history

- Before students get up in arms about food claims, let them explore some of the famous frauds that could kill you quick in historical times.
- ◇ Wine sweetened with lead. Lead is a poison. It also apparently, makes wine taste sweeter. Ancient Roman winemakers were caught reducing their customer base in a fatal fashion when they added lead to the liquor.
- ◇ Sweet death. It's not just the wine that would get you in the past. In 1850s Britain, popular sweets were made with sugar, gum and a filler – usually plaster. But in 1858 the manufacturers got a cheap load of arsenic and used it in the sweets instead. 200 sweet-tooth types died.
- ◇ Fake flour and bones in bread. Again, in the 1800s, bakers would add cheap ingredients to bread flour to make their loaves rise – more profitably. The problem was, some of the additives included chalk, plaster, sawdust or ground-up bones. In fact, one theory has it that the Victorian childhood verse about the giant who yells 'Fi, Fie, Fo, Fum!' and wants to grind up the man's bones to make his bread, is a comment on the bread scandals of the 1870s.

### Certified confusion

- Also on the ACCC website, explore with students this resource about organic certification of food:
- ◇ Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) – Groceries – Organic Claims: <https://www.accc.gov.au/consumers/groceries/organic-claims>
- What does the ACCC tell you will identify an organic product? (A symbol, logo or other trade mark.) What is missing from this consumer information page? (Pictures of certified symbols, logos or trade marks.)
- What does this allow for? (Confusion, and even the opportunity to make up symbols that look like but are not the same as certified organic symbols.) Yes, this happens. See if you can find one in the packaging or photos of packaging you have gathered.



### Certified Organic

At the time of writing, there are FIVE potential organic certification programs in Australia, each with its own name and logo.

The Department of Agriculture lists five certified organic logos:

<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/about/contactus/phone/aco#southern-cross-certified-australia-pty-ltd-sxca>

Explore:

- ◇ Which ones have students seen?
- ◇ Are there more than one?
- ◇ What choices do farmers and food producers need to make if they would like to certify their products?

- ? Do all the certifications mean exactly the same thing or do some have stricter standards than others?
- ? Many Australian farms and food producers rely on export sales – i.e. selling their product to other countries. Do students think these icons are all recognised world-wide? Why or why not? What opportunities and risks does this pose to food growers and producers?
- How can consumers be informed about making decisions based on organic claims on packaging? In pairs, students discuss options for consumers, such as buying from trusted companies, purchasing direct from farms, or asking questions of retailers about certification claims. Ask each pair to report back and make a class list of suggestions.

### Examining the English

- Once students have a basis of knowledge about food fact and frauds, start them on literacy hunt for bias, distortion and implied meaning.
- Provide a wide variety of product packaging, or photos of product packaging, and have students work in pairs to spot implied meaning in omission (what you don't say), commission (what you do say), and in use of product visuals such as non-standard icons and fake certification logos.

- Discuss persuasive devices used in advertising, such as images that imply authority (ticks and stars), placement that confers authority (placing a made-up icon in the panel next to two genuine icons); language that can't be quantified 'With the fresh taste of real tomatoes!', and that does not have a legal definition 'House-made', 'All natural', 'Improved' (by whom, compared to what, since when?)

### Tip:

- It can be quite hard at first to spot packaging persuasion. After all, it all looks so reasonable! Trust us – persuasion is there and it takes a little time to tune in to the twists and tricks.
- Prompt each pair of students to re-examine every reasonable claim they read, do some research and look with fresh eyes.

### Teacher resources

- Modern Farmer – Farm Fakes: A History of Fraudulent Food: <https://modernfarmer.com/2013/05/farm-fakes-a-history-of-fraudulent-food/>
- Education in Chemistry – The fight against food adulteration: <https://eic.rsc.org/feature/the-fight-against-food-adulteration/2020253.article>
- Schoolgirls Rumble Ribena Vitamin Claims: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/mar/27/schoolsworldwide.foodanddrink>
- Popeye's Spinach Story Rich in Irony: <http://www.abc.net.au/science/articles/2011/12/06/3384516.htm>
- Why the Tomato Was Feared in Europe for Over 200 Years: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/why-the-tomato-was-feared-in-europe-for-more-than-200-years-863735/>
- A WWII Propaganda Campaign that Popularized the Myth That Carrots Help You See in the Dark: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/a-wwii-propaganda-campaign-popularized-the-myth-that-carrots-help-you-see-in-the-dark-28812484/>
- Four Theories About Why Vampires Hate Garlic: <https://horror.media/four-theories-about-why-vampires-hate-garlic>
- Fact or Fiction? Carrots Improve Your Vision: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/fact-or-fiction-carrots-improve-your-vision/>