FROM REAL LIFE or a MOVIE?

Grades 3-5 (30 minutes, easily divided into two sessions)

As AI improves, it will soon be impossible to tell by looking whether an image or video is real. To prepare students for that world, we extend beyond looking for quirky flaws *in* the image to strengthening inquiry skills *about* the image.

This activity is a way to practice verifying photos while also affirming that the world is an amazing place with many surprising and wonderful things to discover.

At the same time, there are some people who use media to create false things that try to fool us. That's why we ask questions and investigate before we share.

Prerequisite: It is possible to do this activity as a stand-alone, but it is designed as a follow up to the "What to Do with Clickbait" activity. Also you'll need to know how to use a reverse image search tool (e.g., TinEye, Google, Bing visual search, an AI system) well enough to show students how to use it.

Students will learn that
- It is difficult, and sometimes impossible to tell whether an image is real just by looking at it. That's why we need to learn other research strategies.
- Asking (and answering) media analysis questions can help them determine whether something is real.
- Reverse image combined with word searches can be used to verify images.

Students will practice
- Doing reverse image searches
- Asking media literacy questions: *Who made this? Where was it shared? What do they want me to think? Why would they want me to think that? If I believe this is true, who benefits or who might be harmed?*
- Discussion & listening skills
- Linking answers to evidence

Materials: Internet access - students will need access to a reverse image search tool or you'll need to project it so they can direct your use. Also, you will need access to a fact-checking site (like Snopes); a way to record a student-created list (e.g., chart paper or a shared digital board)

Images
cloud antelope – slide #37
interesting image collection – slide #38

Step 1

Show the cloud antelope image and ask, *Is this a real animal or something created for a movie?*

 Note: We suggest using the movie reference rather than the word "fake," because the connotation of fake is an image created with nefarious intent. "Movie" suggests fantasy storytelling. It avoids inducing the anxiety that comes with suggesting to students that they always need to be afraid of being deceived.

Allow for some brief speculation and then ask, *Does anyone know a way we could find out?* Begin generating a list and be prepared to add these options as needed:

1. We could think about what we know about real animals and use logic and reason to think about whether it could be real (e.g., It's in a forest. Do forest animals usually have long fur or horns or bright coloring that would make them easy to spot?).

2. We could ask media analysis questions like *Who made this? Where was it shared? If it's not real, why would someone want me to think that it is?*

3. We could look at a fact checking site, like Snopes.com.

4. We could send it to a site that answers questions like Wonderopolis and ask them if it is real.

5. We could ask people in our school or email it to someone in the community who know a lot about animals.

6. We could do a reverse image search.

Step 2

As a group, talk through the pros and cons of each option, including options suggested by the students. Ask them how well they think their idea would work and fill in gaps as needed.

1. We could think about what we know...
   Skepticism is always a good idea and this could help you lean towards an option, but unless someone in the group knows for certain what this is, thinking through what you know about animals can only result in an educated guess.

2. We could ask media analysis questions...
   This would be a great strategy if you had more context, like if you saw it online and know who posted it or check others' responses. But without context, the questions don't help much.

3. We could look at a fact checking site...
   Most fact-checking sites only allow queries using words, not images. So until we know what to call this, fact-checking sites won't be helpful.

4. We could send it to a site that answers questions, like Wonderopolis...
   This could totally work, but it could take weeks to get an answer back. It's not an option if we want an answer today.

5. We could ask people in our school or email it to someone in the community...
   Maybe. But it would probably take at least a day to get an email response back. And what could we do if no one in the school knows?

6. We could do a reverse image search...
   This is probably our best option. Even if we can't find out for sure

where this image comes from, the search might give us some terms would could submit to a fact-checking site.

Ask, *Who knows how to do a reverse image search?*
Even if a few students raise their hands, tell them you want everyone to have this skill, so you're going to show them how. Then use the image to demonstrate your reverse search tool.

Note that some sites seem to call the creature a "cloud antelope." Now you have a term you can type into other search tools or fact-checking sites to see what you find. Walk students through that process.

Important: Do not allow students to use fact-checking sites on their own unless you can give them restricted access to sites intended for children. Sites like Snopes are great if a student is using it with adult guidance, but the site is for adults and much of the information it includes is not appropriate for young children.

Once research reveals that the image is not real, you can stop and let students know that they'll be practicing reverse image searches next time, or you can continue now to the next step.

Step 3
Practicing reverse image searches by playing "Is it Real or From a Movie?" Show the "interesting images" slide and give them their task: *At least one of these is from a movie and the rest are real. Your job is to use reverse image searches to figure out which is real.*

Students can work individually or in groups. Be prepared to circulate and help as they work on their computers.

You may want to set a timer and re-convene to share results at a set time. Leave time for students to present what they found and talk through results. (Note: The answer is that the top, right image is from a movie. Everything else is real. See slide notes for sources, and if you wish, take students to each original source so they can find out what they're looking at.

Close by noting that we live in an amazing world filled with wonders. So don't automatically dismiss things because they seem fantastical and don't automatically believe things because someone says or implies that they're real. Now you know how to check for yourself.

CURRICULUM   **CONNECTIONS**

Invite students, faculty, and staff to contribute items to a collection of things that look like they might be fake but are actually real. These might be things they learn about, like animals, sea creatures, plants, geological features, weather phenomena, inventions, or even things that are microscopic or images of space from telescopes. [STEM]
Create a display of the collection, perhaps mixing in a few images that are not real. Make the display interactive with a title that says something like: Three of these images aren't real. Can you tell which ones? What makes you think so? Create a way to vote for the fakes and celebrate National Media Literacy Week (annually in October) with a reveal of the answers and explanations of how people determined their answers.

AASL Standards Correlations

A. VI. 3. Evaluating information for accuracy, validity, social and cultural context, and appropriateness for need.

B. I. 1. Using evidence to investigate questions.
B. 1. 2. Devising and implementing a plan to fill knowledge gaps

D. I. 2. Engaging in sustained inquiry.
D. III. 1. Actively contributing to group discussions.
D. VI. 3. Inspiring others to engage in safe, responsible ethical and legal information behaviors