

A 3D wireframe box is shown in perspective. The top face of the box contains the word 'Visual' in a bold, italicized, yellow sans-serif font. The bottom face of the box contains the word 'TRUTHS' in a bold, italicized, white sans-serif font. Below the box, the word 'toolkit' is written in a bold, yellow sans-serif font.

Media Literacy & Digital Storytelling

An open-access resource for youth workers, facilitators & educators.

A collaboration between

BeyondBühne (Austria) and Asociación Teatral On&Off (Spain)

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Welcome to the Visual Truths Toolkit

This toolkit is the one of the main outcomes of the Visual Truths project, a partnership between BeyondBühne (Austria) and Asociación Teatral On&Off (Spain), co-funded by the Erasmus+ KA210-YOU programme. Inside, you will find a collection of field-tested methodologies, workshop structures, and practical guides developed over months of collaborative work with young people across both countries.

Whether you are a youth worker, educator, cultural facilitator, or community organiser, this resource is designed to help you integrate media literacy and digital storytelling into your daily practice, regardless of your technical background or working context.

What you will find in this toolkit

Part 1 Theoretical Foundations of Media Literacy

Part 2 Workshop Structures & Exercises

Part 3 Digital Storytelling Techniques & Audiovisual Content Creation

Part 4 Study Cases & Good Practices

Part 5 Implementation Guidelines

How to use this toolkit

This toolkit is designed to be modular. You do not need to follow it from cover to cover. Each Act can stand alone and be adapted to your target group. We recommend:

- Starting with Act 1 if you or your participants want a solid ground on media literacy concepts, especially regarding disinformation .
- Jumping directly to Act 2 if you are looking for ready-to-use exercises and dynamic activities.
- Using Act 3 as a standalone guide for short-form video production workshops.
- Referring to Act 4 whenever you need real-world examples to adapt materials for a new group or context.
- Consulting Act 5 to ensure the long-term impact and sustainability of your educational actions.

All activities have been tested with young people aged 13 – 21 in Austria and Spain. To make your preparation easier, every exercise includes estimated timeframes, required materials, and practical adaptation tips.

Act 1

Theoretical Foundations of Media Literacy

Before stepping onto the stage and facilitating workshops, it is essential to have a clear grounding in the core concepts of media literacy. This section provides an accessible, practical introduction to the ideas that underpin the Visual Truths project, written with practitioners in mind, not academics.

1.1 What Is Media Literacy?

Media literacy is the ability to access, analyse, evaluate, and create media in a variety of forms. In our current digital ecosystem, it goes beyond just reading the news; it requires understanding how platforms work, why certain content is amplified by algorithms, and how to maintain critical thinking amidst information overload. A media-literate person can:

- Identify the author and intent: Recognise who is behind a piece of content and what their goal is.
- Deconstruct manipulation: Spot the specific techniques used to persuade, mislead, or emotionally trigger audiences.
- Distinguish genres: Clearly separate opinion, satire, sponsored content, and factual reporting.
- Create responsibly: Produce and share content with an active awareness of its digital footprint and social impact.

Media literacy is not about teaching young people to distrust everything they see. It is about transforming passive consumption into an active habit of asking questions.

1.2 The Landscape of Disinformation

To navigate the digital world, we must first learn the vocabulary of the landscape. Information disorder generally falls into three distinct categories, though in practice, the lines between them often blur:

Misinformation	False or inaccurate content shared without intent to deceive. Example: sharing an outdated news article believing it to be current.
Disinformation	Deliberately false content created and spread to deceive. Example: fabricated quotes attributed to public figures.

Malinformation

True information used maliciously to harm. Example: leaking someone's private messages out of context.

We do not need our participants to become master categorisers. What matters is helping young people slow down, pause, and verify before they react.

1.3 How Fake News Works

The term "fake news" is often a lazy catch-all. To help young people recognise manipulation in the wild, it is much more effective to look behind the scenes at the different forms misleading content can take:

Common types of misleading content:

Fabricated content: Completely false information with no factual basis, designed to deceive.

Manipulated content: Genuine information or imagery that has been altered to change its meaning.

Imposter content: Real sources impersonated or spoofed to lend credibility to false claims.

Misleading content: Genuine information used in a misleading way (e.g. selective statistics).

False context: Genuine content shared with false contextual information (e.g. old images presented as current events).

Satire & parody: Not inherently harmful, but can be mistaken for factual reporting.

1.4 Cognitive Biases and Why We Fall for It

Disinformation does not succeed because people lack intelligence; it succeeds because it exploits human psychology. Understanding these cognitive vulnerabilities is the first step to building resilience:

- Confirmation bias: We tend to believe information that confirms what we already think.
- The illusory truth effect: Repeated exposure to false claims makes them feel more credible over time.
- Emotional reasoning: Content that triggers strong emotions (anger, fear, pride) bypasses critical thinking.
- Social proof: We are more likely to trust content that has been widely shared or liked.
- Authority bias: We grant more credibility to sources that appear official or expert.

Remind your participants that falling for fake news is not a sign of stupidity: it is a sign of being human. Our tools are designed to build a psychological "buffer zone" between feeling an emotion and hitting 'share'.

1.5 Bias in Media

Beyond deliberate lies, all media involves bias. Every editorial decision (what to cover, how to frame it, whose voice to include) reflects the values, priorities, and limitations of the people making it. Types of bias young people should learn to spot:

- Framing bias: How a story is framed shapes how we interpret it. A protest can be described as 'clashes' or as 'peaceful demonstration' for very different effects.
- Selection bias: What is not covered is as important as what is. The absence of certain perspectives is itself a form of bias.
- Source bias: Over-reliance on official or institutional sources can distort coverage.
- Commercial bias: News organisations have financial interests that can influence editorial decisions.

The goal is to help young people engage with media as critical consumers rather than passive recipients.

1.6 Fact-Checking: A Practical Overview

Fact-checking is a core skill in media literacy education. Several reliable tools and techniques can help young people verify information independently.

Key fact-checking techniques:

Reverse image search (Google Images / TinEye): Check where an image originally appeared.

Source verification: Who published this? Do they have a track record? Are they transparent about funding?

Lateral reading: Rather than reading down into a single source, open new tabs and search what others say about that source.

Check the date: Old content frequently resurfaces out of context.

Read past the headline: Headlines are often misleading even when the body of the article is accurate.

Consult dedicated fact-checkers: Sites like Snopes, Full Fact, Maldita, and AFP Fact Check.

In workshop settings, building fact-checking into exercises as a natural habit, rather than a special skill, is more effective than teaching it as a standalone topic.

Act 2

Workshop Structures & Exercises

This section provides comprehensive workshop guides and dynamic exercises developed, tested, and refined during the Visual Truths project. All activities are designed to be flexible: they can be run as standalone sessions or combined into a complete training programme.

2.1 Workshop Design Principles

Before diving into the practical stages, here are the core pedagogical pillars that shape every activity in this toolkit:

- Participation over instruction. Young people learn best by doing, not by being told. Keep lecture time short and activity time long.
- Safe spaces for uncertainty. Encourage participants to say 'I don't know' and 'I'm not sure.' Critical thinking starts with intellectual humility.
- Real content, real stakes. Using actual examples from social media, not invented ones, makes the learning feel relevant and urgent.
- Creative expression as a learning tool. Making content helps young people understand how it is made, and therefore how to critique it.
- Iterate and adapt. No session will go exactly as planned. Build in flexibility and debrief with participants to improve as you go.

2.2 Warm-Up Activities

Warm-up A: Debate Line

Duration	15 – 20 minutes
Group size	8 – 15
Materials	A big enough room with free space.
Energy level	Medium, conversational

How it works:

1. Designate two areas of the room as YES / AGREE and NO / DISAGREE.
2. Read out a provocative digital media statement. (IA art is true art, social media use should be regulated by law).
3. Participants move to the area that reflects their gut reaction, including the nuances spaces in between.
4. Ask participants to explain their choice. Facilitate a polite exchange of perspectives.
5. Participants can shift their position if their opinion changes.

Objectives:

1. Encourage critical thinking, active listening and empathy.
2. Develop a wider sense of community and democracy: we may disagree but we can still work together towards shared goals.

Warm-up B: Scroll

Duration	5 – 10 minutes
Group size	Any
Materials	None
Energy level	High

How it works:

1. In pairs, participants are asked to perform two roles: the User and the Feed.
2. The Feed must physically perform rapid, non-stop content bites to the User.
3. The User reacts in real-time by mimicking digital interactions: giving likes, typing comments and shares, or scrolling by physically sweeping their hand.
4. When the Scroll produces, the Feed must instantly shift to a completely new piece of content to satisfy the User.
5. After a while participants switch roles within the pair.
Alternative format: One participant acts as the User, while the rest of participants play a moving line that represents the Feed.

Objectives:

1. Break the ice, lower inhibitions, and build physical group energy.
2. Visually illustrate the mental exhaustion and dopamine loops created by modern social media interfaces.
3. Identify and reflect on the visual stereotypes and tropes that inhabit digital spaces

Warm-up C: Fun Facts

Duration	5 – 10 minutes
Group size	Any
Materials	None
Energy level	Medium, playful

How it works:

1. Participants stand in a circle. Each person says their name and names their favourite film, film series, or TV series.
2. They then briefly represent their choice physically, for example by embodying a character, gesture, or recognisable element from it.
3. The whole group repeats and imitates the movement together before moving on to the next person.

Objectives:

1. Break the ice and learn participants' names and interests.
2. Encourage physical expression and creative confidence.
3. Create a shared group experience through popular culture.

Warm-up D: That's you!

Duration	5 – 10 minutes
Group size	Any, working in pairs
Materials	Smartphones with cameras
Energy level	Medium, curious

How it works:

1. Participants work in pairs and stand facing each other.
2. On a signal, both participants turn away from each other and use their smartphones to photograph one detail of their own body or appearance.

3. They turn back towards each other and show their photograph to their partner.
4. Each participant tries to identify which detail of the other person's body or appearance is shown in the photograph.
5. Once the detail has been identified, participants can briefly explain their decisions.

Objectives:

1. Encourage observation and attention to visual details.
2. Explore how photographs can isolate and transform familiar visual information.
3. Build curiosity and interaction between participants.

2.3 Core Workshop 1: The Anatomy of a Fake Story

Duration	90 minutes
Group size	8 –15 participants
Materials	Laptops or smartphones with internet access, worksheets, whiteboard
Objectives	Understand the mechanics of disinformation; practise lateral reading and source verification

Scene 1: Introduction (15 min)

Present a recent viral story that turned out to be false. Do not reveal it is false immediately. Ask participants to improvise a scene that reflects the story and the following questions: Who shared it? What emotions does it trigger? What sources does it cite? Reveal its true nature to spark curiosity.

Scene 2: Small Group Forensic Investigation (35 min)

Divide participants into groups of 3 – 4. Each group receives a different viral story to investigate. They must:

- Identify the original source of the story.
- Search for independent verification or debunking.
- Note the techniques used to make the story appear credible.
- Assess whether it is misinformation, disinformation, or ambiguous.

Scene 3: Group Presentations (25 min)

Each crew takes the stage and presents their findings to the room in theatrical ways. Encourage other participants to challenge or add to their analysis after each scene.

Phase 4: Debrief & Synthesis (15 min)

As a full group, identify common patterns across the stories. Build a shared list of 'red flags' that participants can apply in their own media consumption.

Facilitator tips:

- Choose stories that are relevant to your group's interests and media habits: music, sport, politics, or health misinformation all work well. Even ask them to bring disinformation examples that they know of.
- If internet access is limited, prepare printed materials in advance.
- Normalise uncertainty: some stories are genuinely hard to verify. That is a valid and important finding too.

2.4 Core Workshop 2: Mapping Motivations & Tactics

Duration	60 minutes
Group size	8 –15 participants
Materials	Blackboard and markers
Objectives	Identify different motives for disinformation, as well as different tactics.

Scene 1: Setting the Stage (10 min)

Open the session with a rapid-fire brainstorm. Ask participants to name famous examples of fake news, internet hoaxes, or digital manipulation they have personally run into. Write these cases across the very top of the blackboard as the "Cast of Characters."

Scene 2: Uncovering the Motives (15 min)

Shifting focus to the bottom of the board, lead a collective analysis regarding why these stories were created. Guide the conversation past the basic answer of "to lie." Dig deeper: Who benefits? Is it for ad revenue (money)? Is it to swing an election (political power)? Is it for internet fame? Or is it just a joke out of hand?

Scene 3: Linking the Tactics (15 min)

Now, bridge the top (cases) and the bottom (motives) of your board. Ask the group how the creators achieved their goals. Draw connecting arrows using a different coloured marker, mapping out the precise tactics used (e.g., emotional headlines, altered visuals, bot amplification, framing bias). This creates a live, visual conceptual map of digital manipulation.

Scene 4: Solution proposal (20 min)

Divide the room into small teams. Challenge them to choose one of the mapped disinformation cases and design a brief, 2-minute theatrical improvisation or creative presentation. The performance must showcase a scenario where a citizen successfully encounters this specific lie and actively applies a solution (e.g., stopping the spread, confronting a friend responsibly, or using humor to expose the bias).

Facilitator tips:

- Choose stories that are relevant to your group's interests and media habits: music, sport, politics, or health misinformation all work well. Even ask them to bring disinformation examples that they know of.
- Encourage active participation, ask participants to draw their own conceptual maps when creating the solution proposal, or perform it in creative ways.

2.5 Core Workshop 3: Text Variations

Duration	60 minutes
Group size	8 – 16 participants
Materials	Smartphones with cameras, a computer and projector
Objectives	Explore how camera perspective, editing and context can transform the meaning of identical dialogue; practise shot/reverse shot editing and over-the-shoulder framing.

Scene 1: Introducing Shot/Reverse Shot (10 min)

Introduce the basic principle of shot/reverse shot and over-the-shoulder framing using a short visual example. Explain how the same dialogue can take on very different meanings depending on the situation, the actors' performance and what the camera shows the audience.

Scene 2: The Script (10 min)

Present participants with the following dialogue:

A: Good morning!
B: Good morning!
A: How is the weather today?
B: Rain is forecast.
A: Don't forget your umbrella.
B: Thanks for reminding me!
A: You're welcome. Goodbye!
B: Goodbye

Divide participants into small groups. Their task is to develop a short film around this dialogue that takes place in a surprising or unexpected situation. They may expand or adapt the dialogue as needed, but the original exchange should remain recognisable.

Two teams work together as one filming unit, allowing participants to film both sides of the conversation and experiment with over-the-shoulder shots.

Scene 3: Production (25 min)

Groups rehearse and film their scenes. Encourage them to think carefully about what the audience sees and when they see it. The challenge is not simply to perform the dialogue differently, but to use camera position, framing, acting and editing to create a situation that the audience would not expect from the words alone.

Scene 4: Screening & Reflection (15 min)

Watch the resulting scenes together. Discuss how the same dialogue changed through context and audiovisual choices. Ask participants which details made them understand what was really happening and how the camera helped create the unexpected situation.

Facilitator tips:

- Show the shot/reverse shot example before participants begin filming.
- Encourage groups to make the situation surprising rather than simply making the dialogue funny.
- Remind participants that the camera does not just document a scene: what is shown, hidden or revealed changes the story.
- If time allows, challenge groups to film one additional shot that changes the audience's interpretation of the scene.

2.6 Core Workshop 4: We Read the Horror in Their Faces

Duration	60 minutes
Group size	8 – 16 participants
Materials	Smartphones with cameras, a computer and projector
Objectives	Explore suspense, visual storytelling and audience expectations; understand how withholding visual information can influence interpretation.

Scene 1: Setting the Challenge (10 min)

Introduce the task: participants must create a short video scene in which one person sees something terrible or funny. The thing they see must not initially be shown to the audience.

The audience should first experience the person's reaction and only later discover what caused it. Participants are deliberately not told how many shots they should use. They must develop their own audiovisual solution.

Scene 2: Planning the Reveal (10 min)

In small groups, participants decide what the person sees and how they want to reveal it. They plan how to create anticipation through acting, framing, camera movement, editing or sound.

Encourage them to consider the question: How long can we keep the audience wondering what happened?

Scene 3: Production (20 min)

Groups film their scenes. The focus is on making the audience understand the character's reaction before they understand its cause. Groups can experiment with a single continuous shot or multiple shots and decide themselves when and how to reveal the hidden information.

Scene 4: Screening & Guessing (20 min)

Watch the videos together. Stop each video immediately before the audience is shown what the character has seen. Ask the other participants to speculate: What do you think they saw?

Collect several different interpretations before continuing the video and revealing the answer. After the reveal, briefly discuss which elements led participants towards or away from the actual answer.

Facilitator tips:

- Do not prescribe a specific filming technique. The openness of the task is part of the exercise.
- Encourage participants to think about what the audience knows, what the character knows and what information is deliberately withheld.
- The reveal can be funny, frightening, surprising or completely mundane—the important element is the difference between expectation and reality.
- During the screening, make sure to stop the video before the reveal so that the audience can actively interpret the scene rather than simply watch it.

Act 3

Digital Storytelling & TikTok Content Creation

This section provides a practical guide to creating short-form video content for TikTok. It is designed for facilitators who want to help young people use digital storytelling as a tool for media literacy advocacy, creating content that educates, challenges, and engages their peers.

3.1 Why TikTok?

TikTok and Instagram Reels are the primary news and entertainment sources for young people across Europe. The format's rapid consumption rate, algorithmic distribution, and creative low-barrier tools make it both a major vector for fast-spreading misinformation and a powerful battlefield for counter-narratives.

Teaching young people to create intentional, well-crafted vertical videos is not about endorsing a specific platform; it is about meeting youth where they already are and equipping them with the creative agency to participate critically in the digital public square.

Key affordances of TikTok and Instagram Reels for media literacy education:

- Low barrier to production, no expensive equipment needed.
- High potential reach among youth audiences.
- Native tools (text overlays, captions, duet, stitch) facilitate commentary and response.
- Algorithmic nature makes it a useful case study in how content is amplified.

3.2 The Creative Process: From Idea to Upload

Creating effective short-form video involves four stages. This section guides facilitators through each one.

Stage 1: Concept & Scripting

Before picking up a phone, participants should have a clear answer to three questions:

- What is the core idea behind our Reel?
- How do we want to communicate that idea?
- What do we want to feel, think or do after watching?

Short-form scripts should be tight and purposeful. A useful structure for 30 – 60 second videos:

0-3 seconds	The hook. An arresting question, visual, or statement that stops the scroll.
3 - 20 seconds	The setup. Brief context that gives the viewer what they need to understand the content.
20 - 45seconds	The core message. The one key insight, fact, or story you are sharing.
45 - 60 seconds	The call to action. What do you want the viewer to do? Share, question, verify, comment?

Have participants write different scripts longhand before filming. This trains them to identify gaps and sharpen their messages.

Stage 2: Filming

Even when shooting on mobile devices, maintaining an organized "film set" mindset instills discipline and elevates the final quality. Help teams organize their production sheet using simplified, real-world categories:

Storyboard

Detailed drawings of every shot needed and back shots for the most bold frames.

Production plan

A list of the shots to be recorded, detailing the order for them and budgeting an amount of time to each one. Facilitators may want to reinforce the idea that in professional set ups the recordings are not chronological to the story, but efficiently thought about.

Production needs

Locations: Concrete spaces in which to film.

Equipment: The list of every technical resource needed:

- Photography department: cameras, tripods, dollies, etc.
- Light department: artificial lighting, reflectors, etc.
- Sound department: microphones and appliances.
- Art department: every object and thing that comes inside the shot should be thought of, so it adds to the story:
 - Set dressing.
 - Props.
 - Costumes and make up.

Human resources: Concrete tasks allocated to concrete participants (ie: if a part of the production takes place in the street, the set up may need somebody to take control of the pedestrians).

- Actors should give written consent to the producer for their voice and image. It is important to have signed forms.

Human needs: Be mindful of actors and participants of the shooting to be fed, hydrated, and respected.

Facilitators should also bring attention to the following:

Light

- Natural light is always best. Position subjects facing a window, not with the window behind them.
- Avoid mixed light sources (e.g. one lamp and sunlight) as this creates uneven colouring.
- For indoor filming in low light, a ring light or a well-lit lamp pointed at the subject makes a significant difference.

Sound

- Audio quality matters. Poor audio will cause viewers to lose interest.
- Film in quiet spaces. Background noise (traffic, fans, chatter) is hard to remove in editing.
- If using voice-over, consider recording audio separately and adding it in editing.
- Lavalier microphones (clip-on mics) are inexpensive and dramatically improve audio quality.

Framing & Composition

- Always check that the aspect ratio is 9:16.
- Leave headroom, do not crop the top of the frame too close to the subject's head.
- Use the rule of thirds: place the main subject slightly off-centre rather than dead in the middle.
- Stable footage is more watchable. Use a tripod or prop the phone against something solid.

Stage 3: Editing

Editing is where the story comes together. For TikTok/Instagram content, less is more: tight cuts, clear on-screen text, and purposeful transitions are more effective than complex effects.

Recommended free editing tools:

- CapCut (mobile): Intuitive, feature-rich, and widely used. Integrates directly with TikTok.
- InShot (mobile): Simple and effective for basic editing, text overlays, and audio.
- DaVinci Resolve (desktop): Professional-grade tool available free. Steeper learning curve but very powerful.

Core editing principles for short-form video:

- Cut ruthlessly. Every second that does not serve the message should be removed.
- Add captions/subtitles. Many viewers watch without sound. This also increases accessibility.
- Use text overlays to reinforce key points, not to repeat what is being said verbally.
- Keep transitions simple. Jump cuts work well. Complex transitions draw attention away from the message.
- Match music to the emotional tone of the content. TikTok's audio library includes royalty-free options.

Stage 4: Platform Strategy

Creating a great video is only half the process. Understanding how TikTok's algorithm and community work helps content reach the right audience.

Posting and discoverability:

- Post at peak hours for your target audience (typically evenings and weekends in European time zones).
- Use 3 – 5 relevant hashtags. Avoid hashtag stuffing, it can reduce reach.
- Write captions that invite engagement: ask a question, pose a challenge, or invite viewers to share their experience.
- Engage with comments quickly after posting, this signals to the algorithm that the content is generating engagement.

Using TikTok's native features:

- Duet and Stitch: Powerful tools for creating response content or building on viral moments.
- Text-to-speech: Useful for accessibility and for creating a distinctive voice style.
- Series: If creating a multi-part explainer, use the Series feature to keep content organised.

3.3 Bonus Workshop: Crafting a Draft Reel

Duration	120 minutes
Group size	10 –20 participants
Materials	Smartphones with editing programs, a computer and a projector.
Learning objectives	Train our capacity of producing a Reel that criticizes Fake News & Disinformation in social media.

This is often the most memorable workshop in the programme. By creating content themselves, participants gain deep insight into the objectives of the program.

Scene 1: Briefing (15 min)

Introduce the task: each group will create one piece of critical content with Fake News or disinformation. Facilitators may use the motives, tactics, and solution proposals from the previous workshop. Furthermore, a brief brainstorm into how to fight misinformation may be useful for participants. An explanation toward the phases for an audiovisual production may come out handy, so participants can organize their time accordingly.

Scene 2: Pre-production (20 min)

Groups craft their idea for the Reel, from the thesis of it till the method to produce it. Facilitators may push for participants to create their own production plan and storyboard, as well as the post-production plan. Lastly, they should give some thoughts into a marketing plan: where do they want to post it and what actions should they take in order to be seen.

Scene 3: Production (25 min)

Groups film their content. Facilitators circulate to support with technical questions. Encourage multiple takes and experimentation.

Scene 4: Post-production (15 min)

Groups edit their footage. Facilitators support with editing tool questions. Remind participants of the core editing principles: tight cuts, captions, and clear messages.

Phase 5: Screening & Feedback (45 min)

Groups share their Reels in turns. After each projection, facilitators generate a debate to analyze three core items:

- The idea behind the Reel and how it fights disinformation
- The audiovisual production
- The coherence between the idea and the production.

Act 4

Implementation Guidelines

This section helps you adapt the toolkit to your specific context. The workshops and materials in this toolkit were developed in Austria and Spain with young people aged 12 – 21. Every group is different. This section offers guidance on how to tailor the content to different ages, backgrounds, skill levels, and organisational settings.

4.1 Adapting for Different Age Groups

Ages 12 - 16	Use more visual and game-based activities. Keep sessions shorter (45 – 60 min max). Use examples from platforms they actually use (TikTok, Instagram, YouTube). Avoid abstract theory, anchor everything in concrete examples. Involve them in choosing the topics to investigate.
Ages 16 - 19	This age group responds well to debate and challenge. Introduce more complexity around bias, algorithms, and platform economics. Longer sessions (75 – 90 min) work well. Give them creative ownership of outputs.
Ages 19 - 25	Can engage with more nuanced theory and structural analysis. Peer-to-peer facilitation works well. Can take on more responsibility for designing activities for younger groups. Connect to professional contexts: journalism, communications, community work.

4.2 Adapting for Different Technical Skill Levels

Not all groups will have the same level of comfort with smartphones, editing tools, or online research. Here is how to adapt:

Low digital confidence:

Start with completely offline activities (card-based exercises, printed materials).
Introduce digital tools gradually, pairing more confident participants with less confident ones.
Focus on critical thinking skills rather than production output.
Use simple tools with minimal learning curve (e.g. WhatsApp for sharing, basic phone camera for filming).

High digital confidence:

Move faster through basic tools and focus more on strategy, ethics, and impact.
Challenge participants to explore platform mechanics (algorithms, monetisation, data).
Invite them to teach tools to peers, this deepens their own learning.
Focus on content quality and message effectiveness rather than technical execution..

4.3 Adapting for Different Settings

Youth centres and non-formal education settings:

- Voluntary attendance means motivation is usually high, use this energy to push creative ambition.
- Flexibility of scheduling allows for longer or more intensive sessions.
- Peer relationships are central, design activities that build on them.

Schools and formal education settings:

- Time constraints (40 – 50 minute lessons) require tight structuring. Use shorter workshop modules and follow-up in subsequent lessons.
- Curriculum links can strengthen buy-in from teachers and school leaders. Media literacy connects to citizenship education, language arts, and digital skills frameworks.
- Consider mixed-ability groupings carefully and plan differentiation strategies in advance.

Community and grassroots settings:

- Participants may have very diverse backgrounds and levels of formal education.
- Connect to local relevance, use examples from local media and community concerns.
- Allow more time for relationship-building at the start of any session.

4.4 Running a Full Programme

The workshops in this toolkit can be combined into a structured programme. Below is a suggested six-session sequence tested during the Visual Truths project:

Session 1	Introduction to media literacy. Warm-Up A or B. Group agreement on norms and goals.
Session 2	Bonus Workshop: Crafting a Draft Reel. Use this workshop to assess or pre-evaluate media literacy and audiovisual production knowledge.
Session 3	Core Workshop 1: The Anatomy of a Fake Story
Session 4	Core Workshop 2: Analyzing Misinformation.
Session 5	Core Workshop 3: Text Variations
Session 6	Core Workshop 4: We Read the Horror in Their Faces
Session 7	Digital storytelling introduction (Act 3.1 – 3.3, scripting and filming).
Session 8	Editing, screening, and reflection. Planning for ongoing media literacy practice.

Each session works as a standalone unit, so organisations with limited time can pick and choose based on their needs and priorities. Every session should start with an Energizer coherent with the Core Workshops, and finish with an evaluation.

4.5 Facilitation Tips & Common Challenges

'My participants think fake news only affects other people, not them.'

This is one of the most common barriers. Use the cognitive bias section (Act 1.4) to normalise vulnerability. Then use activities like Warm-Up A or Core Workshop 1 to demonstrate that trained critical thinkers can still be fooled, the difference is that they catch it.

'Participants get overwhelmed or anxious about the scale of disinformation.'

Acknowledge that the problem is real and serious. Then pivot to agency: what can they do? Each workshop should end with something concrete participants can apply immediately. The creative workshop is particularly powerful for building a sense of empowerment.

'Some participants are resistant to questioning sources they trust.'

Do not challenge specific sources directly. Instead, use a structured analysis approach: all sources involve editorial choices. Asking questions about sources is a sign of respect, not distrust.

'We do not have access to smartphones or internet in our sessions.'

Every core workshop can be run fully offline with preparation. Prepare printed materials in advance: screenshots of articles, printed headlines, offline exercises. The only session that truly requires devices is the video creation workshop, but even then, you can focus on scripting and storyboarding without filming, or even trying to provide with analogic tools or other materials.

4.6 Documenting and Evaluating Your Work

If you are running this toolkit as part of a funded project or wish to demonstrate impact, consider building in simple evaluation from the start.

- Pre/post surveys: Short questionnaires assessing participants' confidence in identifying misleading content before and after the programme.
- Reflective journals: Ask participants to note one thing they noticed in their media consumption each week. Reviewing these at the end of the programme reveals change over time.
- Facilitator notes: Brief written reflection after each session captures what worked, what did not, and what you would change.
- Output portfolio: Collect participant-created content (fact-checks, videos, analyses) with their permission. This demonstrates concrete skill development and can be shared (with consent) to inspire other organisations.

4.7 Going Further: Resources & Connections

The Visual Truths toolkit is a starting point, not an endpoint. Here are some organisations and resources to deepen your practice:

Recommended resources:

First Draft News (firstdraftnews.org): Training and resources on misinformation and verification for journalists and educators.

MediaSmarts (mediasmarts.ca): Research-based media literacy resources, including many free teaching materials.

EAVI (European Association for Viewers Interests): European media literacy advocacy and educator resources.

[Maldita.es](https://maldita.es): Spanish fact-checking organisation with educational tools and resources.

Mimikama (Austria): Media literacy and fact-checking organisation focused on the German-language context.

Full Fact (fullfact.org): UK-based independent fact-checking charity with useful guides for educators.



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