



Highsted Knowledge Organiser

Subject HPL

Year 9: Becoming a Critical Researcher: Unsolved Mysteries and Conspiracy Theories

What I need to know

We will look at how to recognise fake news and conspiracy theories.

We will develop research skills consolidating knowledge of how to test the validity of sources.

We will explore the Jack the Ripper murder mystery in order to practice critical research skills

We will also link our research on the victims of Jack the Ripper to our work in history on attitudes to women at the beginning of the twentieth century and the campaigns of the Suffragettes and Suffragists.

Key Vocabulary

- **A conspiracy theory** is the belief that a covert, but influential, organisation is responsible for an unexplained event, political decisions or social/economic trends. Conspiracy theories often reject the standard explanation for an event.
- **Fake news** is false or misleading information presented as news. Fake news is often associated or given as evidence for conspiracy theories
Some fake news may have small elements of fact but are embellished or taken out of context
- **Disinformation** – false information deliberately spread to deceive people.
- **Provenance** – who wrote a source of information, when was it written and for what purpose?
- **Objective** – balanced opinion based on facts, not influenced by personal feelings or opinion.
- **Subjective** – one sided, influenced by personal views or opinions
- **Authoritative** – able to be trusted as accurate and well informed.
- **Misogyny** -dislike of or ingrained prejudice against women.
- **Patriarchy** – a society in which men hold power and women are excluded from it.

Student reference point

- **Critical researchers consider the provenance of sources and cross reference with a range of sources before accepting information as fact. They recognise and look out for elements of fake news.**
- Conspiracy theories are often based on little or flawed evidence so why do so many people believe them? They confirm previous doubts or world view- people may share ideas with friends who confirm their views – an echo chamber.
- Conspiracy theories or increased belief in these theories often happens after catastrophic or unusual events. The theories are a way of talking about or making sense of things that we fear. In a way people are turning to story telling to help them deal with threat and to form support groups.
- It can be very interesting to research conspiracy theories and mysteries.
- **However, you must be extremely careful and use all your strategies as a critical researcher if looking at articles on conspiracy theories online. Please refer to your notes on this from the lesson.**

Suggested reading

[fake news generator - where does fake news come from?](#)

[Foucault and fake news](#)