

REAL Framework Worksheet

Your Critical Thinking Toolkit for AI Content • Student Activity • Ages 10 to 15

Instructions: The REAL Framework helps you evaluate any information, especially content generated by AI chatbots. Complete each section to practice your critical thinking skills.

R: Read Carefully

Don't skim; read the FULL text. Note specific claims. Look for red flags: vague statements, missing dates, overly confident language, too-perfect grammar.

Quick-Check Questions:

- Did I read the entire text, not just the headline?
- Did anything feel "off" or too good to be true?
- Can I identify the specific claims being made?
- Does the language feel overly confident or vague?

E: Evaluate the Source

Who created this content? A chatbot, a news site, a blog, a social media post? Does the source have expertise? Does it have an agenda or commercial interest?

Quick-Check Questions:

- Who or what created this content?
- Is the source an expert on this topic?
- Does the source have a reason to be biased?

- Would I trust this source with my health or safety?

A: Ask for Evidence

Are sources or references cited? Can you actually check them? Be suspicious of “studies show” without naming the study, or “experts say” without naming the expert.

Quick-Check Questions:

- Are specific sources or studies cited?
- Can I find and verify the cited sources?
- Does the evidence actually support the claim?
- Are statistics from a named, credible organisation?

L: Look for Other Sources

Do 2+ other reliable sources confirm the same information? Check: BBC, NHS, GOV.UK, university websites, published research. If only one source says it, be sceptical.

Quick-Check Questions:

- Do at least 2 other reliable sources agree?
- What do BBC / NHS / GOV.UK say about this?
- If I search for the opposite claim, what do I find?
- Is this information consistent across different sources?

Practice: Apply the REAL Framework

Exercise 1: Evaluate This AI-Generated Paragraph

“The Great Wall of China, completed in 200 BC by Emperor Qin Shi Huang, is the only man-made structure visible from space. Stretching over 13,000 miles, it was built to protect against Mongol invasions and remains the longest wall ever constructed. Studies show that over 10 million workers died during its construction.”

This paragraph contains at least 3 errors. Use REAL to find them.

R - Read: What claims are being made?

E - Evaluate: Who is the source? Are they reliable?

A - Ask: What evidence is provided? Can you verify it?

L - Look: What do other sources say?

My conclusion:

Exercise 2: Evaluate This Social Media Claim

“BREAKING: Scientists discover that drinking 8 glasses of water a day is actually harmful! New research from the Global Health Institute proves that 4 glasses is optimal. Share before this gets taken down!”

Apply each REAL step. What red flags can you identify?

R - Read: What claims are being made?

E - Evaluate: Who is the source? Are they reliable?

A - Ask: What evidence is provided? Can you verify it?

L - Look: What do other sources say?

My conclusion:

Exercise 3: Evaluate This ChatGPT Response

“The first computer was invented by Charles Babbage in 1822. He called it the Difference Engine. Ada Lovelace then wrote the first computer program for it in 1843. The Difference Engine was successfully built and demonstrated in London.”

Which parts are true? Which need checking? (Hint: the Difference Engine was never completed in Babbage’s lifetime)

R - Read: What claims are being made?

E - Evaluate: Who is the source? Are they reliable?

A - Ask: What evidence is provided? Can you verify it?

L - Look: What do other sources say?

My conclusion:

Advanced Practice: Real-World Scenarios

Exercise 4: Evaluate This Health Claim

“New study from the International Health Research Centre finds that eating chocolate every day reduces the risk of heart disease by 40%. The study, funded by a major chocolate manufacturer, surveyed 500 participants over 6 months.”

What red flags can you spot? Think about who funded the study and the sample size.

R - Read:

E - Evaluate:

A - Ask:

L - Look:

My verdict: Real / Misleading / False **Confidence:** Low / Medium / High

Exercise 5: Evaluate This AI Image

“Viral photo shows a famous celebrity at a protest rally. The image has been shared 50,000 times with the caption: “Finally taking a stand!” No news outlets have reported on the celebrity’s attendance.”

How would you verify if this image is real or AI-generated?

R - Read:

E - Evaluate:

A - Ask:

L - Look:

My verdict: Real / Misleading / False **Confidence:** Low / Medium / High

Quick Reference: REAL Framework Pocket Card

Cut out and keep in your notebook, pencil case, or locker:

REAL Framework: Quick Check

R - READ carefully. Note claims. Spot red flags.

E - EVALUATE the source. Expert? Biased? Agenda?

A - ASK for evidence. Named sources? Verifiable?

L - LOOK for 2+ other sources. BBC? NHS? GOV.UK?

Red Flags: No sources cited • Urgent language • Too good to be true • Only one source • "Share before it's deleted!"

Reflection

1. Which REAL step do you think is the most important? Why?

2. Think of a time you believed something online that turned out to be false. Would REAL have helped?

3. How will you use the REAL Framework in your daily life?
