2.4 Social Studies: AI, Media and Reality

Can We Believe Everything We See?

Subject: Social Studies · **Grade:** 5 (age 10–11) · **Duration:** 1 double lesson (90 min) · **AI:** Teaching **ABOUT** AI

AI-related competencies (DUAL.AI.TEACHer Framework) – teacher level	**Subject-specific learning objectives – student/learner level**
EA-FC-2a *(ETHICS OF AI × FACILITATING LEARNERS' AI DIGITAL COMPETENCE Level 2 – Reflective Implementation)* "Teachers can implement learning activities that develop learners' ethical reasoning about AI, justified by the methodological choices."	**By the end of the lesson, students can:** • explain in simple terms what generative AI can do with text and images; • distinguish between information, opinion and artificially generated content; • identify clues that can make an image, text, or claim seem suspicious or unreliable; • explain why an AI-generated answer or image is not automatically true; • identify ways of checking information before accepting or sharing it; • discuss how AI can influence communication, media and people's everyday lives; • justify their own opinion about the responsible use of AI-generated content;

> **Take-home message:** AI can produce convincing text and images, but convincing does not mean true. Before we believe or share something, we need to ask where it came from, what evidence supports it and whether we can verify it elsewhere.

Content

Artificial intelligence is increasingly becoming part of everyday communication. AI systems can generate texts, pictures and other forms of content that may look as if they were created by a

person. This creates new possibilities, but also new challenges for how people understand and evaluate information. For students at this age, the important question is not necessarily **how AI works technically, but how AI-generated content can affect people and society.**

The lesson introduces AI through a familiar social situation: information encountered in everyday life. The teacher presents examples of texts and images and asks students to decide whether the content is real, edited, or AI-generated. The emphasis is not on teaching students to detect AI perfectly. In fact, one of the central conclusions of the lesson is that **appearance alone is not a reliable way of establishing whether something is true.**

Students instead learn a simple verification process:

STOP → QUESTION → CHECK → COMPARE → DECIDE

The activity connects with the Social Studies curriculum's emphasis on developing critical thinking, analysing evidence, forming and expressing opinions, and researching the social environment. The curriculum specifically includes the **role and influence of the media** as one of the proposed social issues for Grade 5. The curriculum also explicitly encourages teachers to develop rational and critical thinking through posing questions that require reasoning, investigating evidence, analysing data that support or challenge conclusions, and considering different interpretations. Importantly, **students do not interact directly with an AI system during the lesson**. The teacher operates the AI tool and presents selected outputs to the class. Students' role is to observe, question, compare and evaluate the content.

Lesson plan

Phase	**Time**	**Activity**
Introduction	10 min	The teacher shows two or three images or short texts connected to a familiar situation. Students individually decide: *Is this real? How do you know?*
Input	15 min	The teacher introduces AI in age-appropriate language: what generative AI can do and why AI-generated content can look convincing.
Demonstration	15 min	The teacher uses an AI tool live to generate an image or short text based on a simple prompt. Students observe how quickly the content can be created and discuss what the AI actually produces.

Investigation	30 min	Groups receive several examples of information/content. They use a verification checklist and decide what they would trust, what they would question and what they would check further.
Reflection	20 min	Whole-class discussion: *Can we trust an image simply because it looks real? What about a text? Who is responsible if we create or spread false information?*

Guiding questions:

Students work through the following situations with the teacher. The AI is operated only by the teacher.

1. Round 1 — STOP: Don't believe it immediately

The teacher shows students an AI-generated image of a familiar situation — for example, an apparently realistic photograph of an unusual event in Slovenia.

1. Before revealing anything, students answer:
    1. Does this image look real?
    2. What makes you think so?
    3. Which details make it seem believable?
    4. Is there anything that looks unusual?
2. The teacher reveals that the image was generated with AI and briefly explains how generative AI can create realistic-looking images.
    1. What made us believe the image was real?
    2. Did we look for evidence, or did we simply trust what we saw?
    3. Could a person use such an image to mislead other people?

Diagnose: Students identify the difference between **"This looks real,"** and **"I have evidence that this is real."**

Key idea: A realistic appearance is not proof that something is true.

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2. Round 2 — QUESTION: Who created it and why?

The teacher presents a short piece of **AI-generated news-style text.** For example, the teacher asks an AI system to produce a short article about an imaginary event at a Slovenian school.

1. Students do not interact with the AI. Instead, they analyse the output.
    1. Who wrote or created this?
    2. Where does the information supposedly come from?
    3. Does the text identify a source?

4. Does it provide evidence?
5. Can we verify the information?
6. Why might someone want to publish such information?
7. Does the text sound certain even though we don't know whether it is true?

2. Students discover that a text can sound confident, informative and convincing while still lacking a reliable source or evidence.

Key idea: A confident-sounding answer is not necessarily a correct answer.

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3. Round 3 — CHECK & COMPARE: Let's verify it

The teacher presents a fictional claim: **“A new rule has been introduced in Slovenia: students are no longer allowed to use mobile phones on Saturdays.”**

The statement is deliberately simple and plausible enough to prompt students to consider how they would check it.

1. Students are **not** asked simply to answer "true" or "false". Instead, they have to design **a verification strategy.**
   1. Where would you check this information?
   2. Who could you ask?
   3. Would you trust a social media post?
   4. Would you check only one source or several?
   5. What would count as good evidence?
   6. Which source would you trust more?
   7. What would make you change your mind?
2. The teacher then demonstrates how the claim could be checked using different types of sources.

Students recognise that checking information is a process rather than simply deciding whether something "feels true".

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4. Optional Round — AI vs. Human

1. The teacher asks an AI system: **“Why is it important to preserve cultural heritage?”**
   - The AI generates a short answer.
2. Students then independently construct **their own answer without AI.**
3. The class compares the two.
   1. What did the AI answer well?
   2. What is missing?
   3. Is the AI giving information, an opinion, or both?
   4. Does the AI know our local environment as well as we do?
   5. Which answer would be more useful when presenting our local cultural heritage?
   6. Can an AI-generated answer replace our own thinking?

This connects with the curriculum's emphasis on cultural heritage, students' understanding of the past and present, and their ability to explain and justify their own viewpoints.

Closing activity: Building a classroom rule

At the end of the lesson, the teacher and students jointly create a simple classroom poster:

5 QUESTIONS BEFORE WE SHARE

- **STOP**
  - Do I need to believe this immediately?
- **QUESTION**
  - Who created or published this?
- **CHECK**
  - Where can I verify the information?
- **COMPARE**
  - Do other reliable sources say the same thing?
- **DECIDE**
  - Do I have enough evidence to believe or share it?

The poster becomes the main practical outcome of the lesson.

Closing question: If a computer can create an image or text that looks completely real, what should we do before we believe it or share it with other people?

Materials

- One computer and projector for the teacher;
- access to an LLM/AI tool operated by the teacher;
- 2–3 prepared AI-generated images and texts;
- several examples of real and fictional information;
- a STOP → QUESTION → CHECK → COMPARE → DECIDE worksheet;
- different sources that students can use for verification;
- a board or poster for constructing the class's "5 questions before we share" rule.

The teacher's role and the students' role

A central design principle of this lesson is that **AI use is teacher-led**.

Teacher	Students
Operates the AI tool.	Observe the AI output.
Creates selected examples.	Ask questions about the content.
Demonstrates how AI generates text/images.	Identify reasons to trust or question information.

Provides examples and counterexamples	Compare different sources.
Models verification strategies	Develop their own verification strategy.
Guides discussion	Explain and justify their conclusions.
Makes the limitations of AI visible.	Reflect on responsible information sharing.

The students are therefore learning *about the capabilities, limitations and social consequences* of AI without needing their own access to an AI system.

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