Eluks Valmis

MINDSHIFT: AUTOPILOT OFF - THINK BEFORE YOU CLICK

critical thinking & media literacy

Co-funded by the European Union

CONTENTS

About the session

1. Session overview 4
2. Learning objectives 6
3. Key messages 8
4. Materials and resources 9
5. Facilitation note 11
6. 90-minute flow 13
7. Detailed session plan 14
8. Worksheets and resources 31
Worksheet 1: Brain Check 32
Worksheet 2: Scroll Check 33
Worksheet 3: My Feed Bubble 34
9. Example media cards 35
10. Homework and follow-up 37
11. Suggested 20-slide structure 39
12. Possible variations 41
13. Facilitator notes 43
14. Simple evaluation questions 46
15. How the plan reflects the research 47
16. MindShift resource set used 49

Eluks Valmis

CRITICAL THINKING AND MEDIA LITERACY

TARGET GROUP
Young people aged 15-25

GROUP SIZE
16-30 participants

DURATION
90 minutes

USER OF THE SESSION PLAN
Youth worker, teacher, trainer, school counsellor, youth information worker

LEVEL Suitable for school, youth centre, training course, youth club or non-formal education setting

FORMAT · INTERACTIVE SESSION
short videos, practical media-analysis tools, small-group work, dialogue and personal reflection

1. SESSION OVERVIEW

Goal

The session helps young people develop practical habits for navigating social media and online information critically. Participants practise slowing down before reacting, asking better questions, checking the credibility of posts and sources, recognising how cognitive biases and algorithms influence what they see, and making one concrete change in their own media habits.

Why this session matters?

Young people do not mainly need theory about "fake news". They need repeated opportunities to practise critical thinking with the kinds of posts, videos, headlines and feeds they encounter every day. MindShift research found a gap between knowing that misinformation exists and being able to evaluate real content in the moment. It also highlighted peer pressure, emotional reactions, algorithmic feeds and a lack of safe spaces for disagreement as important challenges.

This session therefore treats critical thinking as a practical habit rather than a school subject. The facilitator does not tell participants what to think. Instead, the session creates a safe structure in which they can ask questions, compare interpretations, change their minds and test simple tools they can use after the workshop.

Core idea: Critical thinking is not about distrusting everything. It is about slowing down enough to ask:

What do I know?
How do I know it?
What might be influencing me?
What should I check before I act?

Eluks Valmis

2. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

1. Name at least three factors that can influence their reaction to online content (emotion, bias, repetition, popularity, framing or algorithmic selection).
2. Use the MINDSHIFT Brain Check to pause, name an emotional reaction and ask critical questions before responding.
3. Use the MINDSHIFT Scroll Check to identify green flags and red flags in a post, video, comment thread or message.

4. Explain in simple terms why a personalised feed is not a neutral picture of the world.

5. Identify at least one perspective, topic or source that may be missing from their own feed.

6. Explain how framing can make the same underlying information feel very different.

7. Choose one practical action to make their media use more intentional.

Eluks Valmis

3. KEY MESSAGES FOR PARTICIPANTS

- Your first reaction is information – not proof.
- Bias is normal. The skill is noticing when a shortcut may be steering you.
- A post can be technically true and still be misleading because of framing, missing context or emotional manipulation.
- Popularity is not evidence. Followers, likes and shares do not make a claim true.
- Your feed is personalised. It shows you a selection, not "the world".
- When a post makes you want to react immediately, that is often a good moment to slow down.
- Changing your mind after checking better information is a strength, not a failure.
- Critical thinking works better in dialogue: trusted people can help us notice what we miss alone.

Eluks Valmis

4. MATERIALS AND MINDSHIFT RESOURCES

For the facilitator

- Projector or screen
- Laptop and speakers
- Flipchart or whiteboard
- Markers
- Sticky notes
- Timer
- Printed or digital example posts/headlines
- Printed MINDSHIFT worksheets for participants

MINDSHIFT resources used in this session

- Video: "Your Brain Has Autopilot" – cognitive shortcuts, good questions, slowing down.
- Video: "Is This For Views or News?" – source checking, emotional hooks and verification.
- Video: "Your Feed Is Not the World" – algorithms, personalisation and feed bubbles.
- Worksheet/infographic: "Brain Check – Autopilot Off!"

- Worksheet/infographic: “Scroll Check – Can I Trust This Post?”
- Worksheet/infographic: “My Feed Bubble – Who’s Talking in My Head?”
- Podcast: MindShift – Critical Thinking & Media Literacy with Nerijus Kriauciunas (optional short excerpt or homework).

Preparation before the session

- Prepare 3-4 realistic pieces of online content for analysis. Ideally use public content that is recent and relevant to the group. Avoid exposing participants to graphic, hateful or personally targeted content.
- If using real social media posts, remove usernames/photos where privacy is not essential. Alternatively create realistic mock posts inspired by common formats.
- Choose examples that are not all obviously false. Include at least one credible post, one misleading/framed post and one ambiguous post. The learning comes from discussion, not from catching participants out.

5. FACILITATION NOTE: CREATE A SPACE WHERE CHANGING YOUR MIND IS SAFE

The research behind MindShift shows that critical thinking is difficult when young people feel that there is one "correct" opinion they are expected to perform. The facilitator should therefore model curiosity rather than authority.

Suggested opening message: "Today is not about proving who is smartest or who can spot the fake. We are practising how to slow down, ask questions and think together. You are allowed to be unsure, to disagree respectfully and to change your mind."

- Participants may always pass and do not need to share private social media activity.
- Ask for reasons and evidence rather than judging answers as “good” or “bad”.
- Distinguish disagreement with an idea from disrespect toward a person or group.
- If a discussion becomes politically or socially charged, return to the process: What is the claim? What is the evidence? What is missing? What would change our minds?
- Do not humiliate participants for believing or sharing misleading content. Everyone uses mental shortcuts.

6. 90-MINUTE FLOW

Time	Building block	Activity	Main purpose
0–10 min	Intro / safe space	Welcome + “What makes you stop scrolling?”	Create trust and connect the topic to real digital life
10–20 min	Teaser	Fast reaction challenge	Experience how quickly we judge online content
20–35 min	Meta-skill	Video: Your Brain Has Autopilot + Brain Check	Notice emotion, questions and cognitive bias
35–55 min	Practical analysis	Video: Is This For Views or News? + Scroll Check Lab	Practise source and content evaluation
55–70 min	Zoom out	Video: Your Feed Is Not the World + Feed Bubble	Understand personalisation and missing perspectives
70–82 min	Experiential creation	Frame It! — same facts, different post	Experience how framing and attention shape meaning
82–88 min	Transfer	My 1% Media Shift	Choose one realistic personal action
88–90 min	Closing	One-sentence checkout	Consolidate learning and close clearly

7. DETAILED SESSION PLAN

Intro and safe space

Goal: To create a respectful atmosphere, connect the session to participants' real media use and make uncertainty acceptable.

Welcome

Explain that the session is about everyday critical thinking online – not an exam in spotting fake news.

Facilitator says:

"*Every day we make hundreds of tiny judgments online: Do I believe this? Do I click? Do I share? Do I get angry? Do I ignore it? Today we will practise a few simple ways to take our brain off autopilot before those tiny choices.*"

Eluks Valmis

Quick check-in: What makes you stop scrolling?

Ask participants to call out or write on sticky notes what usually makes them stop scrolling. Examples: something funny, shocking, beautiful, outrageous, useful, scary, controversial, involving a celebrity, or something they strongly agree with.
Cluster the answers quickly. Point out that many of the strongest attention triggers are emotional. Do not yet explain too much – this becomes relevant throughout the session.

Group agreement

- We can disagree with ideas without attacking people.
- We ask "how do you know?" with curiosity, not as an insult.
- We are allowed to say "I don't know".
- We are allowed to change our mind.
- Nobody has to show their private feed or account.

TEASER: FAST REACTION CHALLENGE

Goal

To let participants experience how quickly impressions form before analysis begins.

Preparation

Display 4 short posts/headlines one at a time. Use a mix of credible, misleading and ambiguous examples. Give participants only 5-8 seconds for each.

For each example, participants choose quickly

- TRUST / MAYBE / DON'T TRUST
- SHARE / DON'T SHARE
- or: stand on an imaginary line from "very believable" to "very suspicious".

Debrief

- What did you base your first reaction on?
- Did the number of likes/followers affect you?
- Did the design or photo make it feel credible?
- Did a strong emotion influence your answer?
- How much information did you actually have?

Key message: Online, we often react before we investigate. Fast thinking is useful – but it is not always accurate.

AUTOPILOT OFF: BRAIN CHECK

Goal

To help participants notice emotional reactions and cognitive shortcuts, and practise better questions.

Step 1 — Watch the video

Play the MINDSHIFT video "Your Brain Has Autopilot". Ask participants to listen for one idea they recognise in themselves.

Step 2 — Apply the Brain Check

Give participants the "Brain Check – Autopilot Off!" worksheet. Re-display one of the teaser posts, preferably the one that produced the strongest disagreement.

Participants work individually for 3–4 minutes:

1. Name the first emotion or reaction.
2. Choose 2-3 critical questions from the worksheet.
3. Tick any bias that might be relevant.
4. Choose a next move: share / don't share / check more / ask someone / let it go.

Pair exchange

In pairs, compare which questions were most useful. They do not need to agree about the content.

Facilitator input

Briefly explain that cognitive biases are mental shortcuts. They are not a sign that someone is stupid or dishonest. Examples that are especially relevant online include confirmation bias, in-group bias, bandwagon effect, authority bias and negativity bias.

Eluks Valmis

Useful question to repeat throughout the session:

“Do I know this — or do I just feel it?”

SCROLL CHECK LAB:
CAN I TRUST THIS POST?

Goal

To practise evaluating a real or realistic piece of online content using clear source and content criteria.

Step 1 — Watch the video

Play "Is This For Views or News?" Emphasise the simple routine: Who made this? What's the trick? Where can I double-check?

Step 2 — Small-group investigation

Divide participants into groups of 3-5. Give each group one post/headline/video screenshot and the "Scroll Check – Can I Trust This Post?" worksheet.

Ask groups to investigate:

- What are the green flags?
- What are the red flags?
- Who is behind the content?
  Can we find the original source?
- What emotion is the post trying to trigger?
- What information or context is missing?
- Can we find one or two independent sources that confirm or challenge the claim?
- Would we share it now? Why or why not?

Important facilitation point

Do not reduce the activity to "true or false". A piece of content can contain correct facts but still be misleading because of framing, missing context, an old date, an edited image, or an exaggerated headline.

Group sharing

Each group gives a 60-second report: one green flag, one red flag, one thing they checked, and their final decision.

Key message: Popularity is not evidence. Emotional intensity is not evidence. A polished design is not evidence. Check the source, context and independent confirmation.

Your Feed Is Not the World

Goal

To understand that algorithms personalise information environments and to identify what may be overrepresented or missing.

Step 1 — Watch the video

Play "Your Feed Is Not the World".

Optional podcast bridge (2–3 minutes)

Play a short excerpt from the MINDSHIFT podcast with Nerijus Kriauciunas in which he discusses attention as a currency and suggests asking not only "Is this true?" but also "Why am I seeing this?" If time is tight, paraphrase this message instead.

Step 2 — Feed Bubble reflection

Distribute "My Feed Bubble – Who's Talking in My Head?" Participants complete only the parts they feel comfortable sharing. They can use categories rather than actual account names.

- What topics do I see a lot?
- What opinions or lifestyles do I see repeatedly?
- How does my feed usually make me feel?
- What topic or perspective do I rarely see?
- What type of source or account could add useful variety?

Small-group discussion

- How can repetition make something feel more normal, important or true?
- Is a "bubble" always bad? When can it be useful or enjoyable?
- When does a bubble become a problem?
- What can we actually change – and what is decided by the platform?

Key message: A personalised feed may fit you very well – but it is still only a slice of reality. Critical thinking includes noticing what is absent.

Experiential challenge: Frame It!

Goal

To experience how framing, emotion and platform logic can change the meaning and impact of the same underlying information.

Set-up

Give every group the same short set of neutral facts. Example: “A town council plans to remove 12 parking spaces from the main square and add trees, benches and a cycle lane. The change will be tested for six months. Local businesses have mixed views.”

Task

Each group creates two short social media posts about the same facts:
1. Post A: designed to maximise outrage, fear or attention.
2. Post B: designed to inform fairly and invite curiosity.
They may change the headline, order of information, image suggestion, emojis and wording – but may not invent new facts.

Compare

- Which words changed the emotional tone?
- What did you put first, and what did you leave for later?
- Could both posts be "factually correct" and still produce different impressions?
- Which post would probably get more engagement? Why?
- What did you learn by becoming the creator rather than only the consumer?

Link this to the podcast idea that creating media can reveal how formats, choices and platform incentives shape what audiences perceive.

Transfer: My 1% Media Shift

Goal

To turn the session into one small, realistic change rather than an unrealistic promise to "use social media perfectly".

Ask participants to choose one action for the next seven days. They can write it on the bottom of the Feed Bubble worksheet, on a sticky note, or as a phone note.

- Before sharing something emotionally strong, I will pause and ask one Brain Check question.
- I will cross-check one surprising claim before forwarding it.
- I will add one credible source or different perspective to my feed.
- I will mute/unfollow one source that repeatedly manipulates or drains me.
- I will check why a certain ad/post is being shown to me.
- I will talk with a trusted person about one piece of content I am unsure about.
- My own idea:

  _____

The goal is not a perfect feed.
The goal is one more moment of choice.

Closing: one-sentence checkout

Goal

To close with a memorable personal takeaway.

Invite participants to complete one sentence aloud, on a sticky note, or privately:

- One question I want to ask more often is...
- One red flag I will notice more is...
- One thing about my feed I realised is...
- One bias I want to catch "in the wild" is...
- Before I share, I want to remember...

Closing sentence from facilitator:

"Critical thinking is not about having the right answer immediately. It is about creating enough space between what you see and what you do to make a more intentional choice."

8. WORKSHEETS AND RESOURCES

The session is designed to use the existing MINDSHIFT Critical Thinking & Media Literacy resources. The full designed versions should be distributed digitally or printed. The summaries below help the facilitator understand their role in the session.

WORKSHEET 1: BRAIN CHECK — AUTOPILOT OFF!

A self-check that starts with the participant's reaction, asks them to slow down and name an emotion, offers critical questions, and includes a "Bias Bingo" with common cognitive shortcuts.

Facilitator use

Use with one emotionally engaging post. Participants do not need to tick every bias; the goal is recognition, not diagnosis.



BRAIN CHECK – AUTOPILOT OFF!

Online, your brain loves shortcuts. That's normal. This page helps you slow down, ask smarter questions, and spot bias — before you react, comment, or share.

WHAT AM I REACTING TO? □ POST □ VIDEO □ COMMENT THREAD □ MESSAGE

Topic: _____ Platform: _____

My first reaction (1-2 words): _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ ___

STEP 1 — SLOW DOWN

I pause for 2 seconds before reacting

I name the emotion:
□ angry □ scared □ amused □ excited
□ disgusted □_____

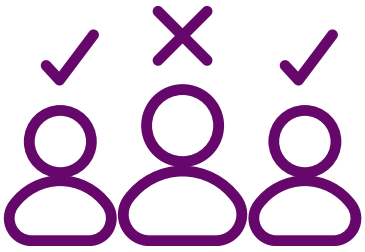
I ask: "Do I know this, or do I just feel it?" If it makes you want to share immediately... that's your cue to not.

STEP 2 — ASK GOOD QUESTIONS

□ What's the evidence – and where is it from?
□ What's missing from this story?
□ Who benefits if I believe this?
□ What would change my mind?
□ Is there another explanation that also fits?
□ Am I mixing up one example with the whole truth?

STEP 3 - BIAS BINGO

Tick any that fit. More ticks = more caution.



□ Confirmation bias - I click what I already agree with.
□ In-group bias - "My group = good, their group = bad."
□ Availability bias - "I saw 3 examples, so it must be common."
□ Negativity bias - bad news grabs my attention more than good news.
□ Status quo bias - "We've always done it this way, so it's right."
□ Authority bias - "A famous person said it, so it's true."
□ Bandwagon effect - "Everyone likes it, so it must be right."
□ Halo effect - "They seem smart/nice, so everything they say is correct."
□ Anchoring - the first number/idea sticks, even if it's random.
□ Fundamental attribution error - blaming people ("they're stupid") instead of context ("what happened?").
□ Sunk cost fallacy - "I've argued this too long to change my mind."
□ Dunning-Kruger effect - feeling super confident with very little info.

BIAS ISN'T A MORAL FAILURE. IT'S YOUR BRAIN SAVING BATTERY.

MY BRAIN CHECK RESULT:

Pauses done: □ yes □ no
Questions asked: ____. Bias ticks: ____

My next move:
□ Share □ Don't share □ Check more □ Ask someone □ Let it go

This week: Catch one bias in the wild and write what it tried to make you do.

Eluks Valmis
Co-funded by the European Union
coobra cooperativa braccianti
Edu Era

WORKSHEET 2:
SCROLL CHECK — CAN I TRUST THIS POST?

A practical source-evaluation checklist with green flags and red flags, followed by a decision about whether to share, check more or stop.

Facilitator use

Use in small groups with a realistic post, headline, video screenshot or forwarded message.



SCROLL CHECK – CAN I TRUST THIS POST?

Before you like, share or freak out about something online, give it a quick SCROLL CHECK. Tick the boxes that fit. The more ✓ you have in the red zone, the more careful you should be

WHAT AM I CHECKING? □ **POST** □ **VIDEO** □ **COMMENT THREAD** □ **MESSAGE**

Topic: _____ Platform: _____

✅ GREEN FLAGS – GOOD SIGNS

□ The author is clear (person / organisation I can look up).
□ There is a date and it's recent.
□ There is a source (link, organisation, website) I recognise or can verify.
□ Other independent sources say the same (I checked at least 1-2).
□ The language is calm and factual, not only emotional.
□ I understand where the numbers or facts come from (study, report, etc.).

🚩 RED FLAGS – WARNING SIGNS

□ I don't know who made this (no info, weird name, no imprint).
□ It tries to make me feel very angry / scared / shocked.
□ It says things like "everyone knows", "they don't want you to know this".
□ It uses ALL CAPS, too many emojis, clickbait titles.
□ There is no date or it's from a long time ago but shared as "new".
□ Picture / video looks edited or taken out of context.
□ The post tells me to "share immediately" without checking.

MY SCROLL CHECK RESULT:

✅ Green flags: _____
⚠️ Red flags: _____

If you ticked many red flags:
Don't share. Check another source or ask someone you trust

Think about it:

- What made this post feel believable at first?
- What changed after doing the SCROLL CHECK?
- Do I still want to like / share / comment - or not?

Edu Era · Eluks Valmis · coobra cooperativa braccianti · Co-funded by the European Union

WORKSHEET 3: MY FEED BUBBLE — WHO'S TALKING IN MY HEAD?

A reflective mapping tool helping participants notice which accounts/topics dominate their feed, how the feed makes them feel, what voices are missing and one small change they can make.

Facilitator use

Use individually first. Participants may use broad categories rather than revealing personal accounts.



MY FEED BUBBLE – WHO'S TALKING IN MY HEAD?

Algorithms show you more of what you interact with. That can create a bubble where you mostly see one side of things. This sheet helps you see who is shaping your view and what might be missing.

1. WHO DO I SEE THE MOST?

Write down 5 accounts, pages, channels or people you see or interact with a lot (likes, comments, views, shares).

	Account/Page/Channel	What do they mostly post? (topic)	How does it usually make me feel? (1-2 words)
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

2. WHAT'S INSIDE MY BUBBLE?



Topics I see a lot:

-
-
-
-
-
-

Opinions I see a lot:
"Most people in my feed think that..."

_____

_____

"I rarely see someone say..."

_____

_____

How my feed makes me feel overall:
(Circle 1-2)

relaxed / stressed / informed / confused / hopeful / angry / entertained / something else: _____ _____ _____

3. WHAT VOICES OR TOPICS ARE MISSING?

A topic I care about but don't see often:

_____

A perspective I rarely see (e.g. different politics, other countries, other life stories): _____

_____

A type of account I might want to add (e.g. scientists, youth organisations, fact-checkers, people with other experiences):

_____

_____

4. ONE SMALL CHANGE THIS WEEK

□ I will unfollow / mute at least 1 account that makes me feel bad or manipulated.

□ I will follow 1 new account that has a different perspective on a topic I care about.

□ I will limit scrolling time on one app by _____ minutes per day.

□ Other idea:

_____



Edu Era · Eluks Valmis · coobra cooperativa braccianti · Co-funded by the European Union

9. EXAMPLE MEDIA CARDS FOR THE SCROLL CHECK LAB

These examples are intentionally mixed. The facilitator can replace them with recent public content relevant to the group.

Card A — "Scientists prove phones destroy your brain!"

A dramatic post with no named study, no link, an image of a brain scan, "SHARE BEFORE THEY DELETE THIS", and 82,000 likes.

Learning focus:

Useful for emotional language, missing source, authority appearance and sharing pressure.

Card B — "City introduces free public transport for under-18s from September"

Post from the verified city account, dated today, linking to an official page with eligibility details.

Learning focus:

Useful because not every exercise item should be suspicious. Participants can identify positive credibility signals.

Card C — Old video, new claim

A flood video from 2022 reposted with the caption "This is happening RIGHT NOW in our city".

Learning focus:

Useful for date/context checking and reverse-image/video search discussion.

Card D — Influencer health claim

A fitness influencer says "This drink detoxes your body in 24 hours", links to a shop, and includes #partner in small text.

Learning focus:

Useful for sponsorship, expertise, commercial incentives and health claims.

10. SUGGESTED HOMEWORK / FOLLOW-UP

Choose one option.

Option 1: Podcast reflection

Listen to the MINDSHIFT podcast on Critical Thinking & Media Literacy with Nerijus Kriauciunas. Afterwards answer:

1. What is one idea that changed or complicated how you think about media?
2. What is one digital habit you recognise in your own life?
3. What does "Why am I seeing this?" add to the question "Is this true?"
4. What is one thing individuals can do – and one thing platforms or society should do?

Option 2: Catch a bias in the wild

During the next week, notice one moment when you recognise a bias or fast reaction in yourself. Write down: What happened? What did your brain want to do immediately? What question helped you slow down?

Option 3: Feed experiment

For one week, intentionally add one reliable or different source to your feed, or directly search for information outside your usual recommendations. At the end, note whether you noticed any difference in what you saw or thought about.

Eluks Valmis

11. SUGGESTED 20-SLIDE STRUCTURE

Slide	Heading	Main content
1	Title	MindShift: Autopilot Off – Think Before You Click
2	Session goals	Slow down, question, check, zoom out, choose intentionally.
3	Group agreement	Curiosity, respectful disagreement, "I don't know" is allowed, changing your mind is allowed.
4	What makes you stop scrolling?	Attention triggers from the opening activity.
5	Fast thinking online	Our first reaction is information, not proof.
6	Video	Your Brain Has Autopilot.
7	Brain Check	Pause – name the emotion – ask a good question.
8	Biases	Confirmation, in-group, bandwagon, authority, negativity.
9	Key question	Do I know this – or do I just feel it?

Slide	Heading	Main content
10	Video	Is This For Views or News?
11	Scroll Check	Green flags and red flags.
12	Source check	Who made this? Where is the original?
13	Context check	Date, evidence, missing context, independent confirmation.
14	Video	Your Feed Is Not the World.
15	Algorithm 101	Your actions → signals → recommendations → more signals
16	Feed Bubble	What do I see a lot? What is missing?
17	Podcast idea	Ask not only “Is this true?” but “Why am I seeing this?”
18	Frame it!	Same facts, different framing.
19	My 1% Media Shift	One small change for the next seven days.
20	Closing	Pause. Ask. Check. Zoom out. Choose.

Eluks Valmis

12. POSSIBLE VARIATIONS

For groups of 30+

Use groups of 5-6 and reduce plenary reporting. For the Scroll Check Lab, use a gallery walk: groups display their analysis and participants walk around reading the results. Ask each group to share only one surprising discovery.

For a quieter group

Use anonymous sticky notes or an online polling tool for the Fast Reaction Challenge. Allow individual writing before every pair/group discussion. Do not force public disclosure of personal feeds.

For younger participants, ages 15-17

Use examples from everyday school and social life: viral rumours, influencer posts, gaming clips, school group chats, dramatic health claims, celebrity news and edited images. Explain only 3-4 biases rather than the full Bias Bingo.

For older participants, ages 20-25

Use examples involving employment scams, AI-generated content, political information, health claims, housing offers, finance/investment content, influencer marketing and professional identity.

For a 45-minute version

1. Fast Reaction Challenge (5 min)
2. Video "Your Brain Has Autopilot" + one Brain Check question (8 min)
3. Video "Is This For Views or News?" + Scroll Check in groups (20 min)
4. Short "Your Feed Is Not the World" input (7 min)
5. One personal action + closing (5 min)

Give the Feed Bubble worksheet and podcast as follow-up/homework.

For a 2-hour version

Extend the Scroll Check Lab with live lateral reading and reverse-image search. Add a structured dialogue or fishbowl on a low-stakes controversial topic, explicitly practising disagreement, evidence and changing one's mind.

13. FACILITATOR NOTES

What to avoid

- “Young people believe everything they see online.”
- “Social media is bad.”
- “This source is always trustworthy / that source is always fake.”
- “You should never be in a filter bubble.”
- “If you shared misinformation, you should have known better.”
- Turning the activity into a competition about who is smartest.
- Using highly polarising examples before a safe discussion culture has been established.

What to say instead

- “All of us use shortcuts. Let’s notice which ones are active here.”
- “What makes this feel believable?”
- “What evidence would make this stronger?”
- “What information is missing?”
- “What would change your mind?”
- “Could two reasonable people interpret this differently? Why?”
- “What can we check before deciding?”
- “What is useful about your feed – and where might it be narrowing your view?”

Working with political or controversial content

The facilitator should not tell participants which political view to adopt. Focus on claims, evidence, sources, framing and reasoning. Make room for different viewpoints as long as they are expressed without harassment or dehumanisation. If the group lacks trust, begin with less polarising examples and build the skill of disagreement gradually.

Using AI-generated content

AI can be included as an example of why source, provenance and verification matter. Avoid turning the session into a game of "spot the AI", because detection by appearance is increasingly unreliable. A more durable question is: What is the source, what is the evidence, what do I know about how this content was created, and can I verify the underlying claim?

14. SIMPLE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

At the end, participants can answer anonymously on a 1-5 scale
(1 = not at all, 5 = very much):

1. I can slow down and ask a useful question before reacting to online content.
2. I can name at least two green flags or red flags when checking a post.
3. I understand that my social media feed is personalised and does not represent the whole world.
4. I can identify at least one bias that may influence how I interpret information.
5. I know one practical action I can use to make my media use more intentional.

Open question: One thing I take from this session is: _____

15. HOW THIS LESSON PLAN REFLECTS THE MINDSHIFT RESEARCH

The session intentionally translates the project's research findings into practice:

- Real-life relevance: participants analyse contemporary social-media style content rather than only learning definitions.
- Skills over information: the session repeatedly asks participants to do – pause, question, check, compare, create and reflect.

- Psychological safety: uncertainty, disagreement and changing one's mind are explicitly normalised.
- Digital reality: algorithms, emotional hooks, feeds, influencers/framing and cognitive bias are treated as part of the same information environment.
- Peer learning: pair and small-group exchanges are built into the session because critical thinking develops through dialogue, not only individual reflection.
- Prevention and habit-building: the "1% Media Shift" and follow-up options encourage small repeated practices beyond a one-off workshop.

16. MINDSHIFT RESOURCE SET USED

Critical Thinking & Media Literacy resources produced in the Ready 4 Life: MindShift project:

- Short video: Your Brain Has Autopilot
- Short video: Is This For Views or News?
- Short video: Your Feed Is Not the World
- Infographic/worksheet: Brain Check – Autopilot Off!
- Infographic/worksheet: Scroll Check – Can I Trust This Post?
- Infographic/worksheet: My Feed Bubble – Who's Talking in My Head?
- Podcast: Critical Thinking & Media Literacy with Nerijus Kriauciunas

The resources are designed to work independently for young people and as integrated materials within facilitated youth-work and educational settings.

THANK YOU FOR USING THE MINDSHIFT LESSON PLAN WITH YOUR GROUP!

We would also really appreciate your feedback as the facilitator. Your experience helps us understand what worked well, what could be improved, and how useful the lesson plan was in practice.

Facilitator / teacher feedback form

We would also be very grateful if you could share the short participant feedback form with the young people who attended the workshop.

Their feedback helps us understand how the activities worked from their point of view, what they enjoyed, what they found useful, and what we could improve in the future.

Participant (young person) feedback form

Both forms are short and take only a few minutes to complete.

Thank you again for using MindShift and for helping us improve the materials based on real experience from practice.