

What are the  
Facts, and  
How Do I  
Decide?

# Think Before You Share: A Journalism Checklist for the People:

Use this checklist to evaluate whether an article, post, or report is rooted in real journalism, or whether it's veering into misinformation or opinion disguised as fact. This guide is based on the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics, media literacy principles, and journalistic standards.

## **Included: Source & Verification | Article Type & Intent | Ethics & Accountability | Critical Thinking Questions**

- ☐ Is the article attributed to a named author or news outlet?
- ☐ Is there a clear date/time of publication?
- ☐ Does the article include links to original documents or cited sources?
- ☐ Are claims supported with verifiable data or quotes from credible sources?
- ☐ Is the article clearly labeled (News, Opinion, Editorial, Op-Ed, Feature)?
- ☐ Is the tone neutral (for news) or appropriately marked as opinion?
- ☐ Does the piece differentiate between fact and speculation?
- ☐ Are first-person statements used only in labeled commentary?
- ☐ Does the journalist refrain from personal attacks, inflammatory language, or loaded words, a.k.a., Yellow Journalism?
- ☐ Is the subject of the article given a chance to respond or be quoted?
- ☐ Are anonymous sources used responsibly (and sparingly)?
- ☐ Is there any conflict of interest disclosed (e.g., personal, financial, political)?
- ☐ What is the source's track record for accuracy and fairness?
- ☐ Am I reacting emotionally or critically thinking?
- ☐ Could this be satire, clickbait, or a personal blog?
- ☐ Who benefits from me believing and sharing this information?

Created by KD Public Relations | [www.KatThePRPrac.com](http://www.KatThePRPrac.com) | June 30, 2025 | 10:00 PM

This checklist was created for educational and media literacy purposes under Fair Use standards. It incorporates publicly available journalism ethics guidelines from the Society of Professional Journalists, The New York Times, and NAMLE. KD Public Relations does not claim ownership of third-party content and credits all sources accordingly.