

YouTube Script: How to Spot Fake News in 30 Seconds

- **Target Video Length:** 3 to 4 minutes
- **Tone:** Friendly, conversational, slightly fast-paced, and practical.
- **Visual Style:** B-roll, clean text overlays, and quick screenshots of social media feeds.

□ Section 1: The Hook (0:00 - 0:45)

[Visual] *Host is sitting in a comfortable space, holding up their phone, looking slightly exasperated. Quick B-roll cuts of chaotic social media feeds scrolling past rapidly.*

[Audio - Host] "We've all been there. You're scrolling through your feed, and you see a headline that absolutely blows your mind. It makes you angry, or excited, or just incredibly shocked. Your first instinct is to hit 'share' immediately because *everyone needs to see this*.

But here is a wild stat: a massive MIT study found that false news spreads **six times faster** on social media than the truth. Why? Because fake news is literally engineered to hijack our emotions.

But you don't need a PhD in journalism to protect yourself. You just need a simple, four-step mental toolkit called the **SIFT method**. Let's break down how you can become completely un-trickable in under 30 seconds."

Section 2: The SIFT Framework (0:45 - 2:30)

[Visual] *A clean graphic of the SIFT method slides onto the screen. As the host speaks, each letter highlights dynamically with cool sound effects.*

[Audio - Host] "SIFT stands for **Stop, Investigate, Find, and Trace**. It's like a quick health check for your brain before you digest any digital information. Here is how it works:

1. S is for Stop

"The moment you feel a strong emotional reaction—whether it's 'I knew it!' or 'This is outrageous!'—that is your cue to **stop**. Don't share it. Don't comment. Just pause. That emotional spike is exactly what the creator wanted. Take a breath and ask yourself: *Do I actually know if this is true, or do I just want it to be true?*"

2. I is for Investigate the Source

"You don't need to do a deep dive, just spend 10 seconds checking *who* is telling you this. Click on their profile. If it's a website you've never heard of, or an account with a suspicious handle, open a new tab and search their name. Are they a registered news outlet, a satirical blog, or just a random account trying to get hate-clicks?"

3. F is for Find Better Coverage

"This is the golden rule of factchecking. If a claim is major, **other people will be talking about it**. Don't rely on just one source. Open a search bar and look up the core claim. If reputable, diverse outlets are all reporting the same thing, it's likely true. If the only place reporting it is a single obscure blog... step away."

4. T is for Trace Claims to the Original Context

"Misinformation loves to take real things out of context. A 5-second video clip might look terrible, but what happened in the 2 minutes before it? A quote might sound shocking, but what was the rest of the sentence? Always try to find the original video, the full interview, or the scientific study to see what was *actually* said."

Section 3: The Secret Weapon—Lateral Reading (2:30 - 3:15)

[Visual] *Screen split-screen. On the left: a user scrolling deeply down a single sketchy article page (Vertical Reading). On the right: a user opening multiple tabs to search the author and claim (Lateral Reading).*

[Audio - Host] "Here is a pro-tip used by professional fact-checkers. It's called **lateral reading**.

Most people read 'vertically'—they stay on the sketchy page, reading the 'About Us' section to see if it's reliable. But guess what? Fake websites can write fake 'About Us' pages.

Instead, read 'laterally.' Move *sideways*. Open three new tabs and search what *other* credible sites say about that source. Let the rest of the web tell you if they are trustworthy."

Section 4: Outro & Call to Action (3:15 - 3:45)

[Visual] *Camera zooms back in to the host, looking warm and encouraging.*

[Audio - Host] "In a world where everyone is fighting for your attention, keeping control of your own thoughts is the ultimate superpower. The next time a headline makes your jaw drop: **SIFT** it.

If you found this helpful, hit that subscribe button, share this video with a friend who always sends you sketchy articles in the family group chat, and let me know in the comments: what is the wildest piece of fake news you've accidentally believed?

Stay curious, think critically, and I'll see you in the next one."

[Visual] *Outro card with subscription button and recommended videos.*