

Conspiracy Investigators

A Lucky Professionals Original Creation



What this project is all about

Do you ever get the feeling that you aren't getting the full story? That the authorities are keeping something from you? That the truth is out there, just beyond your grasp, laughing at you?

You know the kind of stuff I mean: your parents tell you Santa won't come if you don't fall asleep - but how would he be able to know your state of consciousness from OUTSIDE THE HOUSE? Or how about this: your teachers tell you not to come into school because it's a "staff day", but your sister who's in middle school says she saw them playing soccer, wearing giant plastic spheres.

People tell you stuff all the time, and expect you to just accept it. And it doesn't get any better when you're an adult: now you are supposed to vote, and there are literally thousands of websites giving "news" about the candidates. Some of it sounds totally crazy: one website tells you that Hillary Clinton is a secret satanist. Another tells you that Donald Trump's campaign manager has been receiving secret payments from foreign governments. How are you supposed to sort out what's true from what's false?

That's what this project is all about: finding the truth in a crazy world, so you never need to take what adults tell you at face value ever again.

This Project's Essential Questions:

- How do I find the truth in this crazy world?
- How certain can I ever be about anything?
- What is it about conspiracy theories that makes them so appealing?

What you're going to learn how to do in this project

1. You're going to create your personal "baloney detection toolkit". This will include
 - a. evaluating the quality of sources you haven't seen before
 - b. evaluating the quality of the specific evidence you get from these sources
 - c. identifying logical fallacies
2. You're going to be able to explain WHY a given piece of information should or should not be trusted, in a way that will convince a thoughtful, well-informed adult who nevertheless often disagrees with you.
3. You're going to be able to write arguments in which each individual sentence is as well-crafted as the full piece.

Your turn: what resources do you use when you want to learn a new skill OUTSIDE school? (for example: basketball, skating, makeup, building, drawing...)

Youtube
WIKIHOW
Instructables
Pinterest
Friends
Books
Just google it and see what I find
Parents

Magazines
Experience
Siblings

The products

1. Your first product will consist of two parts:
 - a. a presentation to your peers giving your initial findings about a conspiracy theory, and making an evidence-based recommendation of how likely it is to be accurate, from 1-10
 - b. an “annotated bibliography” of the sources you used
2. Your second product will be a “detective-style” diagram of a conspiracy theory, on the classroom wall

And now it gets interesting, because it’s up to all of us to decide what to create for our final product (the one we’ll be showing off at festival).

I have three requirements for this product:

1. creating it must help us figure out how to find out the truth in this crazy world
2. it must ultimately help other people (including total strangers) to find out the truth in this crazy world
3. it must be awesome

We’ll decide what this should be in week 4.

Your turn again: what are your initial ideas for a product, off the top of your head?

Week	What this week is all about...
1	How do I find the truth in this crazy world? Our first attempt at conspiracy investigation
2	How do I find the truth in this crazy world? AND “Can I ever be certain about anything?” Create our initial “baloney detection kit” Put some useful and cool-looking detective-style diagrams on the walls
3	What is it about conspiracy theories that makes them so appealing?
4	The “moment of truth”: At this point, we will know more than most people about how to figure out what’s true, as well as about why so many people choose to believe stuff that isn’t true. With great knowledge comes great responsibility, so this is the week that we ask: how do we share this with our often-confused fellow humans?
5	What happens here depends ENTIRELY on what we decide in week 4
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12	Festival Del Sol