

The
Economist

EDUCATIONAL
FOUNDATION



DEEPFAKES

PART 1: IN THE KNOW

Radu Bercan/Shutterstock

LEARNING INDEPENDENTLY?

Check out this week's
introduction video

bit.ly/NewsCycle

KEEN TO HAVE YOUR SAY?

Share your opinion on
this week's News Cycle

bit.ly/NewsCycleJan12

KEY VOCABULARY

DEEPPFAKE =

A fake photo or video that makes it look like someone is saying or doing something

CONTROVERSIAL =

When lots of people might disagree with something

DUBBED =

When a voice is played over a video

NEWS CYCLE

WHAT'S HAPPENED SO FAR?

Will new technology make fake news even harder to spot?



On December 25th, the Queen delivered her traditional televised Christmas message to 6.3 million people. Shortly afterwards, a rather different version aired on Channel 4. It looked and sounded similar to the Queen, but it was actually a “deepfake” made using computer technology.

The digital trickery lasted for five minutes and showed what appeared to be the Queen talking about her family and dancing. In reality, the voice of actress Debra Stephenson had been dubbed over pictures of the Queen, but the latest technology made it look convincingly real.

Channel 4 said the broadcast was intended as a “stark warning” about fake news in the digital age. Deepfakes, which have been around since 2018, are getting easier for people to create themselves and becoming harder to distinguish from reality.

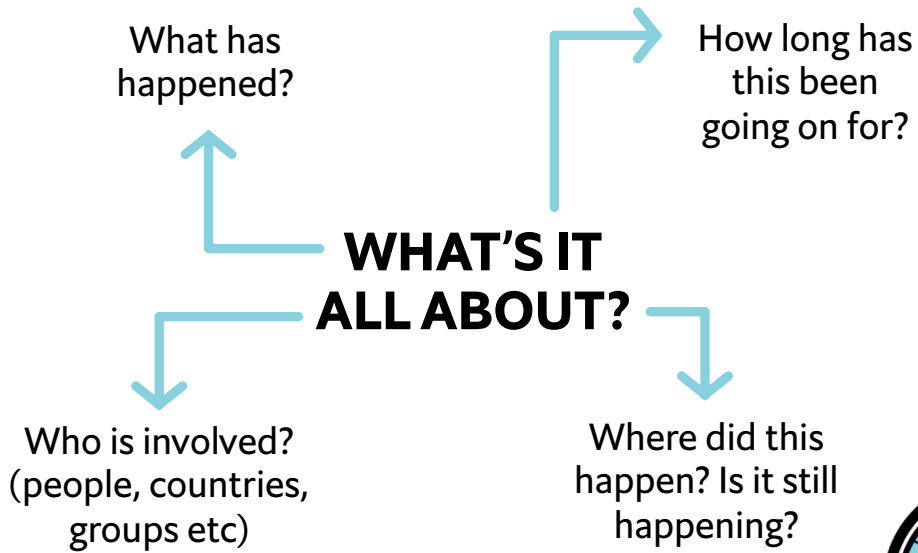
Ian Katz, director of programmes at Channel 4, said that this deepfake should act as “a powerful reminder that we can no longer trust our own eyes”.

However, the deepfake of the Queen has been very controversial, with some people calling it “disrespectful”, “disgusting” and “in poor taste”. So far, the UK’s media regulator Ofcom has received over 200 complaints about the video but it has not yet decided whether to take action against Channel 4.

When approached by reporters, Buckingham Palace had no comment about the broadcast.

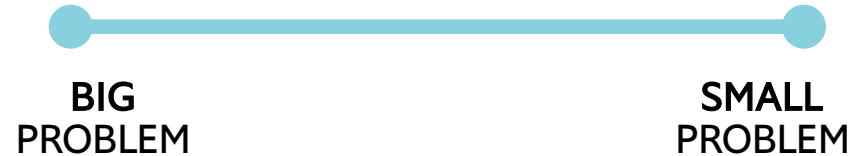
Was this deepfake video a fair warning about fake news or a step too far?

WANT TO KNOW MORE? Look here! [bbc.co.uk/news/av/technology-51223254](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/technology-51223254)



NEWS SCALE

How much of a problem are deepfakes for you? Mark your opinion on the scale below with an X. What about for a celebrity? Where would they put their X? What about for people who only find their news online?



A school subject?

NEWS CONCEPT: justice?

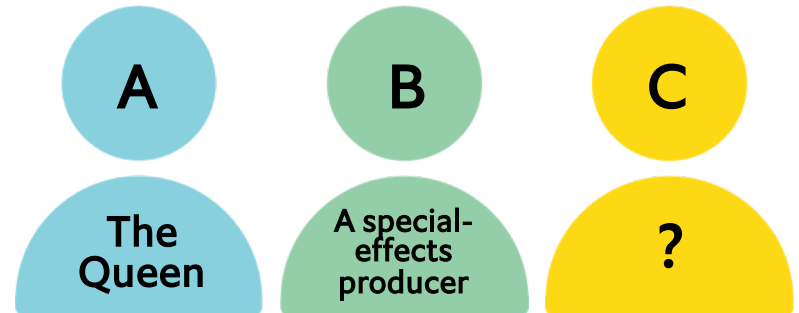
A different news story?



Your life?

PERSPECTIVE FLIP

What would Person A think about this issue? How are they affected by the issue? Now flip to Person B and think about the same questions. Are any perspectives missing?



CHALLENGE: how is this issue developing in the news?