Fantastic Beasts (AI Edition)

http://shipseducation.net/misinfo

This activity is designed primarily as a “teaser” (rather than to develop any particular media literacy skill or competence). The aim is to bring awareness in a light-hearted way to the *problem* of credibility in the media, especially of images.

The presentation provides many images of “fantastic beasts” -- some real, some imaginary. Students are invited to guess which is which. It’s not easy!

The real answers are ultimately not that important (you may wish ***not*** to divulge them). Indeed, students should ideally experience some of the discomfort of uncertainty. That is the situation of “science-in-the-wild.” This is what can motivate developing skills in media literacy.

There are really no good or definitive visual clues. In most cases, it reduces down to a plausibility judgment. But such judgments can be misleading. Effective assessments typically require prior knowledge, or biological expertise: Do you *recognize* an organism that is already familiar to you?

Namely, images alone can be persuasive. Distinguishing real from imaginary requires more information -- about the *source of information* and its context, or from having relevant *expertise*. These are two major dimensions of *credibility* --whether what we apparently see is *trustworthy*.

Take home lesson: Seeing is not always believing! *You need to ascertain the credibility of the source.* That’s what the other lessons in this collection are all about.

Fantastic Beasts -- Key to Species & Image Credits

Slide 3

bald uakari *Cacajao calvus* (Amazon varzea)	Mongolian saiga *Saiga tatarica* (Eurasia) [worldlifeexpectancy.com]	proboscis monkey *Nasalis larvatus* (Borneo) [*The Guardian*]
"erumpent" J.K. Rowling, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* (film)	African okapi *Okapia johnstoni* (Congo)	"jackalope" (imaginary, American folklore) [Anne Henry]

Slide 4

ili pika *Ochotona iliensis* (China) [© Li Weidong]	imaginary by Michael Kutsche	baby short-beaked echidna *Tachyglossus aculeatus* (no, not a "niffler," although they inspired Rowling's roguish creature) [Taronga Zoo]
naked mole rat *Heterocephalus glaber* (east Africa) [*The Guardian*]	tube-nosed fruit bat *Nyctimene wrightae* (New Guinea) [Piotr Naskrecki]	Phillipine tarsier *Carlito syrichta* [mtoz flickr cc2]

Slide 5

dodo (extinct) *Raphus cucullatus* [Frederick William Frohawk]	"hippogriff" (imaginary) J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (book/film) [Rev Stan, flickr, cc2]	imaginary [hornbill beak, roadrunner body] by Michael Kutsche
"diricawl" (imaginary) J.K. Rowling, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* (film)	shoebill *Balaeniceps rex* (central Africa) [*The Guardian*]	"augurey" J.K. Rowling, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* (film)

Slide 6

imaginary (fabricated from animal hides & horns) from imgur	Sloane's viperfish *Chauliodus sloani* [*The Guardian*]	smilodon (saber-toothed cat) *Smilodon* (extinct, Pleistocene) [ZEM, Primeval Fandom]
star-nosed mole *Condylura cristata* (NE North America) [*The Guardian*]	a "vegetarian T-rex" *Chilesaurus diegosuarezi* (extinct) [Gabriel Lo]	"chizpurfle" (imaginary) by J.K. Rowling [Harry Potter wiki]

Fantastic Beasts -- Key to Species & Image Credits

Slide 7

dumbo octopus *Grimpoteuthis discoveryi* (abyssal depths) [NOAA Okeanos Explorer]	scalloped hammerhead shark *Sphyrna lewini* [BBC]	red-lipped bat fish *Ogcocephalus darwini* [@eltonmok]
tardigrade (or “water bear”) *Paramacrobiotus tonolli* [Eye of Science]	leafy sea dragon *Phycodurus eques* [*The Guardian*]	*Anomalocaris* (extinct/ Burgess shale, model) [Yinan Chen]

Slide 8

Parson’s chameleon *Calumma parsonii* (Madagascar) [D. Allchin]	sea swallow (sea slug) *Glaucus atlanticus* [tangatawhenua]	pink handfish *Brachiopsilus dianthus* (Tasmania) [BBC]
sea serpent--imaginary (although believed real by Charles Lyell and other in the early 19th century) [Olaus Magnus]	*Halluninogenia sparsa* (extinct/ Burgess shale, model) [Jose Manuel Canete]	Kune’s chromodoris (nudibranch) *Goniobranchus kuniei* (IndoPacific)