

# How To Fact Check Social Media Posts in 5 Minutes

A fast, five step checklist to verify posts before you share.

## The Five Steps

### Step 1 — Find the original source (60 seconds)

Click through to the first publication or video. Note who made the claim, when it was published, and where it first appeared. If there is no clear origin, treat it as unverified.

### Step 2 — Check the date and context (45 seconds)

Confirm the publish date. Ask: Is this old content recirculating as “breaking”? Look for cut clips, missing paragraphs, or screenshots without surrounding context.

### Step 3 — Corroborate with independent sources (120 seconds)

Search the main nouns and verbs from the claim. Look for confirmation from at least two unrelated outlets or a primary document. Avoid chains of sites that only cite each other.

### Step 4 — Inspect the evidence (45 seconds)

Numbers need a clear method and sample size. Quotes need the full paragraph or transcript. Images and videos may be cropped or edited—watch for artifacts or missing context. When in doubt, mark it unverified.

### Step 5 — Classify before sharing (30 seconds)

Verified: share with source links. Unverified: share only if clearly labeled as unverified.

False/Misleading: if you previously shared it, post a correction.

## Common Red Flags

- Anonymous “insider” with no documents
- Only one outlet covering it, especially late night or weekend
- Headlines that do not match the body text
- Screenshots of text with no link to a source

## 5 — Minute Copy and Paste Checklist

- Original source found (who/when/where)
- Date and context confirmed
- Two independent confirmations
- Evidence or method reviewed
- Classified: Verified / Unverified / Misleading