

**Завдання II етапу Всеукраїнської учнівської олімпіади  
з англійської мови  
11 клас**

**Тур I  
Аудіювання**

*Прослухайте текст і виконайте завдання.*

**Coati – носуха**  
**Aardvark- африканський мураход**  
**Measles – мед.кір**

Today I'd like to talk about some of the reasons why we shouldn't automatically believe everything we read online, and how false information spreads so easily with the help of technology. One of the reasons for this is a phenomenon known as circular reporting. It's basically reports which are based on other reports, rather than on the primary evidence or source. To the reader, it looks like the information is coming from several different independent sources, which normally means it can be trusted. But, in actual fact, all the reports are based on each other. Imagine a piece of false information is published, for example on Wikipedia, and then is referenced in a newspaper article or other publication. Then, in turn, the original Wikipedia entry references or quotes the article as validation that the information is true. In a nutshell, it's the confirmation of false information by more than one publication.

So, someone writes an article on Wikipedia which contains some false information which is not referenced or checked and in no way is obvious as being false. And then this false information is copied from Wikipedia by a journalist and included in a newspaper article, or other type of article, as if it were true information. And then Wikipedia references the newspaper article, which verifies the information in the original Wikipedia article as being true. And sometimes it's not just one newspaper article that cites the false information. Several publications may include it and so it becomes very difficult to prove that the original information is false. Let me give you an example. A few years ago a 17-year-old American student was on holiday with his family in Brazil. He spotted what he believed to be an **aardvark** ['a:dva:k], but which was in fact a type of Brazilian raccoon called a **coati** [kou'a:ti]. When the boy got home after his holiday, he went online and changed the Wikipedia entry by adding the name «Brazilian aardvark» to the information on the article, as a sort of joke, and then he forgot about it and thought nothing more of it. However, what started to happen was that articles and blogs began to quote the information from Wikipedia and then those articles were re-reported as evidence in Wikipedia. Before long, everyone was talking about the 'Brazilian aardvark' as if it were factual information.

It makes you wonder how many hoaxes initiated by people in this way have ended up as truths in many people's minds just because people copy and paste vandalised Wikipedia pages. That's not to say that all information on Wikipedia is false by any means. There's a ton of really valid information there and it is

constantly being updated – many people consider it to be the most up-to-date and unbiased encyclopaedia in the world. However, it is the open structure of Wikipedia, compared to a traditional encyclopaedia, which makes it a target to be tampered with. We just have to be aware that there may be a certain amount of inaccuracies on Wikipedia, and it's also worth mentioning that circular reporting is not just restricted to harmless information like the «Brazilian aardvark». For example, some time ago, claims that certain vaccines could cause autism in children were published in a prestigious medical publication by a British surgeon. The problem was that the unsupported claims were picked up by the media and the news spread like wildfire. Soon enough the general public were understandably concerned about the risks and huge numbers of parents refused to vaccinate their children. Consequently, in recent years we have seen an increase in the number of children suffering childhood diseases such as **measles**. By the time the claims were proven unfounded, the damage was done and even to this day some people still believe that there is a link between vaccines and autism.

We can make sure that what we're reading is true by taking certain steps such as checking the original source of the information and, if at all possible, checking that the original source is reliable and not just taken from either Wikipedia, Facebook or the media. So we need to be a little more critical and not just believe everything we read online, although it's difficult because we want information quickly and immediately, so it's not always viable to spend time checking the sources of information, even though we should. And we should certainly try and reflect on the information and decide ourselves if we think it's true or not. If you feel unsure about the validity of certain information, then there's no harm in looking into it further to check how true it actually is. We often take things at face value and don't really take the time to think critically about them.

### **I. Mark the statements T (True) or F (False)**

1. Everything we read online can be trusted.
2. Wikipedia can reference newspaper articles which include false information copied from Wikipedia.
3. A 17-year-old American student was doing research in Brazil when he spotted what he believed to be an aardvark.
4. People do not copy and paste vandalised Wikipedia pages.
5. All information on Wikipedia is false.
6. Wikipedia is considered by many to be fair and impartial.
7. Information on 'Brazilian aardvark' had catastrophic consequences.
8. An increase in the number of children suffering from measles is related to unsupported claims published in a prestigious medical publication by a British surgeon.
9. The link between vaccines and autism is no longer recognized by anyone.
10. Critical thinking can help us avoid using false information found online.

## II. Circle the correct item

1. What makes the spread of false information so easy?
  - a) independent sources
  - b) technology
  - c) Wikipedia
  - d) printed media
2. Which statement about circular reporting is true?
  - a) It is the spread of true information.
  - b) It is when false information is validated by one other source only.
  - c) It only occurs with information on Wikipedia.
  - d) It may involve several publications.
3. How can false information be validated?
  - a) When it is published on Wikipedia.
  - b) When it is reported on television.
  - c) When it is referenced in a newspaper article or other publication.
  - d) When it is posted on Facebook.
4. Which statement is true about journalists?
  - a) They are not permitted to copy information from Wikipedia.
  - b) They refuse to copy information from Wikipedia.
  - c) As soon as they include information in an article, they verify the information.
  - d) Many journalists may publish inaccuracies in several articles.
5. Which statement is correct?
  - a) Another name for a coati is a Brazilian aardvark.
  - b) The American student changed the information on Wikipedia to what he believed to be the truth.
  - c) Many people believed that a Brazilian aardvark was the same as a coati.
  - d) When writers wrote about the Brazilian aardvark they knew it was a joke.
6. Which statement is true about Wikipedia?
  - a) Some people add false content to a Wikipedia entry intentionally.
  - b) Updating information on Wikipedia is against the law.
  - c) There is hardly any true information on Wikipedia.
  - d) Many true facts on Wikipedia initially appear as false information.
7. What is true about childhood vaccines and autism?
  - a) There is a clear connection between childhood vaccines and autism.
  - b) Circular reporting incited many parents not to vaccinate their children.
  - c) The claims that they were connected first appeared on Wikipedia.
  - d) The media proved early on that the claims about vaccines and autism were false.
8. According to the article, what can we do to make sure that what we are reading is true?
  - a) never use Wikipedia.
  - b) check the original source of information.
  - c) use unbiased encyclopaedias only.

- d) always take things at face value.
9. Which statement is correct?
- a) Generally speaking, it's easy to identify false information.
- b) If the original source is Wikipedia or the media, the information is almost always false.
- c) Reflecting critically on what we read is something most people often do.
- d) Lack of time to think and investigate can cause us to believe things that aren't true.
10. What does the author of the article try to urge upon its readers?
- a) to stay away from Wikipedia, Facebook and other media.
- b) to change Wikipedia entries as we see fit.
- c) not to take things at face value and really take the time to think critically about them.
- d) never to reference or quote articles.

## Тип II

### Визначення рівня мовленнєвої компетентності

*Для вибору учням пропонується 20 тематик ситуативного спілкування.*

1. Is it important to share the wisdom of age with younger generations so that they can avoid making the same mistakes?
2. Holidays are special times when people excitedly give and receive meaningful presents to and from loved ones signifying their love for one another. What do you think is better: to give or to receive presents? Why? What presents do you especially wish for? Why do you want these things? If you had the money or ability to give one person in the world anything, what would you give, to whom would you give it, and why?
3. Which age-group in your country eats most fast and convenience food? What could be done to encourage these people to eat more fresh food?
4. There have been many important inventions throughout the course of human history. Which invention do you think is the most important? Do you think creating new inventions is important for humankind? Conversely, if you could erase one invention from human history, what would it be and why?
5. Do you think that the tax payer should have to support the Arts? E.g., why should a football fan have to pay for opera?
6. Which country would you visit to appreciate the Arts? What would you plan to see?
7. In Britain, there are restrictions on what can be screened on TV before 9 p.m. Do you think that TV programme content should be censored?
8. Nearly every nation in the world has its own flag, anthem, and emblem. What purpose do these national symbols serve? Do you identify with any national symbols? What are the advantages and disadvantages of having national symbols?
9. Are famous people treated unfairly by the media? Should they be given more privacy, or is the price of their fame an invasion into their private lives?

10. Every generation of people develop different characteristics due to the influence of different events, technologies, and people in their lifetimes. Summarize events that you believe define your generation and why.

11. Will modern technology, such as the internet ever replace the book or the written word as the main source of information?

12. What is the biggest problem in your town or city? How does this problem affect people's lives? How would you address the problem? How would you ask other people to help you address the problem?

13. Some fashion models refuse to advertise products involving animal cruelty such as cosmetics and fur coats. Would you buy such products?

14. People enjoy decorating their rooms in a way that reflects their personality. Describe your favourite room. How does this room reflect your personality? What colours are the best/ worst? Why? If you had the money to decorate your room as you wish, what would you change and why?

15. What is a very important skill a person should learn in order to be successful in the world today? Choose one skill and use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

16. Some people say that physical exercise should be a required part of every school day. Other people believe that students should spend the whole school day on academic studies. Which opinion do you agree with? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

17. Which system do you favour for measuring children's progress – final examinations or continuous assessment?

18. Some educators value maths and science more than the humanities (e.g. literature, music, and history). Why do you think they feel this way and do you agree with them?

19. Describe the social and professional activities that give you the most opportunity to speak English.

20. Describe your perfect day, including location and weather. What activities would you do? With whom would you spend it? How would this day be different than every other day? Do you think it's possible to have a perfect day? Why?

### **Тип III**

#### **Творча письмова робота**

*Оберіть одне тему й дайте розгорнуту відповідь.*

1. What kind of relationship do you have with your parents? Would you want to have the same relationship with your children? What would you do if your child had ideas and beliefs different from yours? Would you expect your child to do all the things you wished you had done?

2. In Ukraine does a person's social position depend solely on merit and achievement (as it purports to in the USA)? Is there such a thing as classless society? Would you prefer to belong to a cultural/social elite, or to be simply a member of the masses? Should we all aspire to equality?

