**ACTIVATING LESSON SCENARIO
developed as part of the project**

'INNOVATIONS IN SCHOOL EDUCATION'

TOPIC

**Resistance to Manipulation – How to Be a Conscious Consumer of Information?
(Development of digital and civic competences)**

1. Lesson Objectives

The student:

- understands what information manipulation is and what techniques are used,
- knows basic strategies of protection against manipulation on the Internet,
- is able to consciously analyze media messages, separating facts from opinions and emotions,
- develops the ability of critical thinking, reflection, and responsibility for their own decisions online,
- knows tools and institutions supporting reliable use of information (fact-checking, media education).

2. Target Group

Primary school students

3. Teaching Methods

- Brainstorming
- Mini-lecture
- Group exercises
- Moderated discussion
- Individual work – reflection

4. Teaching Aids / Sources

- A set of sample news items (true, manipulated, clickbait)
- Infographic "10 Signals of Information Manipulation"
- Flipchart or interactive whiteboard
- Access to fact-checking websites (Demagog.org.pl, EUvsDisinfo.eu, Manipulátoři.cz)
- Sticky notes for creating a list of rules

5. Lesson Plan (duration: 45 minutes)

5.1 Introduction – Are We Easily Manipulated? (5 min)

Form: brainstorming + short examples

Course:
The teacher begins the lesson with questions to stimulate students to think about their own online experiences.

Questions to students:

- Have you ever clicked on a sensational headline or shared a post that later turned out to be false?
- Why do we sometimes believe news just because it "sounds true" or "urgent"?
- What emotions (e.g. fear, outrage, curiosity, hope) make us less careful in checking information?
- Have you ever wanted to react immediately after reading something online, before making sure it was true?

Additional activating element:
The teacher presents 2–3 short examples of manipulated (fictional) headlines/news, e.g.:

- "New law will ban Internet use for teenagers under 16 – read before it's too late!"
- "Experts warn: tap water causes dangerous diseases!"

Students say what emotions these messages evoke in them and whether they are inclined to believe them without checking.

Substantive information for the teacher (to summarize brainstorming):

- Manipulation is the deliberate influence on recipients through the use of emotions, half-truths or suggestions, to persuade them to a specific action or way of thinking.
- The goal of manipulation is not to inform, but to exert influence, often against our interests or without full access to facts.

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- Manipulation works because our brain reacts faster to emotions than to fact analysis – when we are scared, surprised, or upset, we are more likely to believe something.
- Resistance to manipulation is the ability to consciously receive content, recognize manipulative techniques, verify sources, and base decisions on reliable information.

5.2 Definitions and Examples (10 min)

Form: mini-lecture with oral quiz elements, comprehension-check questions.

Definitions:

1. **Information manipulation**
   - Intentional use of emotions, half-truths, omissions, suggestions, or false data to influence the views, decisions, or behaviors of recipients.
   - The aim is not reliable information, but to persuade the recipient to a certain action or way of thinking (e.g. liking a post, buying a product, changing political views).
2. **Resistance to manipulation**
   - The ability to consciously receive content, notice when someone is trying to influence us with emotions or false information.
   - Includes the ability to verify sources, check facts, compare different points of view, and make decisions based on reliable data.
3. **Critical thinking**
   - The process of actively analyzing content: asking questions ("who wrote this?", "where is this information from?", "is there evidence?"), distinguishing facts from opinions, and avoiding hasty conclusions.
   - Protects us from spreading fake news, even if it is popular or emotionally appealing.
4. **Conscious consumer of information**
   - A person who does not uncritically believe every piece of news, checks its source, looks for confirmation in different media, recognizes emotional language and manipulation techniques.

Examples of manipulation:

1. **Emotion-laden headlines:**
   - "Doctors are hiding the truth – see shocking evidence!"
   - Evoke fear, anger, or sensation to prompt clicking, without proof of truth.
2. **Photos taken out of context:**
   - A photo of a protest from another country used to illustrate "riots in Europe."
   - The manipulation lies in changing the meaning of the image without giving the true source.
3. **Referring to anonymous experts:**

- o "A well-known doctor warns against tap water – it's poison!" – no name, no research, no link to a report.
  - o Apparent credibility that cannot be verified.
4. **Mass repetition of the same news:**
  - o The so-called digital echo – many accounts and portals share the same unverified content to make it look like fact.
5. **Manipulative graphics or memes:**
  - o Combine an emotional image with a short, shocking slogan that is easy to remember and share, even without reading the full content.

Oral quiz (after mini-lecture):
Teacher asks students questions to check understanding:

- Which of the given news items could be manipulation? Why?
- Does emotional language in a headline always mean falsehood?
- What question is worth asking before clicking "share"?
- What might indicate that the expert in an article is made up?

5.3 Exercise – "How to Recognize Manipulation?" (15 min)

Form: group work (3–5 students)
Objective: develop skills in recognizing manipulative techniques in news items and responding consciously.

Teacher's instructions:

1. Divide the class into groups of 3–5.
2. Give each group a set of 4 short news items (headlines, short social media posts, or article excerpts):
  - o 2 reliable (with real sources, facts, signed author).
  - o 2 manipulated (emotional language, no sources, anonymous "experts," sensational slogans).

Sample set of news:

Reliable:

1. **Headline (portal "Science for Everyone"):**
   "Polish students win gold in an international mathematics competition"
   Source: Nauka Dla Wszystkich, Author: Anna Kowalska
   Content: "A team from Warsaw took first place in a competition in Prague, beating 20 teams from across Europe."

2. **Facebook post – municipal library profile:**
   "On Saturday we invite you to a book fair – you can exchange readings or donate them to the library. Details on our website."
   Source: Official website of the Municipal Library in Kraków
   Author: Municipal Library

Manipulated:

3. **Social media post – anonymous profile:**
"Schools in Poland will soon introduce mandatory lessons starting at 7:00 AM! A teacher friend told me it's already certain, although no one talks about it yet."
(No source, reference to a "friend," sensational tone)

4. **Excerpt from an unknown blog:**
   "Scientists warn: reading paper books may damage your eyes! Experts say it's better to switch completely to screens."
   (No names of experts, no research, exaggeration of risk)

Group tasks:

1. Identify manipulation signals: emotional language, lack of source, anonymous experts, contradictory or unchecked data.
2. Analyze emotions: what feelings does the author want to provoke, and why?
3. Propose verification methods: fact-checking websites, official statements, independent media.
4. Fill in a table:

News content	Manipulation signals	How to check?	Credible? (YES/NO)

News content	Manipulation signals	How to check?	Credible? (YES/NO)

Discussion:

- Each group presents one news item (2–3 min).
- Teacher summarizes:
  - Manipulation works mainly through emotions and lack of critical thinking.
  - Emotional language ≠ truth.
  - Resistance = checking sources, seeking evidence, asking questions.

5.4 Discussion – How to Be Resistant to Manipulation? (8 min)

Form: moderated class discussion
Goal: make students aware that resistance to manipulation is a skill that can be developed.

Discussion questions:

1. Why does manipulation work, even if the message is absurd?
   - How can emotions overshadow logical thinking?
   - Does repetition online make us believe something more easily?
2. Do we always recognize emotions aimed at steering us?
   - Which words or images trigger the strongest reactions?
   - Do we notice when someone tries to provoke or scare us online?
3. How can we strengthen our resistance?
   - Which tools or websites help check information?
   - Can talking to others help distinguish truth from falsehood?
   - How to avoid believing something just because it fits our views (confirmation bias)?
4. What habits are worth cultivating?
   - Reading whole articles, not just headlines.
   - Checking author and source.
   - Comparing in different media/languages.
   - Delaying sharing until verified.
   - Reflecting on one's emotions after reading.

Teacher's conclusions:

- Manipulation mainly works through emotions → key = recognizing them and responding consciously.
- Critical thinking + fact-checking = basic defense tools.
- Building good digital habits protects us and others from disinformation.
- Resistance is a skill developed daily.

5.5 Summary and Reflection (7 min)

Form: individual work + class work

1. **Individual (3–4 min):** students complete sentences:
   - "I understood that manipulation online…"
   - "The most suspicious thing in manipulated news is…"
   - "To resist manipulation next time I will…"
   - "One thing I will remember from this lesson is…"
2. **Class activity (3–4 min):**
   - Students share answers (anonymously if needed).
   - Class creates a "5 rules of a resistant information consumer" list.

Sample list:

1. I check the source and author before believing.
2. I don't trust emotional slogans until I find reliable data.
3. I seek confirmation in other independent media or fact-checking portals.
4. I ask who benefits from this news and why it was published.
5. I don't share unchecked content, even if it seems shocking.
6. I analyze my emotions – is someone trying to manipulate me?

Teacher's conclusions:

- Manipulation works because it exploits emotions, time pressure, and habits.
- A conscious consumer stops, checks, thinks → then reacts.
- Recognizing manipulation = digital hygiene + civic responsibility.

6. Glossary – Resistance to Manipulation

Term	Definition
Information manipulation	Deliberate influence through emotions, half-truths, suggestions, omissions, to affect decisions.
Fake news	False or manipulated message presented as real.
Critical thinking	Analyzing information, asking questions, verifying sources, drawing independent conclusions.
Information bubble	Algorithms show us only content matching our views, limiting exposure to other opinions.
Fact-checking	Process of verifying truthfulness of information in reliable sources, by

Term	Definition
	experts or independent organizations.
Resistance to manipulation	Ability to consciously receive content, recognize manipulation, and decide based on facts.

7. Teacher's Methodological Guide

1. **Examples and material selection:** use fictional, neutral, or international examples; avoid local political issues; prefer exaggerated/humorous examples.
2. **Teaching materials:**

- Set of 4 news items (2 reliable, 2 manipulated).
- Analysis table.
- Infographic "10 signals of manipulation."
- List of fact-checking portals (PL, CZ, SK, EU).

3. **Moderating discussion:** ask open questions, encourage argumentation, avoid judging answers.
4. **Safe atmosphere:** emphasize everyone can fall for manipulation; avoid mocking; apply the rule: "we learn, we don't judge."
5. **Possible extensions:**

- Mini-project "Week without Manipulation."
- "Manipulation map" poster.
- Pair exercise: role-play journalist vs. reader.

Scientific and Educational Sources

International:

- EDMO – European Digital Media Observatory – https://edmo.eu
- EUvsDisinfo – https://euvsdisinfo.eu
- UNESCO – Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers
- OECD – Combatting Online Misinformation – https://www.oecd.org
- Council of Europe – Information Disorder Reports – https://www.coe.int

Poland:

- Demagog.org.pl – https://demagog.org.pl

- Konkret24 – https://konkret24.tvn24.pl
- Niebezpiecznik.pl – https://niebezpiecznik.pl

Czech Republic & Slovakia:

- Manipulátoři.cz – https://manipulatori.cz
- Demagog.cz – https://demagog.cz
- Demagog.sk – https://demagog.sk
- Infosecurity.sk – https://infosecurity.sk