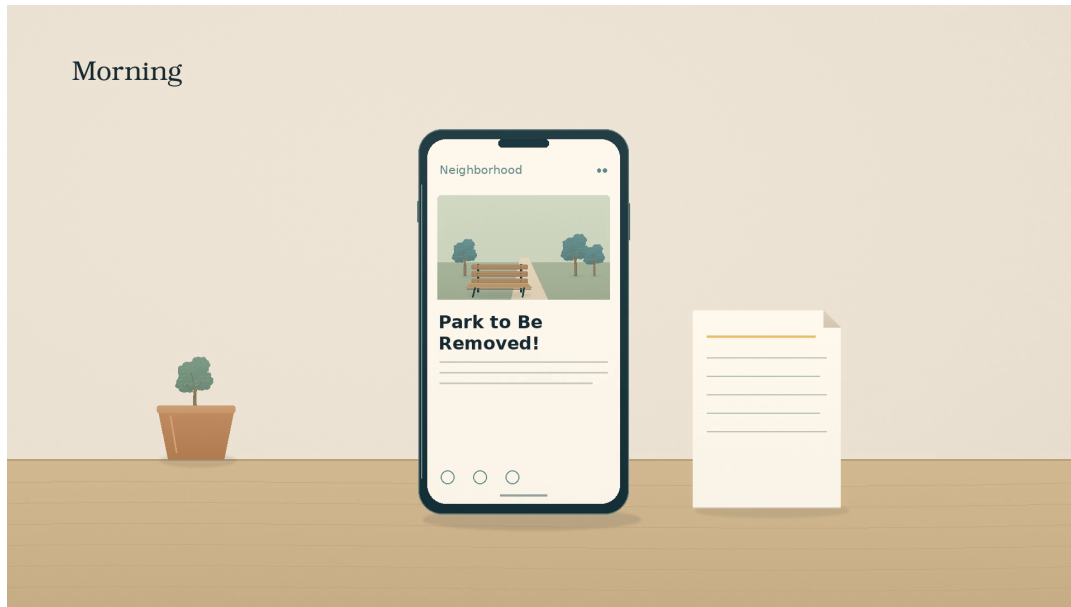


Why Does Repetition Make Things Seem True?

Name: _____

Class: _____



Does recognizing a statement mean knowing it is true?

1. Think about these questions as you watch. You can write your notes afterward.

What, if anything, does the person learn between first seeing the post about the park and telling someone about it the next day?

In the video, how can a familiar statement affect someone's judgment of whether it is true?

What Changed in the Experiment?

Lin and colleagues' first experiment involves 199 content moderators.

First encounter

The moderators rate 16 true and false headlines for how interesting they are.



An unrelated task comes next.



Final rating

The 16 old headlines appear together with 32 new ones. This time, the moderators rate every headline for accuracy.



2. In the study, repeated false headlines receive higher accuracy ratings on average. A student explains the result like this:

"So every moderator completely believed every false news story that was repeated."

Underline the overgeneralizations. Why doesn't an increase in the average rating tell us this much?

Where Did the Story Start?

3. Connect the cards with arrows showing who passed the story to whom.

A • Grove Bulletin

May 18, 2026 • 9:00 a.m.

Park to Be Removed!

The post has no decision document, news link, or other source.

B • Local News

May 18, 2026 • 12:10 p.m.

Shares Grove Bulletin's post about the park without adding any new information.

D • Emma

May 18, 2026 • 7:00 p.m.

Sends her friends a screenshot of Grove Bulletin's post.

C • Noah

May 18, 2026 • 6:00 p.m.

Posts in the class group chat, saying he saw the story on Local News.

a. Follow every path backward. Which post starts the chain? Does it provide any evidence for its claim?

b. Someone says, "I saw it in four different places, so it must have been verified four times." Use your connections to respond.

What Does the Notice Tell Us?

On May 18, you open this notice on the city's website:

PARKS DEPARTMENT

Maintenance at Rose Park

Posted: May 18, 2026

The playground at Rose Park in the Sycamore neighborhood will be closed from May 20 to May 22, 2026, for surface maintenance. The walking path and wooded area will remain open.

4. Which statement does the notice support? Check it, then underline the words in the notice that support your choice.

- ☐ **A.** All of Rose Park will be removed.
- ☐ **B.** Rose Park's playground will be closed for three days.
- ☐ **C.** Rose Park will never be removed in the future.

a. How do the other two statements go beyond what the notice actually says?

b. If this notice appeared under a new post two years later, would it be enough to explain the situation at that time? Why?

It Is Quite True!

Hans Christian Andersen • From “It is quite True”

One evening, a white hen was settling on her perch. As she scratched herself with her beak, one feather fell off. “How beautiful I shall look if one falls off every time I scratch myself,” she joked. Then she forgot the feather and fell asleep.

A hen nearby heard her. Soon she was telling a different story: “I name no one, but it is said that a hen has plucked out all her feathers, and is not fit to be seen.” She visited the owls across the way and repeated the story, insisting she had heard it with her own ears.

The mother owl flew off to tell her neighbors. Passing the pigeons, she called out that a hen had pulled out all her feathers. The hen would freeze to death, if she was not dead already!

“I heard of it in the neighbouring farm-yard,” said a pigeon. “I have as good as seen it with my own eyes. The story is really so improper that no one cares to relate it, but it is certainly true.” The pigeons believed every word and carried the news to the farmyard.

The story changed again. Now two hens had pulled out all their feathers and died. In the next telling, there were three. The story traveled from one farmyard to another.

At last it returned to the henhouse where it had begun. Now there were five hens, and a rooster had died because of what had happened. The white hen who had lost one feather did not recognize her own story.

She decided to stop the gossip by sending such stories to the newspapers, so everyone would hear them. The newspapers took up the story and changed it again. One little feather had become five hens!

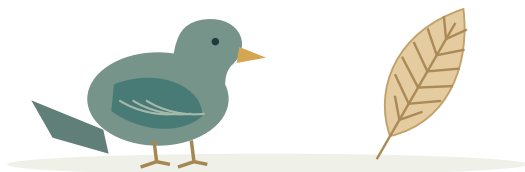
Adapted and abridged from Mrs. H. B. Paull’s public-domain English translation.

5. How could the white hen’s plan to stop the gossip make it spread even further?

Changing Words and Beliefs

6. Reread the pigeon’s two statements.

“I have as good as seen it with my own eyes.”
“The story is really so improper that no one cares to relate it, but it is certainly true.”



Is the pigeon describing something it saw or passing on something it heard? What impression might these two statements give a listener?

7. In the story, one feather becomes five hens as the message changes. In the experiment from the video, the same headline is shown again.

If everyone in the story had repeated the first statement without changing a word, could people still have found it more believable? Use the finding from the video to explain.

When the Newspaper Arrives

Richard Caton Woodville • Politics in an Oyster House • 1848



Oil on canvas

The Walters Art Museum • Gift of C. Morgan Marshall, 1945 • 37.1994 • CC0

8. What kind of conversation do the newspaper, hands, and gazes suggest? Support your interpretation with two specific details from the painting.

Can the painting tell us who is right in this conversation? Connect your answer to the question from the video: “How do I know this?”

One Beginning, Two Endings

9. Write two different endings for this fictional opening. In each one, make it clear what Ella bases her decision on.

A student says a movie will be filmed in the schoolyard next week. Ella is excited to hear the news.

First Ending

Ella becomes more convinced simply because she hears the story again, without finding any new evidence.

Second Ending

Ella examines relevant evidence and reaches a conclusion. It may support or contradict the story; show what the evidence is.

Sources

Video

Why Does Repetition Make Things Seem True?

Reading

Hans Christian Andersen

“It is quite True”

Hans Andersen’s Fairy Tales

Translated by Mrs. H. B. Paull

Frederick Warne, 1888

Adapted and abridged directly from the public-domain English translation. This is not the complete story.

[Read the English Text ↗](#)

Painting

Richard Caton Woodville

Politics in an Oyster House

1848 • Oil on canvas

The Walters Art Museum

Accession no. 37.1994

The museum’s CC0 image is reproduced in full, with its original proportions and colors preserved.

[Artwork and Image Record ↗](#)

[CC0 Public Domain Dedication ↗](#)

Research Featured in the Video

Hause Lin and colleagues (2024)

Accuracy prompts protect professional content moderators from the illusory truth effect.

PNAS Nexus, 3(11), pgae481.

[Article · 10.1093/pnasnexus/pgae481 ↗](#)

Steeven Ye and colleagues (2026)

Systematic review and meta-analysis of the evidence for an illusory truth effect and its determinants.

Nature Communications, 17, 3270.

[Article · 10.1038/s41467-026-70041-x ↗](#)

The opening illustration comes from the video’s original animation. The posts, city notice, and opening of Ella’s story are fictional examples written for this booklet, not real news or materials used in the research.