

## Fake News: Using Noun Clauses to State Position Answers

Read the following paragraphs from the article. Find **the noun clauses**. How are they being used in each case? What verbs do they follow? (**adjective clauses** come after nouns)

- Be careful - THAT does not always mark a noun clause. Remember that a noun clause occurs after a verb. Also notice that there are no commas used with this type of dependent clause.

1. The rationalization camp, which has gained considerable prominence in recent years, is built around a set of theories (**REDUCED ADJECTIVE CLAUSE – THIS IS A VERB – WHICH IS**) **contending that when it comes to politically charged issues, people use their intellectual abilities to persuade themselves to believe what they want to be true rather than attempting to actually discover the truth.** According to this view, political passions essentially make people unreasonable, even — indeed, especially — if they tend to be good at reasoning in other contexts. (Roughly: The smarter you are, the better you are at rationalizing.)

2. Apparently, more “analytical” Democrats were better able to convince themselves **that climate change was a problem**, while more “analytical” Republicans were better able to convince themselves **that climate change was not a problem**. Professor Kahan has found similar results in, for example, studies about gun control in which he experimentally manipulated the partisan slant of information that participants were asked to assess.

3. Further evidence cited in support of this of argument comes from a 2010 study by the political scientists Brendan Nyhan and Jason Reifler, who found **that appending corrections to misleading claims in news articles can sometimes backfire:** Not only did corrections fail to reduce misperceptions, but they also sometimes increased them... We believe **that people often just don't think critically enough about the information they encounter.**

4. A great deal of research in cognitive psychology has shown that a little bit of reasoning goes a long way toward forming accurate beliefs. For example, people who think more analytically (those who are more likely to exercise their analytic skills and not just trust their “gut” response) are less superstitious, less likely to believe in conspiracy theories and less receptive to seemingly profound but actually empty assertions (like “Wholeness quiets infinite phenomena”). This body of evidence suggests that the main factor explaining the acceptance of fake news could be cognitive laziness, especially in the context of social media, where news items are often skimmed or merely glanced at.

5. We found that people who engaged in more reflective reasoning were better at telling true from false, regardless of whether the headlines aligned with their political views. (We controlled for demographic facts such as level of education as well as political leaning.) In follow-up studies yet to be published, we have shown that this finding was replicated using a pool of participants that was nationally representative with respect to age, gender, ethnicity and region of residence, and that it applies not just to the ability to discern true claims from false ones but also to the ability to identify excessively partisan coverage of true events.

6. Our results strongly suggest that somehow cultivating or promoting our reasoning abilities should be part of the solution to the kinds of partisan misinformation that circulate on social media. And other new research provides evidence that even in highly political contexts, people are not as irrational as the rationalization camp contends. Recent studies have shown, for instance, that correcting partisan misperceptions does not backfire most of the time — contrary to the results of Professors Nyhan and Reifler described above — but instead leads to more accurate beliefs.

7. We are not arguing that findings such as Professor Kahan’s that support the rationalization theory are unreliable. Our argument is that cases in which our reasoning goes awry — which are surprising and attention-grabbing — seem to be exceptions rather than the rule. Reason is not always, or even typically, held captive by our partisan biases. In many and perhaps most cases, it seems, reason does promote the formation of accurate beliefs.

8. This is not just an academic debate; it has real implications for public policy. Our research suggests that the solution to politically charged misinformation should involve devoting resources to the spread of accurate information and to training or encouraging people to think more critically. You aren't doomed to be unreasonable, even in highly politicized times. Just remember that this is also true of people you disagree with.