

Birds Aren't Real

People & Society



Kickoff: Ask and answer the questions as a group.

1. What is a conspiracy theory? Can you name one?
2. Why do you think some people believe in conspiracy theories?
3. Are there any famous conspiracy theories from your home country?
4. How can conspiracy theories impact society or individuals?

Vocabulary Focus: Read the sentences and focus on the underlined word. Choose the correct definition from the box below.

be patient	observation; watching	unquestioning followers	totally covers, soaks	mass political or social meetings
edges; not mainstream	made different; excluded	self-affirming information bubbles	grow rapidly and uncontrollably	give in; stop trying

1. The gossip began to snowball online.
2. The rain drenches protesters outside the secret meeting.
3. Conspiracy believers often hold rallies downtown.
4. He gets his news from the fringes of the web.
5. After threats, some activists chose to fold.
6. Bear with me; this theory gets complex.
7. He felt othered for his unpopular beliefs.
8. Government surveillance worries many privacy advocates.
9. Some say the public are just blind sheep.
10. Social media often becomes echo chambers of similar views.

Video Comprehension: Watch the video and answer the questions.

[\[video link\]](#)

1. [00:13] According to the talk, how many birds were killed from 1969 to 2001?
2. [00:57] What did the government replace the birds they killed with?
3. [01:24] Where does the speaker say that the birds recharge their batteries?
4. [02:41] What is the name of the movement that the speaker is part of?
5. [04:32] How many people did the movement bring out to a rally in Washington Square?
6. [05:19] How long did the speaker play this character for?
7. [06:50] In what year did he decide to break character?
8. [07:12 - 07:58] Why was it easy for the speaker to play the role of a conspiracy theorist?
9. [08:44 - 09:13] How did the public react to the speaker's character?
10. [10:32 - 12:50] What reasons does the speaker give for people becoming conspiracy theorists?

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Speaking: **Discuss the questions in response to the video.**

1. Do you think social media platforms play a role in the spread of conspiracy theories? How so?
2. How should schools or educational systems address the topic of conspiracy theories?
3. Can you think of a situation where a conspiracy theory turned out to be true?
4. What's the difference between healthy scepticism and believing in a conspiracy theory?

Role Play: **Create your own conspiracy theory!**

In small groups, brainstorm and create your own imaginative conspiracy theory. Once you've come up with the theory, each member should have a distinct role:

1. Theorist: Presents the conspiracy theory to the class.
2. Sceptic: Questions and challenges its validity.
3. Witness: Shares a personal story (made up) that seemingly supports the theory.
4. Expert: Provides fake "scientific" or "historical" evidence to support the theory.

After preparation, each group will present their conspiracy theory to the class. They should try to present it in a convincing way. Once all the groups have presented their conspiracy theories, the class will vote on the most convincing, funny, and plausible conspiracy theories.

Remember, the goal is to be creative and to have fun!

