Something false or inauthentic is spurious. Don't trust spurious ideas and stories. Spurious statements often are lies, just as a spurious coin is a counterfeit coin — a fake.

Anytime you see the word spurious, you're dealing with things that can't be trusted or accepted at face value. A spurious claim is one that's not backed up by the facts. A spurious argument relies on faulty reasoning — and maybe some lies. Politicians often accuse each other of saying things that are spurious and meant to deceive the voters. As long as you're honest, clear, and not trying to trick anyone, nobody can say you're being spurious.

- **Other forms:** spuriously (adverb), spuriousness (noun)
- **Synonyms:** false, sham, bogus, mock, feigned, phony; meretricious, deceitful.
- **Antonym:** genuine

**Usage:** General:
- *Spurious* legitimacy.
- Many trees have been cut down for entirely spurious reasons.
- They gave a spurious justification for the maintenance and extension of the surveillance state.
- This assumption is equally spurious for, if anything, the Bay of Pigs was a classic tragedy of good intentions.
- It was a spurious Picasso painting that wouldn't have fooled an art expert for a second.

- **Science:**
  - *Botany:* Similar in appearance but unlike in structure or function. Used of plant parts; having the appearance of another part but differing from it in origin, development, or function; false \(\Rightarrow\) a spurious fruit
  - (of radiation) produced at an undesired frequency by a transmitter, causing interference, etc.
DIRECTIONS: Discuss the meaning of the word with your students, with special emphasis on any variations or nuances of the word specific to your discipline. Consider taking it a step further by using one or all of the following ideas as you involve students with the new vocabulary. Remember to preview all content you intend to share with students. Not all items on the lists provided below are appropriate for all classes or age levels.

#1 Read and discuss the implications of this article from *The New York Times*: “Medicines Made in India Set Off Safety Worries” by GARDINER HARRIS, FEB. 14, 2014. The article reports that New Delhi, India, “the second-largest exporter of over-the-counter and prescription drugs to the United States, is coming under increased scrutiny by American regulators for safety lapses, falsified drug test results and selling fake medicines.” In the tenth paragraph, it states that “the World Health Organization estimated that one in five drugs made in India are fakes. A 2010 survey of New Delhi pharmacies found that 12 percent of sampled drugs were *spurious*.”


#2 Read this article by Ed Power from 12 December 2013 in *Slate*. It is entitled “This Is Not Middle-Earth” and purports that “New Zealand is exactly the wrong backdrop for the works of J.R.R. Tolkien.” The word *spurious* is used in the first sentence: “Since he began adapting the works of J.R.R. Tolkien, director Peter Jackson has faced numerous complaints from longtime fans of Middle-earth—some *spurious*, some more substantial.”

http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/culturebox/2013/12/the_hobbit_and_lord_of_the_rings_movies_new_zealand_was_the_wrong_filming.html

#3 Read this article by Alwyn Scott from *Reuters*, Sept. 30, 2013: “U.S. Considers Expanding Tablet, E-reader Use on Flights.” In the thirteenth paragraph, Scott writes that “even the more recently made aircraft carry delicate navigation and radio equipment that can be influenced by *spurious* radio frequency emissions’ from portable electronics.”

http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/30/us-faa-electronics-idUSBRE98T16O20130930?feedType=RSS&feedName=technologyNews
#4 Read “History in the Making: A Roman Map... and an 18th-Century Hoax” about the fact that “in 1747, the sensational discovery of an ancient chronicle redrew the map of Roman Britain and gave us place names we still use today. There was only one problem. It was a sham.” The article was published in The Guardian on July 19th, 2013 by Charlotte Higgins. In the article she states that “some of the document’s spurious Roman names indelibly persist.”

http://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/jul/19/history-roman-map-18th-century-hoax#

#5 A sports story: “After Loss, Querrey Complains about Tomic’s Use of Injury Timeout” published by David Cox in the “Tennis” section of The New York Times on June 25, 2013. In the article, “Querrey said he believes that the rules need to be changed to prevent players taking injury timeouts for what might be spurious complaints.”


#6 Discuss this cartoon and its relationship to the word spurious.

For a fun and creative challenge, put students into small groups and give them 10 minutes to write a group story—the backstory for this cartoon.

Then have each group read their stories aloud and have the class vote on the story that best emphasizes the concept of a spurious gift.
#7 Spurious Correlation

http://www.tutor2u.net/blog/index.php/business-studies/comments/correlation-perfectly-spurious

Explain the concept of a spurious correlation to your students, or have them read the article (link provided above).

Then consider having students use the Acrostic WTL strategy to relate their new understandings about spurious correlations.
More > > >

#8 Spurious Relationship
http://www.usca.edu/polisci/apls301/Text/Chapter%2013.%20Controls.htm

(The X means this is a false relationship.)

A

X

B

C

#9 Spurious Emissions

Consider having students engage in a Writing to Learn strategy. Using this diagram as a vocabulary list, assign students the Focused Free Write strategy. Give them 5-8 minutes to tell you, in writing, everything they can glean from this diagram. Have them consider it a challenge to their analytical skills.
More > > >
#9 Quotes

Have students:

- Read these two quotes.
- Paraphrase these two quotes.
- Respond with agreement or disagreement and provide support for their positions.

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*Sentimentality, the ostentatious parading of excessive and spurious emotion, is the mark of dishonesty, the inability to feel.*

(James Baldwin)

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*A successful work of art is not one which resolves contradictions in a spurious harmony, but one which expresses the idea of harmony negatively by embodying the contradictions, pure and uncompromised, in its innermost structure.*

(Theodor Adorno)
#10 Book Titles

Have students read the plot synopses for each of these books which have the word *spurious* in their titles. Then have them write a paragraph for each (or choose one) explaining how the plot of the novel relates to the title, or how the title supports the theme.