Do you know the idiom ‘a red herring’?
Do you know what ‘a red herring’ means?

When we say something is ‘a red herring’ we do not normally mean that it is simply a fish smoked until it is red!

The idiom ‘a red herring’ is used to describe information or clues that are deliberately misleading.

There are some words that are similar to this idiom:
• bluff
• trick
• hoax.
Origins: the story

The use of a red herring is first documented around the 17th century.

Red herrings (or dead cats and dogs) were dragged along the ground to create a fake scent for hunting dogs to follow so that hunters could train their horses to follow the dogs and not get spooked and scared in a real hunt.
Examples

1. The writer included lots of red herrings to throw the reader off the scent of the real murderer throughout their mystery novel.

2. That argument is a red herring, it is not linked to this issue at all!
Consider

• When have you noticed red herrings in books, films or situations you have experienced?
• How did the red herring affect the situation?
• How did it affect how you felt during and after the situation?
• When might it be useful to try to use red herrings?
• Are there any times that we shouldn’t use red herrings?