

Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion

Distinguishing between fact and opinion is a vital critical thinking and reasoning skill.

The main difference between facts and opinions is that facts can be verified, or checked for accuracy. In contrast, opinions cannot be checked for accuracy. Opinions are what someone personally thinks or how they feel about an issue.

*Writers often identify what they think or how they feel, but they don't always present the facts. Good readers interpret what the writer is saying so you can form opinions of your own. As they read an author's views, they question if the author is presenting an established **fact** or a personal **opinion**.*



Part 9: Reading Comprehension- Distinguishing between Fact and Opinion



Facts are pieces of information that can be verified. Opinions are statements that describe someone's judgment, belief, feelings or way of thinking about a topic, but cannot be verified. Good readers distinguish between fact and fiction in order to become critical readers. They engage and interact with text, and read with a questioning approach. This micro-skill enables readers to become critical thinkers and discriminating consumers of advertising and media.

Tips to help at home!

- ✓ Challenge your child to name a fact and opinion about different objects.
- ✓ Watch television commercials and write a list of facts and opinions about the product.
- ✓ Do a fact/opinion acrostic. Write a name down the side of a piece of paper. Decide if the acrostic is going to be fact or opinion-based. Then write phrases for each letter of the word.
- ✓ Read a newspaper article and highlight Facts/Opinions using different colours.

Focus Questions

To help your child distinguish between fact and fiction, ask him/her the following questions:

- What facts were presented in the article?
- What evidence did the author include to support statements of fact?
- Can this statement be proven?
- How can I check this statement?
- What opinions were revealed in the selection?
- What do I already know about the topic that could help me decide whether this is a fact or an opinion?
- How did the author convey the validity of the information?
- What words and/or phrases did the author use to let readers know that an idea was a fact or an opinion?