

READING SKILLS

Teacher's notes

Distinguish facts and opinions




Warm up

Ask the students if they know what 'fake news' is. Have a whole-class discussion about their answers and link it to the difference between facts and opinions.

Practice

1 You are going to read a text and see if you can separate the facts from the writer's opinion. Before you read, discuss your ideas as a class.

- Tell the students they are going to read a text and see if they can separate the facts from the opinions. Before they read, have a whole-class discussion about whether they know how to separate the two.
- Ask students to share ideas about the differences between facts and opinions.
- The main differences are:
 - **Facts** can be proved either by written documents or sometimes oral statements from reliable people who saw the event. There must be proof or evidence for facts.
 - Factual statements are often specific and use numbers such as dates or percentages.
 - Facts will often refer to an outside reference. *According to the United Nations ...*
 - **Opinions** often use descriptive words such as adjectives. *The profits are enormous.*
 - Opinions are often general or less clear than facts. *People are always buying new clothes.*
 - Opinions often use expressions such as *I think* or *I believe ...*

2  In pairs, discuss how you can see the differences between facts and opinions in a reading text. Make some notes here to help you remember.

- Ask the students to look again at the **Worksheet** in their pairs and to discuss the ways they can see the differences between facts and opinions in a reading text. Encourage them to make some notes to help them remember. This activity will consolidate the discussion above.

3 Read the text below, which is from the Faculty of Arts, and look at the highlighted sections. Mark them as fact (F) or opinion (O).

- Ask students to read the text on their own. Students mark each section as fact or opinion.

Answers

William Shakespeare was a British playwright **F**

is generally considered to be one of the finest writers ever, but not everyone agrees **O**

Dante, who was from the city of Florence **F**

Alfred Hitchcock, who was British **F**

was the best **O**

Many people say the best music comes from the UK **O**

It's impossible to judge and is perhaps just a personal thing. **F**

4  Compare your answers to Exercise 3 with your partner. Are they the same? Discuss any differences.

- Ask students to compare answers in pairs. Encourage them to discuss similarities and differences in detail. Monitor and provide support to pairs as needed.

Students' own answers

5  **With your partner, write down a list of how you decided if the statements in the text in Exercise 3 were fact or opinion. What did you look for?**

- Ask pairs to write down a list of how they decided if each item in the text in Exercise 3 was fact or opinion. Make sure they explain what they looked for each time.

Students' own answers

(Make sure students have used different techniques to mark different parts of the text.)

6 **Discuss your list from Exercise 5 with the class.**

- Lead a whole-class discussion that covers each of the fact/opinion choices in the text, ensuring that all students have understood the different techniques that can be used to assess whether information is a fact or an opinion. Take this opportunity to answer questions and provide clarification where needed.

7 **If you had to give five tips on separating facts and opinions, what would they be? Write them here and add some examples if you can.**

- Walk round the class while the students complete the activity. Monitor their work and provide support where needed.

Reflect

8 **Have you ever had to separate fact and opinion in a text? Think about how you did it. Make some notes as a reminder.**

- Students can either do this activity in class, or they may prefer to have more time to think about it, in which case they can do it at home then discuss their ideas and share their notes in the next lesson.