

Student name: _____

Class: _____

Date: _____

FOCUS

Identifying a writer's point of view

In texts that reflect a writer's point of view, we often find these features:

- The use of personal pronouns and possessive adjectives – writers often use these to make us feel as if they're talking to us directly and make us feel included.

Examples *I, we, me, us, my, our*

- Adverbs of attitude – these tell you the writer's position on a statement. They often go at the start of a sentence and are followed by a comma.


Examples *sadly, clearly*

- Opinion markers – short phrases that tell us an idea is the writer's personal view.

Examples *I think/believe ... In my view/opinion ...*

In many of the reading activities in *C21 English for the 21st Century*, Level 5, you have to identify the writer's point of view in order to understand the text. This Worksheet will focus on things to look for so that you can do this more effectively in your studies.

Practice

- 1  Read the extracts. Then circle the correct phrase to complete each statement of the writer's point of view. Discuss the words and phrases from the extracts that led you to the correct answers.

- a We still rely heavily on examinations as a way of assessing students, but I can't help feeling that there is a better way.

The writer *doesn't think / thinks* that we should change how we assess students.

- b Of course, strict discipline is known to work in employment situations, as it gives employees a clear picture of what is and is not acceptable. However, this is sometimes counterproductive, as it leads to feelings of resentment and rebellion.

The writer thinks that strict discipline is *always / sometimes* effective.

- c Opening a sales office in Zimbabwe was not the worst suggestion I had heard.

The writer thinks that the suggestion is *worth considering / absolutely ridiculous*.

- d I suspect that the legal implications of such a move were so forbidding that nobody dared sanction it.

The writer believes that people did not agree because *of fear of what the law would do / they were generally scared to act*.

- e** The exact provenance of the diamonds was a matter of some dispute, although there is no doubting that the work in the jewels was exquisite.

The writer is *more* / *less* interested in where the diamonds came from than in their beauty.

- f** There is some suggestion that these lines refer to a romantic involvement the author had, but she never kept a diary and her many biographers have turned up nothing; sadly, therefore, if there was such a person, the details are destined never to come to light.

The writer *would like to know* / *is not interested in knowing* who inspired the author to write the lines.

2 Read the text and answer the questions.

Those of us who work in traditional schools set our students tasks and make them sit exams which involve finding and supplying 'right answers'. In this way, we avoid providing opportunities for our students to explore alternative ways to solve problems and risk creating a society of unimaginative thinkers. But what if we posed questions that had more than one correct answer?

- a** What can we understand from the use of the words *us* and *our* in the first sentence?
- b** Why does the writer put '*right answers*' in quotes at the end of the first sentence?
- c** In the second sentence, the writer does not state her point of view, but we still know it. What does the writer want teachers to do, and how do we know this?
- d** Why does the writer mention *a society of unimaginative thinkers*? What is the relevance of this phrase?
- e** The text ends with a question. What does this question tell us about the writer's point of view?

3 Read the extracts and choose the tones from the box that best describe each one.

- You can use more than one tone to describe each extract.
- Discuss your answers.

dismissive	disparaging	formal	sarcastic	scientific	serious
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a _____

In the system known as Very Long Baseline Interferometry (VLBI), radio antennas are separated over a very wide area and their combined action mimics that of a huge telescope. This system allows us to locate objects in space with great precision. Because linking the individual antennas over hundreds of kilometres would be prohibitively expensive using fibre-optic cable, individual atomic clocks are used to provide a time stamp. These stamps are later used to combine data into a single observation.

b _____

The former practice of physiognomy – whereby we could supposedly determine a person's character from facial characteristics alone – was, frankly, absurd. The only thing more surprising than the ridiculousness of this so-called science was the length of time we took it seriously – right up until the early 20th century. Those who continue to pursue this fruitless line of research even today are, to put it mildly, misguided, and do not deserve to be even remotely linked to the discipline of science.

Reflect

4 Read the checklist and answer the questions.

- Which things did you look for before?
- Which things do you think give us the best insight into a writer's point of view?
- Would you add anything to the list?

Checklist: identifying the writer's point of view

- a** Does the writer use words such as *I/me/we/you/us*, etc.? Are the pronouns formal or informal?
- b** Are there adverbs of attitude such as *obviously, tragically, happily*? What do they tell us?
- c** Are there obvious indicators of the writer's point of view, such as *I think ... I doubt ...*?
- d** Does the language suggest a biased, dismissive or sarcastic tone?
- e** Does the lack of emotional language suggest a formal, academic tone?