



FACT vs. OPINION



Why is it important to recognize facts and opinions? You will want to know if an author is trying to inform you with facts or convince you of an opinion. In your own writing, you can make your own opinions more convincing by using facts to support them. A writer may use factual statements to support his or her opinions.

Fact: a statement that can be tested by experimentation, observation, or research and shown to be true or untrue.

Opinion: a person’s belief, feeling, or judgment about something. It is a subjective or value judgment, and it cannot be proven.

- **Opinion** statements may occur even in what seems to be strictly factual material.
- **Opinions** refer to a particular person’s (or group’s) feeling, thought, judgment, belief, estimate, and/or anything that is not 100 percent true and can’t be proven.
- A reader should look for words that are clues to statements of **opinion**.
- These words indicate the possibility of **opinions**:
 - Perhaps
 - Sometimes
 - Probably
 - Often
- These words clearly point out that an **opinion** is being expressed:
 - I feel
 - I think
 - I believe
 - It seems

Opinions are disputable

- The definition of a **fact** is something that is true or something that has occurred or has been proven correct.
- An **example of a fact** is that the world is round.
- An **example of a fact** is the detail about a driver texting while driving that is told to the court and reported in a news story.
- **Facts** can be all or some of the following:
 - Can be proven
 - Real for all people and places
 - Can be duplicated
 - Can be observed
 - Historical
 - 100 percent true

Facts are certainties

Ask yourself, “Does the statement express beliefs or feelings?” “Can this statement be proven?”
Example:

- ❖ Dogs are the best pets. **OPINION**
- ❖ Dogs are mammals. **FACT**

EXERCISE 1: Write *F* on the line in front of each factual statement.

- ___ 1. Harry S. Truman was a president of the United States.
- ___ 2. Barack Obama was the best president the United States has had.
- ___ 3. Movies are generally more interesting than books.
- ___ 4. The unemployment rate in the U.S. today is higher than it was in 1935.
- ___ 5. Non-poisonous snakes make delightful pets.
- ___ 6. In New York State, smoking in public places is against the law.
- ___ 7. *Time* is a better magazine than *Newsweek*.
- ___ 8. Hillary Clinton won the popular vote in the 2018 presidential election, but lost the electoral vote.
- ___ 9. Michelle Obama wrote the book, *Becoming*.
- ___ 10. Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

Directions: Read each statement and then circle whether it is a fact or opinion. Explain your answer.

1. George Washington was the first President of the United States under the Constitution.

Fact or Opinion Explain: _____

2. Michael Jordan is the greatest basketball player of all time.

Fact or Opinion Explain: _____

3. It is illegal in New York State for people under the age of 21 to drink alcohol.

Fact or Opinion Explain: _____

4. Oranges contain both calcium and vitamin C.

Fact or Opinion Explain: _____

5. McDonalds sells more hamburgers than any other restaurant chain in the world.

Fact or Opinion Explain: _____

6. Chicken has more protein than carrots.

Fact or Opinion Explain: _____

7. The Bill of Rights are the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

Fact or Opinion Explain: _____

8. Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white man.

Fact or Opinion Explain: _____