

Student Handout: Unit 4 Lesson 2



Facts and Opinions

Suggested time: 1 Hour

What's important in this lesson:

- Checking your understanding of the difference between fact and opinion
- Challenging the idea that just because something is written in print it must be fact by evaluating statements in a recent newspaper or magazine article
- Continuing your biographical readings, but this time, as you read, considering whether the ideas are facts or opinions
- Learning how to record internet research

Complete these steps:

1. a) With your teacher, complete the first half of the diagnostic, "Is it Fact or Opinion?"
b) The second part of that worksheet asks you to consider facts and opinions involving your own life and to write some factual statements and some opinion statements.
For example, It may a fact that you grew up in a crowded neighbourhood, but it may be your opinion that your neighbourhood was an interesting place to grow up.
c) Challenge your teacher or peers to read your statements and tell which are facts. Make this a challenging quiz.
d) Refer to the Student Resource "Notes on Facts and Opinions" for understandings on this topic.
2. Read for 30 minutes. Choose from one of the biographical selections for this unit.
3. Enter today's reading in your Reading Log.
4. Complete "Facts and Opinions in Reading" Handout 1. This sheet asks you to select parts of today's readings that show facts and parts that are clearly opinion. Ask your teacher for help if you have difficulty completing this handout.
5. Move to a computer and locate additional information about a person you are reading about in this unit. Look at two or three websites about this person.
7. Choose the best of the web sites you looked at and fill in "Keeping Track of Website Research" Handout 2.

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Hand-in the following to your teacher:

1. Reading Log showing today's reading.
2. "Facts and Opinions in Readings" Handout 1 for completion check.
3. "Keeping Track of Website Research" Handout 2 for completion check.

Questions for the teacher:

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“Fact or Opinion?”

Name _____

Date _____

Instructions: Read each statement. Write **F** (fact) or **O** (opinion) in the space provided beside each statement. For opinion statements, circle the clue words that helped you decide.

- ___ 1. Algonquin Park is the best place for camping and canoeing.
- ___ 2. Bats are nocturnal since they are most active at night.
- ___ 3. I don't think twelve year olds are old enough to baby-sit.
- ___ 4. Computers are an essential part of the success of most businesses.
- ___ 5. Because of their recent increase in numbers, wild turkeys are no longer an endangered species in Southern Ontario.
- ___ 6. Given the rate of inflation, I believe the minimum wage should be raised.

Now, in the space below, write **5 statements** about yourself. Some should be facts. Some should be opinions. Read your statements to others - your teacher or your peers – and ask them if they can tell which statements are opinions. Try to make your quiz challenging!

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

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Facts and Opinions in Reading

Instructions: In one of the biographical readings you have read so far find two clear examples of facts and two clear examples of opinions. Write the examples, including title of work and page number. Then explain how you know that a statement is a fact or opinion.

Fact #1 from: Title of Work _____ page _____

Statement _____

This is a fact because _____

Fact #2 from: Title of Work _____ page _____

Statement _____

This is a fact because _____

Opinion #1 from: Title of Work _____ page _____

Statement _____

This is an opinion because _____

Opinion #2 from: Title of Work _____ page _____

Statement _____

This is an opinion because _____

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Keeping Track of Website Research

Name: _____

Date: _____

Information posted on the internet “belongs” to the person or group that posts it. It is therefore ethical to credit your sources whenever you use any of this information. Also, noting your sources enables others to check out the information further, if they wish to do so.

So, whenever you visit various websites to gather information, you should keep track of your research. This form shows you how to do a correct “Work Cited”.

Instructions:

Your assignment here is to discover some additional information about someone in your Biography Unit.

- 1) Use a search engine, such as Google.ca, to locate two or three websites that provide information about the person.
- 2) Choose the most helpful site and complete the form below.
- 3) Submit this completed worksheet to your teacher for a completion check.

Example

Title of Web Site: The Spirit Bear Youth Coalition (*usually written at the top of homepage*)

Web Manager or Author (if given): D.Simon Jackson (*usually given at bottom of homepage*)

Date Site was created or updated: _____ (*in this case, no date indicated on website.*)

Date Visited May 30, 2005. (*the date you, the student, looked at the site*)

URL: <http://www. spiritbearyouth.org>

- 1) Fill in this “Works Cited” information. Follow the example given above.

Title of Web Site _____.

Web Manager or Author (if given) _____.

Date Site was created or updated (if given) _____.

Date Visited _____.

(URL): <http://www. _____>.

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2) List 5 Key Points/Important Ideas you learned about your research topic from this website

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-
-
-
-
-

3) In the margin beside each point you listed above, write **F** if you think it is a fact, or **O** if you think it is the website master's/author's opinion.

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Notes on Facts and Opinions

Writing that contains only facts best suits encyclopedias and dictionaries. Creative non-fiction, a category under which biographical works fall, frequently interprets the facts; that is, it contains opinion and bias. While most authors are careful to keep the facts and their opinions separate, not all do. Thus, it remains for the reader to detect when facts give way to interpretation.

These are some things to understand about facts and opinions. Can you think of examples of these from your own experience?

- What people say and write is often based more on their own opinions than on facts.
- The difference between facts and opinions is a critical reading skill. It is not always easy to distinguish the two.
- A *fact* is information that can be proved. e.g., “The temperature today is 20 degrees C” is an idea that can be measured and so demonstrated to be true.
- An *opinion* is an author’s belief about something. e.g., “20 degrees C is very warm” is a relative term. Someone from a hot climate would call such weather conditions cool or perhaps even cold.
- Sometimes, a reader can use clues in the wording to detect opinion statements, e.g., “I think” or “I believe”. Also, strong descriptive words, such as “best”, “worst”, “wonderful”, “awful”, etc. indicate the writer’s personal values, not fact.
- Everyone’s writing contains biased or value-laden statements. Few works are ever completely free of some interpretive slant.
- People develop opinions from their family and cultural background, age and personal experience, and education. How were your opinions formed?
- The concept of values will be taught more explicitly in Lesson 3, “Motivation”