

Facts vs. Opinions in Advertisements

Lesson Author: Education Oasis Staff

Subject: Language Arts; Media Literacy; Critical Thinking

Grade Levels: 6-8 (May be modified for other grades.)

Overview: Students will develop criteria for determining statements of opinion. Students will practice discerning statements of opinion in advertisements.

Rationale: Smart consumers need to be able to distinguish between fact and opinion in advertisements.

State/National Standards: Demonstrates literal, inferential and evaluative comprehension skills by distinguishing between fact and opinion.

Learning Objectives:

Students will:

- develop ways for determining whether a statement is a fact or opinion
- recognize signal words commonly found in opinions
- practice distinguishing between facts and opinions in advertisements

Materials:

- one advertisement for each student (laminated if possible to allow multiple uses)

Procedure:

Briefly discuss the difference between facts and opinions.

-A fact is a statement that can be proven true.

-The Empire State Building is 1,250 feet tall.

- Michael Jordon was born on February 17, 1963

-An opinion expresses someone's belief, feeling, view, idea, or judgment about something or someone.

-The puppy is cute.

-Mercedes makes the best car in the world.

Either as a class or in groups, have students identify ways to determine whether a statement is an opinion or a fact. (Lead students in the direction of noticing "signal" words which indicate opinion statements.) Write the suggestions on chart paper or on the board.

or

Display a series of statements (some facts and some opinions). Go over each one and determine together whether the statement is a fact or an opinion. After doing several of these, have the class identify ways to determine whether a statement is a fact or opinion. (Again, lead students in the direction of noticing "signal" words which indicate opinion statements.)

-For example: Opinion statements use words such as: believe, perhaps, probably. Or, judgment words such as: good, best, pretty, amazing, fantastic.

-Facts can be proven true (or verified).

Distribute one laminated advertisement to each student. Tell students to write down (word for word) each statement in the ad that is an opinion . (Or, if time is limited, tell students to write down a certain number of opinions.)

Then, tell students to look carefully at each opinion statement they wrote down. Tell them to note beside each statement the following:

- how they know the statement is an opinion

-whether or not the statement was presented as a fact (you may wish to delete this step with younger students)

Assessment:

Make copies of an ad which contains both facts and opinions. Have students determine which statements are facts and which are opinions. (This may be done in a true or false format or in the manner noted above.)

Alternative/Additional Assessments:

Have students create their own ads which contain both facts and opinions. Have students trade ads. Students determine whether the statements in their peers' ads are facts or opinions. Students then get together to discuss the results.

Extension/Enrichment:

Tell students to watch for opinion statements for the next few days. When and where do they occur most frequently? Discuss as a class.

Discuss as a class why it is important to be able to distinguish between fact and opinion in advertisements.

Allow students to visit some of the websites mentioned below.

Online quizzes:

<http://www.manatee.k12.fl.us/sites/elementary/palmasola/rcfo1.htm><http://www.evsc.k12.in.us/schoolzone/schools/EMPOWER/harrison/essential/opinion2.htm>

<http://www.evsc.k12.in.us/schoolzone/schools/EMPOWER/harrison/essential/opinion3.htm>

Fact or opinion games:

<http://www.quia.com/jq/24723.html>

<http://www.quia.com/pop/12709.html>