

# Distinguishing Facts from Opinions

- When you read the newspaper or magazine, do you believe that every sentence is a fact?
- If you don't, how do you know which sentences are **facts** and which ones are **opinions**?
- This lesson helps you to learn some useful questions that critical thinkers use to identify facts from opinions.
- As you decide which of the following statements are facts and which ones are opinions, try to write down any questions you ask yourself when making each decision.
- Below is a useful list of questions to ask next time you want to distinguish facts from opinions in something you read.

1. Does this sentence contain words such as **could, may, might, possibly, predict, and should**? (opinions)
2. Could this statement be **proven experimentally** or **with evidence**? If yes – facts. If no – opinion.
3. Is this statement by a **reputable authority**? (fact)
4. Have the things in this statement actually happened or are they happening now? (facts)
5. Does this statement relate to the **feelings** of someone? (opinion)
6. Does this statement contain words like **is, has, was, does**? (fact)

## Examples

The Prime Minister of the UK is a man.

**fact**

The Prime Minister of the UK should be a man.

**opinion**

## Student worksheet

Some sentences in newspapers or magazines are facts (F) and some are opinions (O). The sentences here are a mix of both kinds. Think about each sentence here and write in **F**, or **O** after each sentence.

1. The sun is larger than the moon.
2. Computers might become as small as molecules one day.
3. The President of the USA in the year 2020 will be a man.
4. The sun is more important to us than the moon.
5. There will be a massive earthquake in China next year.
6. Dogs make better pets than cats.
7. Insects have six legs.
8. We shouldn't produce electricity with nuclear reactors.
9. We can produce electricity with nuclear reactors.
10. Men make better pilots than women.
11. People will live on the moon one day.
12. It is safer to fly than drive on the roads.
13. Science is more difficult than History.
14. Everyone should have a computer.

Now write down some silent questions you asked yourself that allowed you to decide whether something was a fact or whether it was an opinion. Share them with the group and make a list of good questions that will help you to distinguish facts from opinions in future.

A statement is a fact if it:

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