

Fact and opinion

Stage 2

Learning focus

Students will learn to determine the difference between fact and opinion and recognise both within a range of texts.

Syllabus outcome

The following teaching and learning strategies will assist in covering elements of the following outcomes:

- EN2-4A: uses an increasing range of skills, strategies and knowledge to fluently read, view and comprehend a range of texts on increasingly challenging topics in different media and technologies
- EN2-8B: identifies and compares different kinds of texts when reading and viewing and shows an understanding of purpose, audience and subject matter.

Year 3 NAPLAN item descriptors

- evaluates the accuracy of statements using information from an information text
- evaluates the presence of information in an imaginative text
- evaluates potential modifications in an information text
- evaluates the presence of information in an information text
- identifies an opinion in a persuasive text

Literacy Learning Progression guide

Understanding Texts (UnT6-UnT9)

Key: C=comprehension P=process V=vocabulary

UnT6

- locates specific information in a predictable print text or a given set of digital sources (C)
- makes connections within and between texts (between spoken and written texts that present similar information) (C)

UnT7

- compares and contrasts texts on the same topic to identify how authors represent the same ideas differently (C)
- distinguishes between fact and opinion in texts (C)

UnT8

- skims and scans texts for key words to identify main idea (P)
- evaluates the accuracy of texts on the same topic or texts that present differing points of view or information (C)

UnT9

- classifies ideas or information for a set task or purpose (C)
- identifies language used to create tone or atmosphere (V)

Resources

- Copies of three different sources on a topic currently being explored e.g. information about mammals from an informative text, website and fact sheet.
- Fact and opinion sort - Appendix 1

Background information

Facts tell information about a topic and can be proven whereas opinions are attitudes or judgements which cannot be proven as right/true or wrong/false.

Where to next?

- Categorising
- Literal comprehension
- Author perspective

Teaching strategies

What is the difference between fact and opinion?

1. Teacher leads discussion on the difference between statements of fact and opinion. Students create a poster or short jingle to demonstrate their understanding. Using these ideas, create a class definition for both fact and opinion. Facts tell information about a topic and can be proven whereas opinions are attitudes or judgements which cannot be proven as right/true or wrong/false.
2. Display the two posters on opposite sides of the learning space. Teacher gives examples of both facts and opinion statements; students move to the side of the room to show their thinking in response to the teacher's examples. Some examples might include: "all Australians love vegemite toast" and "the great white shark is a species of large mackerel shark which can be found in the coastal surface waters of all major oceans" and so on.
3. Teacher questions why students determined a statement as fact opinion with prompts such as 'how could you prove this statement?' and 'Do you think everyone thinks the same way?'
4. Additional Task: Students complete a Venn diagram to compare and contrast fact and opinion. The middle section could be used for examples that students are unsure if they are facts or opinions or it could be used for examples that are both fact and opinion.
5. Students complete a fact and opinion sort based on a current unit of learning or using the healthy eating theme in Appendix 1. Discuss as a whole class, drawing attention to key vocabulary which assists a reader to determine whether a statement is a fact or opinion (choice, should, delicious, having a reputable source referenced, subject-specific language).

Determining fact reliability

1. Discuss why recognising the difference between fact and opinion is important, who might disguise opinion as fact and what process we should take to determine the reliability of sources.
2. Teacher models reading a factual text linked to a current unit of learning. Teachers use a 'think-aloud' strategy to demonstrate summarising information into a synthesised answer and put onto class display poster (see below).
3. *Jigsaw task*: Students are given the three key questions and a source (see example) to determine facts from the text, recording on the class display. When all three sources and questions are completed, teacher uses a 'think-aloud' strategy to model how to read the three different facts and determine a summary which includes important information that can be validated by all sources.
Variation: Students may use a more challenging text which is both narrative and informative text such as 'My Place' by Nadia Wheatley. Students will need to determine what is factual and what is part of the narrative.

Example:

Topic: reptiles	What distinguishes reptiles from other animals?	In what ways are reptiles like amphibians?	How do reptiles reproduce?
Current understanding:	Is a vertebrate and most are covered in scales.	Habitat	Lay eggs
Source 1 <i>Text, author and publisher details</i>			
Source 2			
Source 3			
Summary			

Task 3: Expert panel

1. Groups of students read a text linked to a current unit of learning and become 'experts'. They form an expert panel and answer questions from other members of the class.
2. Students nominate who wants to be on the expert panel; these students read the text and consult each other to summarise, find the main idea and supporting details ready to respond to questions.
3. The remaining students read the same text and devise questions to illicit fact and opinion statements from the expert panel. Students ask their questions; the experts must respond and justify their answers with evidence from within the text.
4. Have students work in pairs to write statements about the text, either facts or opinions. Set a reasonable time limit to complete the task. Have partners exchange their work and categorise the statements as fact or opinion.

Statement	Fact	Opinion

Appendix 1

Fact and opinion sort

Healthy eating

<p>Peaches are not the best choice for the dessert because they are sour.</p>	<p>Sunflower kernels are a delicious afternoon snack.</p>
<p>Raspberries are full of antioxidants and are a healthy food choice.</p>	<p>There are a range of milk options including cow, almond, soy and oat.</p>
<p>Almost half of children aged 2-15 years ate the recommended daily amount of vegetables (healthykids.nsw.gov.au)</p>	<p>Anything cooked in oil is bad for you and you should not eat it at all.</p>
<p>Kakadu plums contain 100 times more Vitamin C than oranges.</p>	<p>Of adolescents in Years 6, 8 and 10, about a third ate confectionary at least three times a week.</p>
<p>We are so lucky to live in a country where we have so many different cuisines, like Chinese, Thai, Indian and Middle-eastern.</p>	<p>The bunya nut can be eaten both raw and cooked.</p>
<p>Fatty fish such as mackerel and salmon are rich in omega-3 fatty acids.</p>	<p>The Mediterranean diet blends healthy eating with traditional flavours and cooking methods found in the Mediterranean region.</p>
<p>Brussel sprouts are definitely not used enough – cooked in the right way, they are a culinary delight.</p>	<p>Water is the best drink to quench your thirst.</p>