Fact and opinion
Stage 2

Overview

Purpose

This literacy teaching strategy supports teaching and learning for Stage 2 students across all key learning areas. It targets specific literacy skills and suggests a learning sequence to build skill development. Teachers can select individual tasks, or a sequence, and embed into their teaching and learning program according to their students' needs. While exemplar texts are provided throughout this resource, it is recommended that teachers select texts which are relevant to their students and curriculum.

Learning intention

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

Syllabus outcomes

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

- **EN2-RECOM-01:** reads and comprehends texts for wide purposes using knowledge of text structures and language, and by monitoring comprehension
- **EN2-UARL-01:** identifies and describes how ideas are represented in literature and strategically uses similar representations when creating texts

NSW English K-10 Syllabus (2022)

Success criteria

The following Year 3 NAPLAN item descriptors may guide teachers to develop success criteria for student learning.

- 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

National Literacy Learning Progression guide

Understanding Texts (UnT6-UnT9)

Key: C=comprehension P=process V=vocabulary

UnT6

- scans texts to locate specific information in a predictable print text (C)
- makes connections between texts (e.g. compares two versions of a well-known story) (C)

UnT7

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

UnT8

- evaluates the accuracy within and across texts on the same topic (C)
- skims and scans texts for key words to track the development of ideas (P)

UnT9

- analyses texts which have more than one purpose and explain how parts of the text support a particular purpose (C)
- identifies language used to create tone or atmosphere (V)

National Literacy Learning Progression

Evidence base

- Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2017). [Effective reading instruction in the early years of school](#), literature review.
- Konza, D. (2014). Teaching Reading: Why the "Fab Five" should be the "Big Six". Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 39(12).
- Oakhill, J., Cain, K. & Elbro, C. (2015). Understanding and teaching reading comprehension: A handbook. Routledge.
- Quigley, A. (2020). Closing the reading gap. Routledge.
- Scarborough, H.S. (2001). Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory and practice. In S. Neuman & D. Dickson (Eds.), Handbook for research in early literacy (pp. 97-110). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

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Teaching strategies

Task	Appendices
[What is the difference between fact and opinion?](#)	[Appendix 1 - Fact and opinion sort](#)
[Determining fact reliability](#)	
[Expert panel](#)	

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
- Exploring perspective

Overview of teaching strategies

Purpose

These literacy teaching strategies support teaching and learning from Stage 2 to Stage 5. They are linked to NAPLAN task descriptors, syllabus outcomes and literacy and numeracy learning progressions.

These teaching strategies target specific literacy and numeracy skills and suggest a learning sequence to build skill development. Teachers can select individual tasks or a sequence to suit their students.

Access points

The resources can be accessed from:

- NAPLAN App in Scout using the teaching strategy links from NAPLAN items
- NSW Department of Education literacy and numeracy website.

What works best

Explicit teaching practices involve teachers clearly explaining to students why they are learning something, how it connects to what they already know, what they are expected to do, how to do it and what it looks like when they have succeeded. Students are given opportunities and time to check their understanding, ask questions and receive clear, effective feedback.

This resource reflects the latest evidence base and can be used by teachers as they plan for explicit teaching.

Teachers can use classroom observations and other assessment information to make decisions about when and how they use this resource as they design teaching and learning sequences to meet the learning needs of their students.

Further support with What works best is available.

Differentiation

When using these resources in the classroom, it is important for teachers to consider the needs of all students, including Aboriginal and EAL/D learners.

EAL/D learners will require explicit English language support and scaffolding, informed by the EAL/D enhanced teaching and learning cycle and the student's phase on the EAL/D Learning Progression. Teachers can access information about supporting EAL/D learners and literacy and numeracy support specific to EAL/D learners.

Learning adjustments enable students with disability and additional learning and support needs to access syllabus outcomes and content on the same basis as their peers. Teachers can use a range of adjustments to ensure a personalised approach to student learning.

Assessing and identifying high potential and gifted learners will help teachers decide which students may benefit from extension and additional challenge. Effective strategies and contributors to achievement for high potential and gifted learners helps teachers to identify and target areas for growth and improvement. A differentiation adjustment tool can be found on the High potential and gifted education website.

Using tasks across learning areas

This resource may be used across learning areas where it supports teaching and learning aligned with syllabus outcomes.

Literacy and numeracy are embedded throughout all syllabus documents as general capabilities. As the English and mathematics learning areas have a particular role in developing literacy and numeracy, NSW English and Mathematics syllabus outcomes aligned to literacy and numeracy skills have been identified.

Text selection

Example texts are used throughout this resource. Teachers can adjust activities to use texts which are linked to their unit of learning.

Further support with text selection can be found within the National Literacy Learning Progression Text Complexity appendix.

The NESA website has additional information on text requirements within the NSW English syllabus.

Teaching strategies

What is the difference between fact and opinion?

1. Lead the 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 or opinion with prompts such as 'What makes you think that? 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 of, 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 - Fact and opinion sort. 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 displays this answer on a display poster.

3. Jigsaw task: Students are given the three key questions and a source (refer to example below) 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. 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.

   To increase abstraction, teacher asks 'What makes you think that?' Students justify their reasoning with evidence from the text.

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 *Text, author and publisher details*			
Source 2			
Source 3			
Summary			

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

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