INFO SHEET #4: DIFFERENTIATING FACT FROM OPINION

Competency

MELC: Use opinion- marking signals to share ideas.

Objectives

After the end of the lessons, the learners are expected to be able to:
1. Differentiate facts from opinion.
2. State facts and opinions about certain topics.
3. Identify the various opinion-marking signals used in the sentences.
4. Express one's view about a certain topic using opinion-marking signals.

Key Information

Distinguishing fact and opinion is a significant skill in order to become critical and analytical in dealing with information and avoid being wrongfully influenced and manipulated. Knowing when and how to distinguish one from the other gives you a head start to becoming a good speaker or writer.

A **fact** is a statement that can be proven to be true by the use of evidence. These are statements that can be verified. Factual statements are true in all cases and for all people; in other words, facts are universal. Moreover, these can be proven true or false. Statements of fact are objective they contain information but do not tell what the writer thinks or believes about the topic.

Example:
General Trias City is one of the largest cities in Cavite.

Opinions refer to personal beliefs (Donnchaidh, 2020). They tell about how someone feels, thinks, or takes a stand about something. They are influenced by a person's experiences, background knowledge, emotions, and preferences. Others may agree or disagree with opinions, but they may not prove or disprove them.

Example:
Filipino is one of the most hospitable nationalities.

DIFFERENTIATING FACTS FROM OPINIONS

Identifying each type of evidence and the foundation upon which it is presented is necessary to distinguish between statements of facts, opinions, fact-based opinions, self-evidence, anecdotal evidence, argument from authority, and empirical evidence. Below is an explanation of these ideas:

1. **Statements of Facts (both true and false):**
   - **Statements of Facts (True)**. These are objective, verifiable statements that can be proven to be true or false. They are based on evidence and can be independently confirmed.
Example: Water boils at 100 degrees Celsius.

   - **Statements of Facts (False)**: These are statements that can be proven to be false based on evidence.
Example: The sun revolves around the Earth.

2. **Statements of Opinions.** These are expressions of personal beliefs, preferences, or feelings that cannot be objectively verified. Opinions are subjective and vary from person to person.

Example: Chocolate ice cream is the best flavor.

3. Statements of Fact-based Opinions. These are opinions that may be influenced or informed by facts, but they still involve a subjective judgment.
Example: In my opinion, the best movie of the year is the one with the most compelling storyline and excellent cinematography.

4. Self-Evidence. A self-evident statement is one that is immediately and necessarily true without the need for further evidence or explanation. However, what is considered self-evident can vary between individuals and cultures.
Example: All squares have four equal sides.

5. Anecdotal Evidence. This involves using personal stories or isolated examples to make a point. Anecdotal evidence is not necessarily representative of the broader truth and should be interpreted with caution.
Example: I know someone who smoked all their life and lived to be 90, so smoking must not be that harmful.

6. Argument from Authority. This is when a claim is considered true because of the authority of the person asserting it. However, an argument from authority is not always valid, as even experts can be wrong. It's essential to consider the evidence supporting the claim.
Example: Dr. Smith, a renowned scientist, says climate change is a serious threat, so it must be true.

7. Empirical Evidence. This involves evidence that is based on observation, measurement, or direct experience. Empirical evidence is crucial in supporting factual claims.
Example: Studies show that regular exercise is linked to improved cardiovascular health.

Understanding these distinctions is vital for critically evaluating material. Facts may be objectively verified, however opinions and fact-based opinions are open to subjective interpretation. Anecdotal evidence and authority arguments may lack generalizability, but empirical data provides a more dependable foundation for judgments. It is vital to use critical thinking abilities to evaluate the credibility and reliability of information. Furthermore, distinguishing between facts and opinions is critical for making informed decisions and participating in meaningful discussions.

OPINION-MARKING SIGNALS
The group of words that introduces opinions are called **opinion-marking signals**. They are used as signal words that will help express and identify opinions. They are usually written in the beginning part of a sentence.

Opinion-marking signals play important roles in signifying that statements are opinion-based. Expressions like I believe, in my opinion and as I see it are examples of opinion-markers. Aside from improving reading and listening comprehension, learning opinion-markers also improves the way you express your own thoughts.

The table below shows some commonly used opinion-markers which you may use when expressing your opinion and stating agreement or disagreement to someone else's ideas.

Stating Opinion	Stating Agreement	Stating Disagreement
• It seems to be that... • In my opinion... • In my view ... • I believe / I suppose ... • I take the view that... • My personal view is that... • In my experience... • As far as I understand/ see/can... • As far as I'm concerned ... • If I am not mistaken... • Personally, I think... • I am not certain/sure, but... • It is claimed that... • I believe one can say...	• I completely/ really / totally / absolutely/ honestly/truly agree with you on that. • I really think/believe so, too. • I couldn't agree more. • I have come to the same conclusion. • I hold the same opinion. • I have no objection. • I see it that way, too. • You have a point there. • You have made a good point. • We are one mind on... • I see exactly what you mean.... • That's a good point....	• I'm afraid... • I'm sorry... • You may be right, but... • That might be true, but... • I beg to differ. • I don't agree with you on that. • I don't share your view. • I think otherwise. • I take a different view. • I am not sure I agree with you. • That's not always the case.

References:
Chauhan, Jagrati. (2014). 100 Phrases – 25 Phrases for Expressing Opinion. Retrieved from http://myenglishonline.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/100-Phrases.pdf
Linde, Sharon (2003 – 2020). Facts vs. Opinions: Examples, Games & Activities. Study.com. Retrieved from https://study.com/academy/lesson/facts-vs-opinions-examples-games-activities.html
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Proposed Performance Tasks

Which side of the coin are you?

Directions:
1. Divide the class into two groups (*depending on the class size*).
2. Two teams compete against each other by presenting opposing arguments on the same topic.
3. Teams will be given the topic without knowing which side of that topic they will argue.
4. The teams will be given allotted time (usually about 20 minutes or so), and they will be assigned to a specific side of the argument through a toss coin.
5. Each team has to use the opinion-marking signals.