

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

## Fact vs. Opinion

A **fact** is a statement that can be proven \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.

### Example:

My car has been driven for 23,600 miles.  
Michael Jordan was born on February 17, 1963.  
The Empire State Building is 1,250 feet tall.

An **opinion** is someone's view, or belief, or way of thinking about something.

### Example:

Beethoven is the greatest composer that ever lived.  
*Goodnight Moon* is the best children's book ever written.  
Extraterrestrials exist.

When you are reading, it is important to be able to distinguish between facts and opinions. Written materials such as articles, web site information, biographies, and newspapers often contain both facts *and* opinions. Being able to tell them apart will help you judge the **validity** of a writer's ideas. It will also help you choose appropriate sources when doing research.

**valid:** logically correct; justifiable; well founded in fact

**Practice**

Directions: Write “F” for fact beside the statements below that are facts. Write “O” for opinion beside the statements below that are opinions.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Washington, D.C. is the Capital City of the United States.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Walt Disney World is a family friendly theme park.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Whales are superior to dolphins.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Whales are mammals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. John Adams was the second president of the United States.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Stephen King is talented.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Abraham Lincoln was the best president the United States has ever had.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Britney Spears sings better than Madonna.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Michael Jordon is the greatest basketball player of all time.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Will Smith starred in the movie *Men in Black*.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. There are glaciers in Alaska.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. The Frenchman, La Salle, explored the Mississippi.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Every time you wash your car it always ends up raining.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. There is no life on Pluto.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Cats are not as friendly as dogs.

**Seeing it in Action**

Directions: The paragraphs below contain both facts and opinions. **Underline** the sentences which contain facts. **Circle** the sentences which contain opinions. There are some sentences which are neither fact nor opinion. Do not mark these.

**Area 51**

Area 51 is a military facility approximately 90 miles north of Las Vegas. At the center of the site there sits a large air base. Area 51 is also the site of a U.S. Government UFO cover-up. "The government is hiding the remains of alien spacecraft there," says Sarah Mitchell, a long-time resident from the surrounding area.

Others believe that weapons testing done there is causing toxic pollution that could harm people near the site. One such person is Mr. Hayakawa, a member of a civilian intelligence group that monitors covert (secret) government operations. "The secrecy must end," he says. "There's nothing extraterrestrial or strange there. It's good old American technology. The government sits back and watches - and sometimes manipulates - these UFO stories to keep people from asking about the real activities there."

So does this mean Hayakawa is against the government research and development? No. "Progress is going to take place, and it's not necessarily a bad thing. But it has the potential for abuse," he says.

Rumors about what goes on at the base continue. The possibility of aliens draws visitors to the area. There is even a book for visitors seeking information. Written by Glenn Campbell, it is titled *Area 51 Viewers Guide*. It is the best and most informative book available on Area 51.

Parts of this text were excerpted from a newspaper article titled "Secrets in the Desert" which appeared in the *Torrance Daily Breeze* written by Michael Gougis, Staff Writer

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