

Fact, opinion and evaluation

Objective

To distinguish between literal facts and personal opinion from words and images to support understanding of evaluation within non-fiction.

Background knowledge

This section shows the children that non-fiction is not made up solely of literal facts. It explains how, whenever the author of a newspaper or magazine article writes about the ideas or feelings, thoughts, behaviours and motives of any individuals, groups or organisations, it is possible to have evaluation. Evaluation is often used in non-fiction writing to persuade and prompt emotional reaction.

Journalists are meant to provide an impartial view of the events or subject matter they are reporting on. However, their articles can be intentionally emotive and aim to influence the opinions of the readers. It is important therefore that the children are made aware of persuasion within non-fiction and that they feel able to distinguish fact from opinion in a report. To do this they need to draw on their prior knowledge, experience of life and common sense to help them recognise emotive language or exaggeration passed off as facts.

Skills

These activities help the children to learn how to distinguish the difference between literal facts and an author's personal opinion in non-fiction texts.

- **Photocopiable page 109 'Fact or fiction?'**
 - Explain that non-fiction is not always literal fact. Sometimes authors of newspaper or magazine articles use emotive language and exaggeration to persuade the reader or influence their opinion.

- Show the children a range of non-fiction articles from newspapers and magazines. Discuss how descriptive words and exaggeration are used to create a reaction in the reader. Show them how these reports differ from direct reporting that present plain information and figures with no description.
- Hand out the photocopiable sheet. Tell the children that they are required to use their evaluation skills, common sense and prior knowledge and experience of people and the world, to work out which are facts and opinion in the non-fiction text examples.
- Ask the children, working in groups, to read and discuss the contents of the page. Tell them to think about the purpose of the information. Ask: *Is it trying to persuade and alter opinion or is it simply informing you of data?* Ask them to underline any descriptive language or exaggerated claims to help them decide which reports are true or false.
- When the groups have agreed whether the information in each question is true or false, ask them to tick the appropriate box and write an explanation for their decision.

Comprehension

- **Photocopiable pages 110 and 111 'Lovely grub'**
 - Hand out the photocopiable sheets. Ask the children to read the text on the first sheet with a partner and discuss their opinions about it.
 - The children's personal experiences, knowledge and evidence from the text will be needed to support evaluative reasoning when answering the questions on the second sheet and generating their own questions from the information.

Digital content

On the digital component you will find:

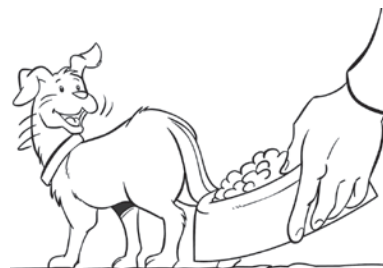
- Printable versions of all three photocopiable pages.
- Answers to 'Fact or fiction?' and 'Lovely grub (2)'.
- Interactive version of 'Fact or fiction?'.

Fact, opinion and evaluation

Fact or fiction?

■ Underline the words that suggest whether the following texts are true or false.

1. Dogs are super-independent animals and are perfectly able to fend for themselves throughout the day. They do not need people's company or the companionship of other dogs. They behave badly and become appallingly spoilt if they are allowed to sleep and eat inside the house.



Fact Fiction

Why do you think that? _____

2. Hours spent watching TV has a negative effect on children's language because they spend little time in conversation with others. This makes it difficult for many of them to make friends.



Fact Fiction

Why do you think that? _____

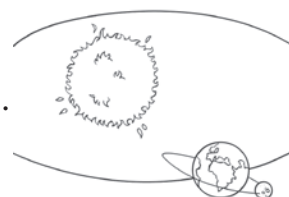
3. British athletes are the most talented and highly trained in the world. They are on track to win a gold or silver medal in every category of the next Olympics.



Fact Fiction

Why do you think that? _____

4. The Moon travels around the Earth. It takes 28 days to go around this orbit. The Earth moves around the Sun; it takes 365 days (one year) to go all the way around. As the Earth moves around the Sun it is spinning. It takes 24 hours (one day) to spin around on its axis.



Fact Fiction

Why do you think that? _____

Fact, opinion and evaluation

Lovely grub (1)

In 2004 a UN report promoted the idea of eating insects.

Insects are a brilliant food source – simple to look after and easy to harvest. Many insects are high in protein and low in fats. Why don't we eat insects every day? Many people do eat insects as part of their regular diet. They eat sago grubs in Papua New Guinea. In Mexico people tuck into grasshoppers and in Bali dragonflies are popular. In America some fancy restaurants put dishes like stir-fried mealworms or caterpillar crunch on the menu.

Insects taste best if cooked when they're alive; or if they're very lively, freeze them first to slow them down. Larvae are often easier to eat than adult insects – no crunchy outside parts to get stuck in your teeth.

We really should all try sautéed caterpillar – they are delicious. Everyone would enjoy chocolate-dipped ants or, better still, juicy bees drizzled with white chocolate and honey.

Entomophagy (the correct term for insect eating) is the sensible way forward. Don't pick the little worm out of your apple – eat it, enjoy the taste and make use of that extra protein.

If you still feel squeamish about munching moth pupae or nibbling on crispy locusts or chilli-roast termites, then disguise them. Use a blender! Whiz them up in sauces and soups. Make fantastic high-protein smoothies – tell your friends after they've drunk them that it was a strawberry and wasp grub sensation or a banana bug detox that they just enjoyed!

Elspeth Graham

Fact, opinion and evaluation

Lovely grub (2)

1. Was this article written simply to inform? What clues tell you this?

2. Do you think it is true that fancy American restaurants serve 'caterpillar crunch' on the menu? Explain why you say this.

3. Give an example of the author's attempt to shock the reader. Do you think she is successful? Explain why you think so.

4. Do you believe the author when she says that the UN (United Nations) promoted the idea of eating insects in 2004? What reason do you have for saying that?

5. Has the author persuaded you that eating insects would be good for you or enjoyable? Why do you say that?

6. Your evaluation question:

Your answer:
