



## FACT OR OPINION – TEACHER’S GUIDE

### Learning Objectives

- Students will learn the difference between a fact and an opinion, particularly with regard to the Internet.
- Students will understand that some websites contain facts, some contain opinions, and some contain both.
- Students will learn that a fact can be verified.

**Estimated Viewing Time:** Completing the entire episode will take approximately 12 minutes. A breakdown of time by segment follows:

- WATCH: 5½ minutes
- TRY: 2½ minutes
- APPLY: 4 minutes

### Synopsis of the Watch Segment

Nermal is upset when he receives an “F” on his report about goats. Garfield looks at the report and finds that Nermal has included facts but also opinions. Nermal reveals that he found the information on a website and wonders how he is supposed to know what’s true and what isn’t. Enter Dr. Nova and Professor G. Dr. Nova explains that there’s a great deal of good information on the Internet but that there’s also a great deal of mis-information. Some online information can even be described as hateful. She helps Nermal learn the difference between facts and opinions (with a little assistance from the Fact-Bot) and stresses that it’s important to read with a questioning mind.

### Build Background

Begin by asking questions to gauge familiarity with the topic:

- How many of you have looked up information on the Internet?
- Who puts all that information on the Internet?
- How many of you have written something and put it on the Internet for others to read?
- Have you ever read anything on the Internet that didn’t seem quite truthful to you?

### SAY:

*I’m glad that you like to find information about interesting things on the Internet. All that information was put there by other people who wanted to share things they care about. However, sometimes it’s hard to figure out if that information is a fact or an opinion. So, today, you’re going to learn how to tell when something is a fact and when something is an opinion. You can use these skills with any information you read anywhere. Let’s start by talking about some of the words you need to know.*



## Introduce Vocabulary

Write and discuss the definition of each keyword. Pause after each definition to answer questions and provide examples. Use each keyword in a sample sentence to show students how each word is used in context.

<b>fact</b>	Something that can be proven to be true or not
<b>opinion</b>	Something that someone believes but isn't necessarily true for everyone
<b>verify</b>	To examine something to make sure it is true or not
<b>true</b>	Something that can be shown to be real
<b>false</b>	Something that can be shown to be not real
<b>message</b>	A piece of communication between people
<b>media</b>	Different ways people communicate with others, such as newspapers, television, radio, and the Internet
<b>Internet</b>	A communication system that connects computers all over the world; also known as the Web
<b>expert</b>	Someone who has studied a great deal about a particular subject
<b>misinformation</b>	Information that is not a fact but that appears to be a fact; sometimes done on purpose
<b>blog</b>	A type of website where people (even kids!) write about things that interest them

## Guide the Viewing of Lesson on Fact or Opinion

- Have students complete the lesson on Fact or Opinion. As they do, circulate the classroom observing students and supporting any who need help with navigation or comprehension.
- After students complete the interactive lesson, have them gather in a circle or another seating arrangement conducive to informal class discussions.

## TRY Answer Key

1. Q: Which statement is a fact?

Many schools serve students a hot lunch.  
Eating the same food every day is boring.  
Pizza is everyone's favorite.  
A hot lunch is better than a cold lunch.

A: Many schools serve students a hot lunch.

2. Q: Which statement is a fact?

Everyone hates broccoli.  
Carrots are the most popular vegetable.  
Experts say that vegetables are an important part of our diet.  
You should eat your vegetable before eating dessert.

A: Experts say that vegetables are an important part of our diet.



3. Q: Which statement is a fact?  
Pizza is much better than tacos.  
Some schools have themed lunches, like “Taco Tuesdays.”  
Schools with themed lunches have happier students.  
“Mystery Meat Mondays” are more popular than “Fish Stick Fridays.”

A: Some schools have themed lunches, like “Taco Tuesdays.”

4. Q: Which statement is a fact?  
Professional athletes never eat sugar.  
Dessert is the best part of the meal!  
The food pyramid should include more chocolate.  
In the healthy eating pyramid, sugary foods should be eaten sparingly.

A: In the healthy eating pyramid, sugary foods should be eaten sparingly.

### **APPLY Answer Key**

1. Q: Which statement is a fact?  
Nermal is the world’s cutest kitten.  
Nermal watches television.

A: Nermal watches television.

2. Q: Which statement is a fact?  
Garfield’s sandwich was the best ever.  
Garfield made a 16-layer sandwich.

A: Garfield made a 16-layer sandwich.

3. Q: Which statement is a fact?  
Odie has a big red tongue.  
Odie is a drool fool.

A: Odie has a big red tongue.

### **Monitor Comprehension**

#### **SAY:**

- *Why was Nermal so angry at the beginning of the episode? (He had received an “F” on his paper on goats. He thought he had done a good job after finding information on the Goats! Goats! Goats! website.)*
- *Why did Nermal believe the information he found at the Goats! Goats! Goats! website was good for his report? (He didn’t understand that some people can put information on the Internet that is an opinion [something they believe to be true but can’t necessarily be proven true], rather than something that is fact [something that can be proven to be true]).*
- *What are some ways Professor Garfield suggested to verify a website? (Look at who put the information on the Internet. Look to see if there are links to other websites or other resources that have information on the same topic. Check the facts posted on the website by reading other websites or resources.*



- Was the website *Goats! Goats! Goats!* created by someone who was an expert on goats? (No, it wasn't created by an expert—it was created by mean dog Willard as a trick on Nermal.)
- What can you learn from this story? (You need to be an active Internet user and always think about whether a website provides information that is a fact, an opinion, or a mixture of both.)

### **SAY:**

*There is a great deal of factual information that can be found on the Internet, but there is also a great deal of information that is an opinion of the person who put it there. Sometimes, people deliberately put information on the Internet that is not fact but that appears to be fact—this is misinformation. It is very easy to misunderstand something you read on the Web if you don't stop to think about whether what you are reading is a fact or an opinion.*

### **Consolidate Learning**

#### **SAY:**

*You've learned that you need to be careful about what you see or hear in different types of media, but this is especially true on the Internet because anyone can put information on the Internet. Let's help ourselves by creating ways to easily remember how to tell a fact from an opinion!*

1. Have students work as a group to create a checklist to use when verifying a website.
2. Ask students to work in small groups or individually to search for three websites that have at least three of the same facts (pick an education-friendly topic, such as animal habitats, if reading is a challenge since the students will more likely find sites dedicated to young people).
3. Challenge students to write a paragraph that is all fact and then one that is all opinion.

### **Evaluate**

Administer the Fact or Opinion Quiz to assess whether students met the learning objectives for the lesson. After evaluating the results of the assessment, you may wish to go over any learning objectives that students did not grasp.

### **Quiz Answer Key**

1. Fact
2. Opinion
3. Opinion
4. Fact
5. You could check if nine out of ten people actually said that in a survey.
6. People who think the sneakers are the best are actually sharing an opinion.
7. Open
8. Open
9. Much like the nine out of ten scenario, someone can say something is true or fact, but you might need to check if the fact is a true fact/if it can be proven.
10. Websites often feature opinions and facts woven together, so you need to think if all the claims are true facts and consider which statements might be someone's opinion.



## FACT OR OPINION QUIZ

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

Is each of the following sentences a FACT or an OPINION? Make a checkmark next to your answer.

1. The thermometer says it is 76 degrees today.  
 FACT       OPINION
2. This restaurant has the tastiest lasagna in the city!  
 FACT       OPINION
3. I think Nermal is cuter than Garfield.  
 FACT       OPINION
4. I made a basket in the basketball game today.  
 FACT       OPINION

Read the following statement and then answer the next two questions:

We asked ten people, and nine of them agreed that Kool Kat Kickers are the best sneakers for fashion and function.

5. How would you be able to verify or check that this statement is true?

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6. What about that statement sounds like an opinion?

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7. Write a statement that is a fact.

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8. Write a statement that is an opinion.

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9. Do you think it is possible for someone on a website to say something that is a false fact?  
Explain your answer.

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10. Why is it important to think if information on a website is a fact or an opinion?

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