



Fact or Opinion

Developed by Debra Baxley, South Campus Learning Center,
Communications Lab Updated 06-16-05

Permission to copy and use is granted to all FCCJ staff provided this copyright label is displayed.

For more information, visit the Learning Services web site:
www.fccj.org/campuses/south/learning_cent/learning_cent.htm

Facts are statements that can be proven either true or false.

FACT: English Composition II is a required course for students seeking an Associate degree from FCCJ.

(This fact can be checked in the college catalogue and with college officials.)

FACT: The St. John's River is the largest river in Jacksonville.

(Measurements can be taken and compared with those of other rivers in Jacksonville.)

FACT: The Crimson Tide of Alabama beat the Tigers of Auburn with a score of 21 to 14 in the Iron Bowl on November 19, 1994.

(Sports records will support this statement.)

Opinions are statements that cannot be proven either true or false. They usually indicate judgements, feelings, or beliefs.

OPINION: Mr. Heart is the best teacher in the world.

(Who says he's the best? Does everyone? Who knows all the teachers in the world? What does "best" mean?)

OPINION: Because he has missed so many days of class, he will probably not pass the course.

("Probably" suggests some doubt.)

NOTE: Other words which indicate opinion are: *perhaps, usually, often, sometimes, on occasion, I think, I believe, I feel, I suggest, and in my opinion.*

A statement can be a combination of fact and opinion.

FACT/OPINION: I believe that the reason he lost the election was because of his past actions.

("I believe" indicates opinion. The fact that he lost can be verified, but the reason given for why he lost is only speculation.)

Fact/Opinion Exercise

Directions: Write F in the blank if the statement is fact or O in the blank if the statement is an opinion.

- _____ 1. Students should be allowed to decide how many classes they can miss without penalty.
- _____ 2. George Washington was the first president of the United States.
- _____ 3. English is a harder subject than math.
- _____ 4. His mother makes the best apple pie.
- _____ 5. December 25th is the date recognized in the United States as Christmas.
- _____ 6. I believe that a major cause of America's problems today revolves around a lack of responsibility.
- _____ 7. A pen is an instrument used for writing.
- _____ 8. Knitting is a more relaxing hobby than woodworking.
- _____ 9. There are fifty states in the United States.
- _____ 10. Dogs are more affectionate than cats.

Answer Key for Fact/Opinion Exercise

1. O-This statement cannot be proven true or false. Different opinions exist about this issue.
2. F-History books and other documents can verify this.
3. O-Whether English is harder than math depends on the individual, so this is not always a fact; it is an opinion.
4. O-Who says that his mother makes the best apple pies? Does everyone? What does “best” mean anyway?
5. F-Calendars and other published material can be used to document that December 25th is the day we in the United States celebrate Christmas.
6. O-“I believe” indicates opinion.
7. F-It is a proven fact that pens can be used to write with.
8. O-Knitting would not be a very relaxing hobby to someone who did not know how to knit, so it depends on who you ask if one hobby is more relaxing than another.
9. F-History books and other published material support this statement; in addition, the states can be counted to prove this statement.
10. O-It depends on the individual animal; some cats are very affectionate.