

Fact or opinion?

About this activity

Some of my learners find it difficult to tell the difference between fact and opinion. This is particularly difficult for young people nowadays because of social media. This activity makes them think carefully about topics that people often have strong opinions about. I vary the topics according to what is going on in their lives and in society.

Stage 1: Introduction	<p>Ask: 'What is the difference between fact and opinion?' Elicit ideas from the class.</p> <p>Explain: 'A fact is something that can be proven true or false. For example: Flowers need water to grow.'</p> <p>Explain: 'An opinion is someone's ideas or feelings. For example: Flowers are more beautiful than trees.'</p> <p>Talk about this with the class.</p> <p>Write a list of topics suitable for the age group on the board, for example: music, food, school uniform, mobile phones, homework, working in groups, etc</p>
Stage 2: Model	<p>Write one of the topics on a flashcard, for example: school uniform. Read the card to the learners.</p> <p>Say: 'Here is a fact. School uniforms are identical clothing that learners at a school wear to show they belong to that school.'</p> <p>Ask: 'Who knows any other facts about school uniform?'</p> <p>Record the learners' facts on the board.</p> <p>Say: 'Here is an opinion about school uniforms. I think that school uniforms are too expensive.'</p> <p>Ask: 'Who has an opinion about school uniforms?'</p> <p>Record the learners' opinions on the board.</p>
Stage 3: Pair work	<p>Divide learners into pairs.</p> <p>Say: 'Choose one topic. Write down one fact about that topic. Then write one opinion about the topic.'</p> <p>Circulate and assist. Stop when most pairs have written their two sentences.</p>
Stage 4: Class share	<p>Say: 'I want you to share your topic and your sentences. First, read the topic. Then read your fact. Next read your opinion.'</p> <p>Select some pairs to share.</p>

Stage 5: End activity

Give each pair or group a piece of paper and ask them to write their facts and opinions on a mind map or poster. Make sure that their opinions use appropriate language (e.g. I think, In my opinion, I believe)
Display the mind maps in a class gallery
Choose your topics according to the level and age of your class. With younger learners, use one topic for the whole class and compare answers.

If your class is large, give several pairs the same topic. During the class sharing, all the pairs with the same topic share their facts and opinions. The learners can elect a spokesperson to share their group's ideas.

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Variations

- Groups could be asked to reveal their scores before teacher provides the right answers.
- Peer or self-assessment: learners work independently and exchange their worksheets with a partner or check their own work with given criteria.
- Individual or group writing, reading and speaking tasks. Learners are given a topic to write or speak about and a checklist for scoring.

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