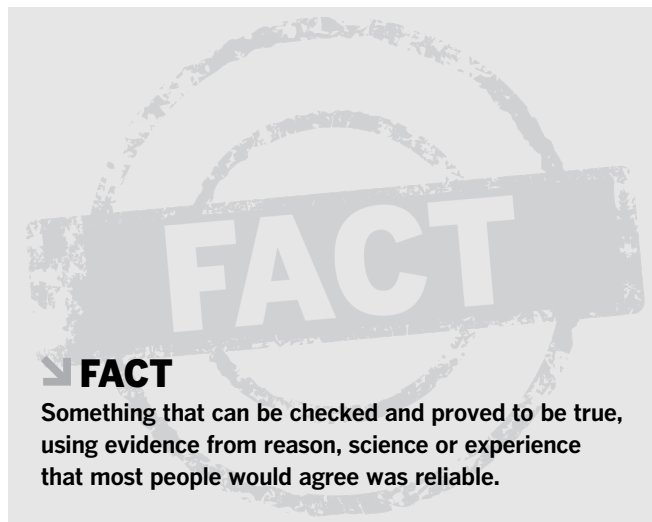




Matter of fact

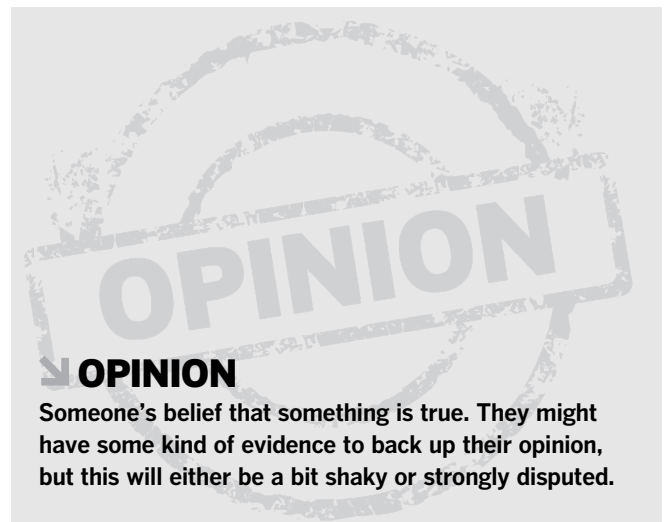
Earn yourself some easy marks by learning to tell facts and opinions apart.

When's a fact a fact, and when's a fact really an opinion? That's what you're going to have to be able to decide in the Media and Non-fiction texts you're given to read in the exam. Sometimes you can score easy marks for spotting obvious facts and opinions, but the examiners aren't daft and they like to throw in a few that require a bit more interrogation. Check out the tricky bits and learn to find the clues with our field guide to fact spotting.



FACT

Something that can be checked and proved to be true, using evidence from reason, science or experience that most people would agree was reliable.



OPINION

Someone's belief that something is true. They might have some kind of evidence to back up their opinion, but this will either be a bit shaky or strongly disputed.

EXAMPLE 1

"Bristol is a city in the South West of England." FACT.

Obvious: we only have to look at an up-to-date atlas to find out that it's true.

EXAMPLE 2

"Bristol is the most amazing city in the South West of England." OPINION.

Obvious (though slightly trickier if you know the South West and think about the alternatives...): it's an opinion because different people find different things amazing. And anyway, "amazing" is a highly emotional adjective that doesn't mean anything very specific that you could check. This gives us a clue that it's an opinion, because facts can always be checked.

EXAMPLE 3

"In the census of 2001 Bristol had a population of 380,615 people who experts suspect are all descended from 17th century pirates."

FACT and OPINION.

It is common for writers to slip opinion in alongside a fact. The first part about the population is true, and could be checked with the census records. "Experts" might make you think the second bit is going to be factual, too, but they only "suspect" and the bit about pirates is so ridiculous we know it can't be true. It's designed to blur the issue and make you think the opinion is fact. In an exam, don't be afraid to separate the two. If only half the sentence is factual, just state that bit.

EXAMPLE 4

"Bristol's role in the transatlantic slave trade is a stain upon its character."

FACT and OPINION.

This is trickier. It can easily be demonstrated, through historical records, that Bristol was a major port for the slave trade. Most people today would regard that history as shameful, and point to evidence of the terrible abuses of human rights and dignity that took place during those times. On those grounds they might want to count this as a fact.

Conversely, other people might think those events are so long ago that the city's reputation is no longer affected by them, preferring to count it as an opinion. It's not always easy.

Revision in 14:00 minutes:

Take two highlighter pens. Go through a news article and highlight all the facts in one colour and all the opinions in another. Watch out for tricky mixtures!

Result!

YOUR EIGHT-WEEK REVISION GUIDE

This exercise is an extract from **Result!** magazine, the new and effective way to revise for GCSE English. To get a headstart with your revision visit us today at www.gcsereult.co.uk

Only 6 weeks to go until exams begin...

Boost GCSE grades with **Result!** magazine – a *cram-tastic* English Revision Course!

Result! magazine is designed to help students achieve better grades in their crucial GCSE English exams. Sign up and you'll get eight weekly magazines sent straight to your door, plus access to hundreds of online revision resources for rapid results.

This structured revision programme is written by experienced teacher and English specialist, Julie Blake. Each magazine:

- supports students with their English revision
- helps them hone skills and consolidate knowledge for each of the key English areas: media, poetry, writing, prose, non-fiction and drama
- supplies extension exercises
- guides students through exam questions
- uncovers what examiners are really looking for
- offers rock solid revision strategies



TEN HOT HEADLINES FROM THE COURSE...

- 1) How to tackle fact finding questions for media and non-fiction reading
- 2) Extending your ideas in writing to comment
- 3) Plot how audience sympathy changes during a play
- 4) Punctuation masterclass: the problem with commas
- 5) Memory techniques for more effective revision
- 6) Effective quotation to impress examiners
- 7) Develop the art of great letter writing
- 8) Know where to score those extra crucial marks
- 9) Get inside the mind of your set poet
- 10) Time management tips for the exam

20% off:
Get the full series for just £15.99*

(*UK only: Sign up online by Friday 15th April and use discount code 'Easter')

You'll receive the first four instalments immediately, then one every week until the final exam.



Join the 1000s of students already working towards a better grade and sign up today at

www.gcsesresult.co.uk