

Keys to Comprehension

FACT AND OPINION

Knowing the difference between **Fact and Opinion** makes you a better thinker and a better reader. It is a skill you will use throughout your life when you read newspapers, texts, and other informational material.

A **Fact** is a statement that can be proven true:

- It is observable. You can check it out for yourself.
- It is supportable. There is reliable data available to back up the fact.
- The words are unemotional.

Indications that facts are primarily involved:

numbers, statistics, photographs, an eyewitness report

An **Opinion** tells what a person believes about something.

- It cannot be proven true.
- It uses emotional words.
- It may suggest that all people agree with the author about this subject.

Signal words in a sentence give you a clue that an opinion is coming up:

appear, most likely, believe, possibly, I think, probably, seem, perhaps

For Example: Are the following statements fact or opinion? Why?

1. Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white man.

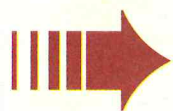
It is a fact. *Photos, history books, and films record the fact.*

2. The Mojave Desert is probably the hottest place on Earth.

It is an opinion. *One person thinks it "probably" is the hottest place on Earth.*

3. A statue of Abraham Lincoln is located in Washington, D.C.

It is a fact. *It is recorded in history books.*



When you read a *factual article*: be sure it is well supported by facts, experiences, or the accounts of experts.
When you read *opinions*: be aware that it is the viewpoint of the writer.