

Newspapers

Fact and opinion

When you read a news story it is important to recognise what is a fact and what is an opinion.

Journalists often mix FACTS and OPINIONS and sometimes it can be hard to tell which is which.

A FACT is something that is true and for which there is proof, for example:

Snow is cold.

We know it is true as we can touch it and feel the cold; science also shows us that its temperature is low. Just because you may think something is true does not mean that it is – there needs to be proof.

An OPINION is something that the writer believes, for example:

Snow is beautiful.

You may agree or disagree with this sentence. If you like snow then you will agree. If you do not like snow you will disagree.

Sometimes the language used in a news story tells you very clearly if it is a fact or an opinion. Here are some examples:

Fact

- * The review showed that...
- * According to the results of the latest survey...
- * Researchers have discovered that...

These examples indicate reliable sources of information that can be checked.....a review, a survey and researchers' discoveries.

Opinion

- * The company claims that...
- * The manager believes that...
- * Most experts think that...

These examples indicate that these are the opinions of the company, the manager and most experts.

The verbs 'claims', 'believes' and 'think' all show that these are opinions.