



SECTION 4 Wildlife Management

Subjects:

reading skills,
sociology



Approximate lesson time:

2 hours



Materials:

paper and pencil,
newspaper editorial
articles
about wolves,
Fact and Opinion
Worksheet

Fact and Opinion

Students identify fact and opinion statements in editorial articles.

STUDENT OBJECTIVE:

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Differentiate between facts and opinions.
2. Assess the impact of facts and opinions in news articles.
3. Evaluate the validity of some sources of facts and opinions.

VOCABULARY:

fact • opinion • scientific evidence • critical thinking • validate • objective • subjective

TEACHER BACKGROUND:

We have all heard that we shouldn't believe everything that we read, but how often do we really evaluate what we are reading? Knowing the difference between a fact and an opinion is essential to understanding any issue, especially one that has strong social advocacy around it. This activity challenges students to evaluate what they are reading and to separate facts from opinions.

While it seems like facts are clearly different from opinions, sometimes distinctions are blurred. Sometimes people will take scientific facts (research) and from that data, apply their opinion to what those

data mean or what might happen in the future. Other times, people only tell the facts that support their opinions and ignore facts that don't agree.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Distribute a copy of the "Fact or Opinion?" worksheet to each student without providing a definition of fact or opinion. Have students complete the worksheet.
2. Come up with a class definition of *fact* and *opinion*. If necessary, refer to the definitions provided in the glossary. Instruct students to review their answers on the worksheet and make any necessary changes. If desired, tell the students to discuss their answers and changes in small groups.
3. Read the following statement to students:

"There are 400 wolves in Michigan."

Ask if students think this statement is a fact or an opinion. Discuss why they answered as they did. Read a few more statements to continue the discussion:

"There are too many wolves in Idaho."

Lynn and Donna Rogers /www.bearstudy.org



National Science Education Standards

Unifying Concepts and Processes

Evidence, models,
and explanation

Science as Inquiry

Abilities
necessary to do
scientific inquiry

Understanding
about scientific
inquiry

“One of the most misunderstood animals on this earth is the gray wolf.”

“The only efficient way to kill wolves is by hunting.”

“The wolf is an endangered species.”

4. Divide the class into groups of four students. Hand each group several newspaper or magazine articles about wolves (samples provided on pages 209–213).
5. Instruct students to make a list of as many statements of fact as they can find in their articles, and another list of opinions.

Discuss:

- Who can dispense “facts”?
- Do authors of articles cite where they find their facts?
- How can you confirm their information?
- What are the advantages of using facts in articles?
- What are the advantages of using opinions?
- Why might people use both facts and opinions in the same article?
- How do people formulate opinions?
- What are some things people do to make their opinions seem like facts?
- Are opinions untruths? Give examples.
- Which are more persuasive, facts or opinions?
- What other persuasion techniques can you find in the articles?

6. Discuss with the students the relationship between beliefs (what you hold to be true), values (deeply held beliefs that guide behavior), attitudes (feeling toward a thing), and action (behavior).

ASSESSMENT:

Have students give a presentation to the class that includes:

- a. summary of the group’s article(s)
- b. evaluation of the facts in the article
- c. evaluation of how effective the article was in convincing readers that its view is correct.

EXTENSION:

Direct students to research supporting data for some of the fact statements they find in their articles.

Worksheet Answer Key:

1. Fact
2. Opinion
3. Fact
4. Opinion
5. Fact
6. Opinion
7. Opinion
8. Fact
9. Opinion
10. Fact
11. Opinion
12. Fact
13. Fact
14. Fact
15. Opinion

Name _____



Fact and Opinion Worksheet

Directions:

Read each statement. Write the word *fact* on the line if the statement is something that can be proved or disproved using concrete evidence (e.g., the sky is blue). Write the word *opinion* on the line if you think that the statement is a belief or position statement (e.g., the sky is beautiful).

1. _____ Gray wolves are carnivores who prey on deer, moose and other animals.
2. _____ Gray wolves should be allowed to spread all across Minnesota so they can control our deer population.
3. _____ Gray wolf pups are born blind in the spring and are raised by the entire pack (family).
4. _____ Wolf hunting should be legal in places where scientists tell us there are plenty of wolves.
5. _____ Adult gray wolves are generally larger than red wolves and coyotes.
6. _____ Gray wolves in the United States are a threat to small children.
7. _____ Wolves are ferocious and mean.
8. _____ Wolves are social hunters with a pack structure based on a dominance hierarchy.
9. _____ Minnesota has plenty of gray wolves right now.
10. _____ Leading wolf biologists say that Minnesota has enough wolves to maintain a wolf population even if they are taken off the endangered species list.
11. _____ People should be allowed to shoot a wolf if it enters their property.
12. _____ Wolves often kill sick, old, young or injured prey animals.
13. _____ Gray wolves are generally shy around humans and will usually run away when they see, hear or smell a human.
14. _____ A wolf could kill a human.
15. _____ Farmers should be reimbursed if a wolf kills their livestock.