FCAT READING SKILL
Distinguishing Facts and Opinions

1. What to do and what to watch for. A FACT is information that can be verified or PROVEN. You can’t argue facts. An OPINION is information that CANNOT BE PROVEN or verified. Opinions are someone’s belief or personal judgment. You can agree or disagree with an opinion.

2. Recognize facts. Read, Stop, and Think. Just because something is printed on the FCAT test, that doesn’t make it a fact! A FACT CAN BE PROVEN. A fact is either true or false. You can’t argue facts. Decide if the statement can be proven or verified. Can you check it out in a reference book? Can you prove it? Is your source a reliable or scientific source? Individual feelings or emotions do not influence facts. That means it doesn’t make a difference if you agree or disagree. It’s a FACT. That also means it doesn’t matter if you like or don’t like the fact, it is still a FACT! If the fact is proven to be false, it is still a statement of untrue FACT!

3. Recognize opinions. Read, Stop, and Think. Opinion statements are different from facts. If the writer is trying to convince you of his point of view, it may sound like a fact, but it is still just an opinion, because you can agree or disagree. OPINIONS CANNOT BE PROVEN or verified by an impartial source, because they only express an individual point of view. Opinions argue one point of view, and you can disagree with an opinion. Opinions evaluate, judge or express feelings and emotions. Statements about the future are always opinions, because you cannot prove the future. It didn’t happen yet!

4. Look for opinion signal words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPINION SIGNAL WORDS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>believe</td>
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<tr>
<td>feel</td>
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<td>may/may not</td>
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<tr>
<td>my perspective is...</td>
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<tr>
<td>possibly</td>
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<tr>
<td>should not</td>
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Cassandra Yorke
Department of Multicultural Education
5. **Put it to the test!** Can you prove or disprove the statement? Can it be verified by a reliable source? Can you check it out in a reference book? Can you prove it? Is your source a reliable or scientific source? Does it express an individual's feelings, thoughts, beliefs, judgments, argument, agreement, disagreement or advice?

*Examples:*

a) *Special Vitamin Cereal is the best cereal because it has more vitamins.*  
   (Opinion: Signal word “best”; cannot be proven; a point of view)

b) *Scientists believe that the world is billions of years old.*  
   (Opinion: signal word “believe”; cannot be proven and is only a theory)

c) *There are nine hundred students in this school.*  
   (Fact: can be proven by checking school records)

d) *Brazil is the largest country in South America.*  
   (True Fact: can be proven by checking reference books)

e) *Paraguay is the largest country in South America.*  
   (False Fact: can be proven to be false by checking reference books)

f) *You should work at least one week before quitting your job.*  
   (Opinion: signal words, “at least”, “should”; cannot be proven; advice)

g) *The thinking of medical doctors is that the disease is not curable.*  
   (Opinion: signal word, “thinking”; has not been proven beyond doubt.)

h) *There are eight million people in the city of New York.*  
   (Fact: can be proven true or false by checking census records)

i) *The United States will always be a democracy.*  
   (Opinion: future tense “will-” can never be proven; it didn’t happen yet)

6. **Use a graphic organizer.** It helps you to find proof for facts and opinion signal words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENT</th>
<th>PROOF</th>
<th>Opinion Signal Words</th>
<th>FACT or OPINION?</th>
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Cassandra Yorke  
Department of Multicultural Education
DISTINGUISHING FACT & OPINION: OPINION SIGNAL WORDS

Opinion statements are different from facts. If the writer is trying to convince you of his/her point of view, it may sound like a fact, but it is still just an opinion, because you can agree or disagree. Opinions cannot be proven or verified by an impartial source, because they only express an individual point of view. Opinions argue one point of view, and you can disagree with an opinion. Opinions evaluate, judge or express feelings and emotions. Statements about the future are always opinions, because you cannot prove the future. It didn’t happen yet!

Use the signal words to identify or state opinions from the reading in the blanks.

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<td>2</td>
<td>_______ believe(s)</td>
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<td>_______ feel(s)</td>
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<td>_______ expect(s)</td>
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<td>_______ should(should not)</td>
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<td>In _______’s opinion is</td>
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<td>_______’s impression is</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>_______’s sense is</td>
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Cassandra Yorke
Department of Multicultural Education
DISTINGUISHING FACT & OPINION: EXPRESSING OPINIONS

Opinion statements are different from facts. If the writer is trying to convince you of his/her point of view, it may sound like a fact, but it is still just an opinion, because you can agree or disagree. Opinions cannot be proven or verified by an impartial source, because they only express an individual point of view. Opinions argue one point of view, and you can disagree with an opinion. Opinions evaluate, judge or express feelings and emotions. Statements about the future are always opinions, because you cannot prove the future. It didn’t happen yet!

Use signal words to identify or state positive and negative opinions from the reading. Is the glass half full or half empty?

POSITIVE OPINIONS
1

2

3

4

NEGATIVE OPINIONS
1

2

3

4

Cassandra Yorke
Department of Multicultural Education
A fact can be proven. A fact is either true or false. You can't argue facts. Decide if the statement can be proven or verified. Can you check it out in a reference book? Can you prove it? Is your source a reliable or scientific source? Individual feelings or emotions do not influence facts. That means it doesn't make a difference if you agree or disagree. It's a FACT. That also means it doesn't matter if you like or don't like the fact. A fact is still a FACT! If the fact proves to be false, it is still a statement of untrue FACT!

Identify facts from the reading, and suggest how/where to find proof.
Fact & proof always go together.
A fact can be proven. A fact is either true or false. You can't argue facts. Decide if the statement can be proven or verified. Can you check it out in a reference book? Can you prove it? Is your source a reliable or scientific source? Individual feelings or emotions do not influence facts. That means it doesn't make a difference if you agree or disagree. It's a FACT. That also means it doesn't matter if you like or don't like the fact. A fact is still a FACT! If the fact is proves to be false, it is still a statement of untrue FACT!

Identify facts & suggest how/where to find proof. Fact & proof always go together.
Opinions are different from facts. You can agree or disagree with an opinion, and opinions cannot be proven, because they only express one individual's point of view. Opinions evaluate, judge, express feelings and emotions, or tell about the future (you cannot prove the future).

Facts can be proven as either true or false. Can you check it out in a reliable reference book? It doesn't matter if you agree or disagree because a fact is still a fact. If the fact is proven to be false, it is still a statement of untrue fact.

Write fact and opinion details about your topic (or in the reading) in each row.

**Opinion Words**
- My point of view is...
- In my opinion
- My sense is...
- Least/most
- Might/might not

**Opinion Words**
- My perspective is...
- My impression is...
- May/may not
- Best/worst
- Should/shouldn’t

**Fact Words**
- Probably
- Think
- Believe
- Feel
- Expect
- Possibly

Cassandra Yorke
Department of Multicultural Education
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Identify facts and opinions in the reading. For facts, show how to find the proof. For opinions, use opinion signal words.
Opinions are different from facts. You can agree or disagree with an opinion, and opinions cannot be proven, because they only express one individual’s point of view. Opinions evaluate, judge, express feelings and emotions, or tell about the future (you cannot prove the future).

Identify an opinion statement from the reading. Use opinion signal words to agree and disagree with the opinion. Give both sides of the opinion. Use opinion signal words and restate the point of view in your own words.

<table>
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<td>In my opinion</td>
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OPINION STATEMENT:

WHY AGREE?

WHY DISAGREE?

STATE POINT OF VIEW

Cassandra Yorke
Department of Multicultural Education
**DISTINGUISHING FACT & OPINION**

**Title/Topic/Text**

Opinions are different from facts. You can agree or disagree with an opinion, and opinions cannot be proven, because they only express one individual’s point of view. Opinions evaluate, judge, express feelings and emotions, or tell about the future (you cannot prove the future). Facts can be proven as either true or false. Can you check it out in a reliable reference book? It doesn’t matter if you agree or disagree because a fact is still a fact. If the fact is proven to be false, it is still a statement of *untrue* fact.

Identify and label facts and opinions from the reading.

For facts, write how to find the proof. For opinions, write opinion signal words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENT</th>
<th>Fact or Opinion?</th>
<th>PROOF (Facts Only)</th>
<th>OPINION Signal Words (Opinions Only)</th>
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**Opinion Words**

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Opinions are different from facts. You can agree or disagree with an opinion, and opinions cannot be proven, because they only express one individual's point of view. Opinions evaluate, judge, express feelings and emotions, or tell about the future (you cannot prove the future).

Identify an opinion statement from the reading. Use opinion signal words to justify the opinion. Indicate whether the opinion is credible or incredible and why.

WHOSE OPINION? __________________________

OPINION STATEMENT: __________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

REASONS TO JUSTIFY THE OPINION

1. __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

2. __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

3. __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
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4. __________________________________________
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7. __________________________________________
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CREDIBLE OR INCREDIBLE? WHY?

My point of view is... My perspective is... Probably Think/Feel Best/worst
My impression is... Should/shouldn't Possibly Believe In my opinion
My sense is... May/may not Expect Might/might not Least/most

Cassandra Yorke
Department of Multicultural Education
Facts can be proven as either true or false. Can you check it out in a reliable reference book? It doesn’t matter if you agree or disagree because a fact is still a fact. If the fact is proven to be false, it is still a statement of *untrue* fact.

Identify and label 5 forms of evidence to prove an important fact in the reading.
When you take a stand, you are giving your opinion. Opinions cannot be proven, because they only express one individual’s point of view. Opinions evaluate, judge, express feelings and emotions, or tell about the future (you cannot prove the future). Opinions are different from facts. You can agree or disagree with an opinion.

Take a stand on an opinion from the reading, and debate the opinion (for or against). Use opinion signal words.

**OPINION STATEMENT:**

___________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

**Opinion Words**

<table>
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<td>May/may not</td>
<td>Expect</td>
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<td>Least/most</td>
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**TAKE A STAND FOR OR AGAINST AN OPINION**

The way I see it...

1

_________________________________________
___________________________________________
___________________________________________
___________________________________________

2

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5

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Cassandra Yorke
Department of Multicultural Education