



Distinguishing facts from opinion



What are facts?

- Facts are information that can be proved by evidence.

To check if a statement is a fact, we ...

- find where the information comes from, e.g. a university study, a newspaper, etc.

What are opinions?

- Opinions are personal views on a subject, and may not be based on evidence.
- They can also be suggestions or recommendations that people offer to solve a particular problem.

To check if a statement is an opinion, we ...

- look for any adjectives that show the writer's personal view on something.

Let's look closer!

Dear Editor,

(iii) Fact: This information can be proved by statistics (the number of deaths) found in a study done by scientists at a university.

According to scientists at the University of Hong Kong, poor air quality has seriously affected the health of Hong Kong's residents. Their study showed that air pollution led to the deaths of over 3,500 people last year. We all know that cars that use petrol as fuel are the worst air polluters in the city.

The situation now is so critical that the government must take immediate action to improve air quality so as to prevent these avoidable deaths. I strongly urge the government to make it more attractive for people to switch to electric cars. It should also raise the price of petrol so that people will want to drive electric cars instead.

(iv) Opinion: The writer believes this is one way to improve air quality, but no evidence is given to show that it will work.

(ii) Opinion: The writer does not provide any evidence to prove that this is a factual statement.

Fact / Opinion / Not Given

e.g. Read the following statements about the text. Are the statements a fact (F) or an opinion (O), or is the information not given (NG)? Blacken ONE circle only.

- | | F | O | NG |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (i) Growing lots of plants can reduce air pollution. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> |
| (ii) Petrol-fueled cars are the biggest source of air pollution in Hong Kong. | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| (iii) Air pollution is a major risk to the health of people in Hong Kong. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| (iv) People will switch to electric cars if petrol is too expensive. | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Let's practise!

The blue whale is the largest mammal in the world, with an average length of 25 m and an average weight of 140,000 kg. The international organisation IUCN lists it as an endangered species, although its population is now slowly increasing. Through years of scientific research, we have learnt that the blue whale's main food source is krill, a sea creature that looks like shrimp. Fishermen catch millions of tons of krill, resulting in a huge reduction in the blue whale's food supply. If this trend continues, I predict that the blue whale population will fall.

1 Read the following statements about the text. Are the statements a fact (F) or an opinion (O), or is the information not given (NG)? Blacken ONE circle only.

	F	O	NG
(i) The blue whale is an endangered species.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(ii) Blue whales mostly eat krill.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(iii) Fishermen need to stop catching krill.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(iv) Less krill in the ocean means fewer blue whales.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Exam Booster

SUBJECT: Conserving the Wildlife Park**USERNAME****POST**

Sam, 15:31 According to a field study done five years ago, forests covered 85% of the park's total area and there were more than 500 animal species within its boundaries. However, a massive wildfire last year changed all of this. The latest field study shows that forest cover has been reduced by 40% and that 5% of animal species have disappeared. This is truly a saddening finding that makes me angry. I suspect that the fire was started by irresponsible tourists. Park managers need to add new rules for tourists to prevent future fires.

Judy, 16:10 I don't think that rules alone can prevent fires. Tourists should also be taught about the consequences of wildfires and what they can do to prevent them.

1 Read the following statements about the posts. Are the statements a fact (F) or an opinion (O), or is the information not given (NG)? Blacken ONE circle only.

	F	O	NG
(i) The wildfire burnt 40% of the park's forest.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(ii) Tourists started the wildfire.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(iii) The new rules can stop wildfires from starting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(iv) The park has punished the tourists who started the fire.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(v) An education programme is useful towards preventing fires.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>