

**Overview**

In this activity groups read sentences from Times articles and determine whether they are fact or opinion.

**Materials**

- [Fact or Opinion Statements](#)
- [Fact or Opinion Recording Sheet](#)

**21st-Century Skills Targeted**

- Critical Thinking
- Information Literacy
- Media Literacy

**Steps**

- Invite individuals to share their understanding of the difference between fact and opinion.
  - Elicit that a fact is something that can be proven true, and an opinion is a personal belief not based on proof.
- Use this as an opportunity to discuss the difference between news articles and opinion pieces that students may come across online. Margaret Sullivan, former public editor at The Times, says that reporters writing a news article strive to keep their pieces free from opinion, while authors of opinion pieces, reviews, or essays are writing from a personal point of view. Opinion pieces may include facts, so the key is in knowing how to separate them from the opinions also being shared.
- Next, have the class read statements taken from Times and record whether they are fact or opinion (and why) on their Fact or Opinion Recording Sheet.
- Have students share their evaluations, encouraging them to support their statements with evidence and reasoning.

Adapted from The New York Times [Skills Practice - Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion](#)

## Fact or Opinion Statements

- "On Tuesday, Ms. [Mary] Barra, 51, completed a remarkable personal odyssey when she was named as the next chief executive of G.M.--and the first woman to ascend to the top job at a major auto company."
- "A big reason America is falling behind other countries in science and math is that we have effectively written off a huge chunk of our population as uninterested in those fields or incapable of succeeding in them."
- "Last month the N.B.A. issued 21 fines and suspensions — a punitive spree that amounted to about \$602,882."
- "The inspiration for the original "Anchorman" came one evening more than a decade ago when Mr. Ferrell was watching a television documentary about Jessica Savitch, one of the first women to anchor news telecasts."
- "Cowbirds are brood parasites, meaning they lay their eggs in the nests of other bird species, thus unloading the messy and demanding business of chick-rearing."
- "Instead of striving to make work fun, managers should concentrate on creating the conditions in which a variety of personality types, from the excitable to the naturally downbeat, can flourish."
- "In the first step to formally eradicating a thrilling but dangerous staple of the game — and an emphatic response to the concussion crisis that has gripped other sports — Major League Baseball's rules committee voted Wednesday to eliminate home-plate collisions."

Adapted from The New York Times [Skills Practice - Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion](#)

Statement	F/O	Reasoning
<p>"On Tuesday, Ms. [Mary] Barra, 51, completed a remarkable personal odyssey when she was named as the next chief executive of G.M.--and the first woman to ascend to the top job at a major auto company."</p>		
<p>"A big reason America is falling behind other countries in science and math is that we have effectively written off a huge chunk of our population as uninterested in those fields or incapable of succeeding in them."</p>		
<p>"Last month the N.B.A. issued 21 fines and suspensions — a punitive spree that amounted to about \$602,882."</p>		
<p>"The inspiration for the original "Anchorman" came one evening more than a decade ago when Mr. Ferrell was watching a television documentary about Jessica Savitch, one of the first women to anchor news telecasts."</p>		
<p>"Cowbirds are brood parasites, meaning they lay their eggs in the nests of other bird species, thus unloading the messy and demanding business of chick-rearing."</p>		
<p>"Instead of striving to make work fun, managers should concentrate on creating the conditions in which a variety of personality types, from the excitable to the naturally downbeat, can flourish."</p>		
<p>"In the first step to formally eradicating a thrilling but dangerous staple of the game — and an emphatic response to the concussion crisis that has gripped other sports — Major League Baseball's rules committee voted Wednesday to eliminate home-plate collisions."</p>		