



# Fact, Opinion, & Bias

FACT: \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ based on real events

OPINION: a \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ formed in your mind about something; can \_\_\_\_\_ be proven

BIAS: a \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_, especially a personal and sometimes unreasoned judgment

Ways BIAS may be created:

\*the writer has \_\_\_\_\_

\*the writer is purposely trying to \_\_\_\_\_

\*the writer's \_\_\_\_\_ is influencing the writer's \_\_\_\_\_

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## Determining fact, opinion, and bias in a nonfiction article

1. Highlight the facts in the article in blue. Can they be proven?
2. Highlight the opinions in green.

Reading for pleasure is a waste of time. People who spend hour upon hour reading don't get to live in the real world. They don't really learn anything that is useful about how to deal with everyday people and problems. Plus, teachers always make us read things that are boring.

Is the tone positive or negative? \_\_\_\_\_

How do you know? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How might experiences have influenced the writer's opinions?  
\_\_\_\_\_

How biased is the article? Can the writer be trusted, or is the bias too strong for a clear understanding of the topic?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Parents always talk about how if schools had uniforms, everything would be so much easier. You wouldn't get caught up on looks and would learn the skills you need. I disagree with this, I think that school uniforms would put a restriction on our creativity. We dress the way we do for a certain reason. Clothes give us expression and the ability to use colors and patterns. The first impression we get of people is usually clothes, facial expression, and language. If we all wear the same thing we don't get to really see what people are like on the inside. Clothes don't distract us from learning, it simply lets us inspire our imaginations and lights up our worlds.

Is the tone positive or negative? \_\_\_\_\_

How do you know? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How might experiences have influenced the writer's opinions?  
\_\_\_\_\_

How biased is the article? Can the writer be trusted, or is the bias too strong for a clear understanding of the topic?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Read the next article and complete the following:

\*Highlight the FACTS in blue

\*Highlight the OPINIONS in green

## **Cell Phones Don't Contribute to Learning** ~ An interview with Education Professor Thomas Sherman



People are using cell phones everywhere, even in schools, leading some school systems to ban them during the academic day. "Cell phones don't contribute to learning and are potentially a distraction," says Thomas Sherman, Virginia Tech professor of education. "There are already enough distractions; there's no need to add another."

"Cell phones mediate or 'stand between' people," he says. The words are sent but the non-verbal information is not. Some consider the voice tone, facial expression, and physical gestures as important to the meaning of a message as the words. When communication is frequently mediated, it is possible children will not learn these subtle aspects of communicating well.

Today much communication is mediated with telephones, computer e-mail, and video. It is appropriate to limit this mediated communication with young children.

Modern cell phones are sophisticated devices that, like games, television sets, and computers, operate from screens. The idea of excessive "screen time" worries many educators. Children can spend two to four hours each day in front of screens. Much of this time has limited physical and mental activity. Often solitary entertainment screen time can occupy the majority of children's out of school free time. Educators recommend that children engage in active play, read, play social board games, and fantasy play. "Screen time" should be limited.

Sherman listed a few other reasons for not having cell phones in school including that the ringing can be a distraction. Cell phones could contribute to social inequities creating a new level of "have/have-not" distinction. There may also be a "keep up with Jones" response as new and fancier phone technology comes along.

"There are no good reasons for children to have cell phones," he says. One of the reasons frequently given for youngsters to have cell phones is to allow them to be able to contact someone in an emergency. "But schools are safe places so emergencies don't happen often," Sherman says. "Schools are good about recognizing emergencies and making the appropriate contacts. Besides, it is not good to give children the impression schools are unsafe - exactly the opposite of the truth.

"There really are no clear learning related uses," Sherman says, "and several disadvantages."

It also is not accurate for families to think that the cell phone is making it easier for daily planning. Sherman suggested that waiting until the last minute to make plans -thus necessitating a call to the

child - is a poor model for children. It is a better model for children to be learning to plan and study with a longer perspective. Parents should keep children informed and within a well planned context.

"Young students don't need this electronic tether to home and parents. They should learn to make decisions and experience the consequences. If children can't make, on their own, the decisions needed at school, they may never learn to be independent thinkers. We just don't need to be so 'connected,'" Sherman says.

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Now fill in the following chart about the article you just read:

	Cell Phones Don't Contribute to Learning
TONE of article (positive or negative)	
How do you know the tone is positive or negative? Write at least 2 examples from the article that demonstrate that tone.	
Author of article	
Is the article biased? (yes or no) Why do you think this?	
Do you think the writer intentionally uses bias to persuade or is it unintentional?	
Can the writer be trusted? OR Is the bias too strong for a clear understanding of the topic?	