

Distinguishing Fact from Opinion

What is it? Statements that can be proven to be true are **facts**. Statements that reflect someone's personal viewpoint are **opinions**. Recognizing the difference between fact and opinion will help you determine how reliable a source of information is.

How to do it. To recognize a fact, look for information that can be checked elsewhere. Often this type of text tells *who, what, where, when, or how much*. If you can find the same information in a reliable source, such as an encyclopedia, it's likely a fact.

To recognize opinions, look for words such as *think, feel, or believe*. Also look for words that carry a value judgment, such as *most, best, impressive, or wonderful*. An author's predictions may be an expression of opinion. For example, "With a little time and money, we could solve the pollution problem in our town." That's the author's opinion.

Try it. As you read this passage, identify facts and opinions. List at least one of each and answer the questions. An example has been done for you.

The Chinese Emperor of Qin had the greatest and longest-lasting influence of all the emperors of China. He was born in 259 B.C.E. and became ruler at age 13. Sometimes called the Tiger of Qin, he was very ambitious. He used military might, spies, bribery, and alliances to conquer rival states. Soon he gained power over all of China. He proclaimed himself emperor in 221 B.C.E. During his reign, the Emperor of Qin created a unified system of laws and writing. He also strengthened the empire against invasion. His tomb covers many square miles. The people of China will always remember him as the man who created a new world.

Fact	How might you prove this fact?	Opinion	What suggests this is an opinion?
1. The Emperor of Qin was born in 259 B.C.E.	1. Use a history book or encyclopedia.	1. The Emperor of Qin had the greatest influence of all Chinese emperors.	1. The words <i>greatest</i> and <i>longest-lasting</i>
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.