



What are facts and opinions?

What is a fact?

A **fact** is something that can be checked and backed up with evidence, e.g. In 2010, Lionel Messi was named FIFA World Footballer of The Year. We can check these details by looking at FIFA records.

Facts are often used in conjunction with research and study. The census (a survey of the population usually conducted by a Government department) is a good example of when facts are used. These facts can be supported by information collected in the census, e.g. According to UK Government national statistics in 2004, approximately one in five people in the UK were aged under 16.

What is an opinion?

An **opinion** is based on a belief or view. It is not based on evidence that can be checked, e.g. Wayne Rooney is the best football player in the English Premier League. Some people might think there are other players in the English Premier League who are better than Wayne Rooney.

Opinions can be found in many types of writing such as a “Letter to the Editor” in a newspaper. A reader may write in with an opinion e.g. “24 hour pub licensing will ruin our community.” Another reader may write in and disagree, e.g. “24 hour licensing will stop yobbish behaviour by staggering closing hours.”

Mixing fact and opinion

Writers often mix fact and opinion. It is not always easy to tell whether something is based on facts that can be checked or someone’s particular viewpoint. For this reason, it is important to read with a questioning mind. Just because someone says something is true – it doesn’t mean it is true. What do you think?