



## The language of fact and opinion

### How do we distinguish between fact and opinion?

One way to distinguish between fact and opinion is to look at the language used. Language helps us to decide whether a statement can be backed up with evidence and verified in some way. Or it can help to show whether the statement is someone's point of view, judgement or belief.

### Examples of the language we use to express facts:

- This review has **demonstrated**...
- **According** to the results of the latest poll...
- The latest findings **confirm**...
- Researchers have recently **discovered**...

**Tip:** look at the key words used to express facts - **demonstrated, according, confirm, discovered**.

### Examples of the language we use to express opinions:

- The company **claims that**...
- The research team **argues that**...
- In Professor Donald's **view**...
- Most experts in this field **suspect that**...

**Tip:** Look at the key words used to express opinion - **claims, argues, view, suspect**.

**NOTE:** Facts and opinions can be manipulated. Opinions can be presented as facts, simply by using the language of facts to present them. For example:

**Recent statements made by the council confirm that most residents do not want a further expansion of the one-way system of streets.**

Although facts are expressed in the language in the above statement, there is very little evidence to back it up. The council may have made statements about increasing the number of one-way streets, but this doesn't mean that local residents were surveyed and that their responses were recorded in any way.