

## Teaching Plan & Guideline for Chapter 5

**Content:**

- Evaluating Ideas
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    - Facts & opinions
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### Objectives:

To provide experience that will result in students' ability to think critically and to:

1. distinguish between facts and opinions and blending fact & opinion
2. evaluate the opinions an author presents,
3. recognize the writer's techniques
4. identify and recognize an author's (ironic) tone in order to find author's purpose.
5. evaluate the role of tone in persuasive writing
6. recognize and evaluate bias or slanted writing in informative and persuasive writing
7. recognize, analyze, and decide if an author's argument is effective or ineffective in reasoning.
8. recognize circular reasoning or begging the question, special pleading, propaganda techniques, and how to guard against it.

### Teaching Procedures and Activities.

1. Review the skills in the previous chapters, give examples from Supplementary Material for Teaching
2. Divide students into equal groups, have them discuss handouts on fact / opinion, writer's techniques, propaganda techniques, circular reasoning, special pleading then each present in class with the help of teachers.
3. Students do practice exercises
4. Test drawn from the Supplementary Material for Teaching

### Teaching Materials

1. Supplementary Material for Teaching
2. Handouts
3. Reading materials, i.e. news articles, features, ads etc.
4. Evaluation form.

### Evaluation

1. Observation of students as they critically discuss and react to a selection, and present in class
2. Exercises, materials to evaluate students in these skills

## CHAPTER 5

### EVALUATING IDEAS

Up to this point, the comprehension skills you've learned have been basic ones. They are skills that help you understand and interpret what you read. But effective reading is more than just understanding. You must be able to read in a critical way – which means that you have to **evaluate** ideas once you understand them. When you evaluate a writer's ideas, you judge the worth of what you read. In other words, you have to evaluate authors' opinions about subjects and their methods of presenting their views; this is another way of thinking called "**evaluating ideas.**"

**Some important questions to ask when evaluating what you read.**

1. Does the author carefully separate objective fact from opinion?
2. Does the passage present the facts completely, specifically, and accurately?
3. Does the author seem reliable? Can you see what strengths or experiences make the author qualified to write about a topic?
4. Does the author make any claims that seem outrageous or unsupportable?
5. Does the author make his or her intent or point of view clear?
6. Does the author take into account other points of view on the topic? Are there other ways of thinking about the subject?
7. Do I agree with the point of view expressed in the selection?  
Why? Why not?

8. Does the author try to appeal more to your emotions or to your reason and common sense?
9. Do your emotions get in the way of your ability to judge an author's statements fairly?
10. Do I believe the action described in the selection is right or wrong? Good or evil? Fair or unfair?
11. Is the selection clearly written? Or is the phrasing awkward and the organization illogical?
12. Does it seem that the author is slanting information in such a way as to prejudice your ideas and to force you to believe a certain way? Is the author using propaganda?
13. Can you see the mood the writer tries to set up?
14. Can you judge how well the writer writes? Have you thought about the style and choice of words? Do you respond to images, good sentence structure, and good organization of material?
15. Determine the author's purpose by asking yourself. *What is the author's reason for writing this?*
16. Determine the author's tone by asking yourself. *What do the author's word choice and writing style convey about his or her attitude toward the topic?*
17. Determine the author's point of view by asking yourself. *What is the author's position or belief regarding the issue?*
18. Determine whom the writer expects to read the work by asking yourself *whom did the author have in mind as readers?*

The following sections will help you sharpen your critical reading skills. **Critical reading skills** *are skills that go beyond basic comprehension to gain additional insights.* They require you to do some additional thinking *after* you have read a passage.

### **Fact and opinion**

Most reading samples contain ideas based on fact *and* opinion. It is not always easy to keep the two apart. A writer often combines the two in such a way that you do not always notice where fact ends and opinion begins. For these reasons, it is important for you to be able to distinguish facts from opinions.

**Facts:** Information that can be verified (proved true) by direct evidence, research, observation, experimentation, or experience.

**Opinions:** Information that cannot be proved or disproved; it is a statement that represents someone's judgment, belief or feeling. Solid opinions are based on facts. However, opinions are still somebody's view of something and are not facts themselves.

Writers sometimes try to make their opinions *sound* as if they were facts so that the reader will accept what they say. When you read an opinion, you will have to decide how well supported the opinion is. That means you must determine whether the opinion is supported by relevant facts and/or by expert opinions that pertain directly to the topic or issue. So it is important for you to be able to distinguish facts from opinions.

## Keeping Fact and Opinion Apart

Here is the process (a short series of questions you can ask) or expression that help you tell whether a statement represents a fact or opinion.

1. Ask yourself, Can the information in the statement be verified through research, observation, experimentation, or experience?. There are three possible answers:

1.1 If the answer is *yes*, the statement represents a *fact*. (It's a fact.)

1.2 If the answer is *no*, the statement represents *incorrect information*. (It's neither a fact nor an opinion. It's wrong information.)

1.3 If it cannot be determined whether *the answer is yes or no*, the information represents an *opinion*. So you need to decide whether or not the opinion is well supported. There are two possibilities:

1.4 The opinion is *well supported*, so it is every bit as valuable as a fact.

1.5 The opinion is *not supported* or is *poorly supported*, so it is of *no value*.

“Well supported” means that the author backs up the opinions with the testimony of experts or presents facts or other logical reasons for the opinion. If an author presents no reasons or presents illogical or irrelevant reasons, then the opinion is of no value.

2. Here are some “**judgment words**” about opinions. They can be interpreted several ways. They mean different things to different people. For example, consider the words **better, sad, successful, disappointing, beautiful, effective, unappealing, remarkable, pretty, ugly, safe, dangerous, evil, attractive, well dressed, good** and so on.

Consider the two sentences that follow:

1. The man leaning against the fence had brown eyes and black hair touching his shoulders.

2. A handsome man leaned against the fence.

In sentence one we have details that describe. In sentence two the writer interprets the details for us. It is somebody's opinion that such a man is handsome.

3. Another words or phrases that authors use as clues to statements of some kind of opinion such as **probably, perhaps, usually, often, sometimes, on occasion, I think, I believe, I feel, I suggest, I like, We should, you ought to, you should have, It would have been better to, In my/our opinion, It seems to us, It appears that, It seems likely that, Expert interpret this to mean, In our view, Perhaps, It could be that, It seems, Presumably, Arguably, One interpretation is that, It seems possible that, and Apparently.**

4. The last clue to an opinion is when an author speaks of something that is going to happen in the future. Obviously, you can't prove something that hasn't happened yet. If an author says, "Someday stem cell research will offer the cure to dozens of illnesses we cannot currently cure. "*Someday* and *will offer*"(future tense) alert you that the statement is an opinion.

5. Before you accept a statement of fact and before you agree with a statement of opinion, question the skill of the author. Is he or she reliable? Why should you take his or her word?

6. Test the writer's opinion by asking whether a different opinion is possible. You do not have to agree with the different opinion (or with the author's). You just have to be able to see if there is another point of view.

7. Sometimes a writer makes something *sound* like a fact, it doesn't mean it is a fact. When writers try to persuade readers to believe something they have written, they may present their opinions as if they're facts. They may introduce the opinion with phrases such as

Everyone knows that.....  
It's a fact that.....  
It's obvious that.....

For example, just because I write, "It's a fact that I'm eight feet tall" does not make it true. You must still *think* for yourself and evaluate what the author has written.

8. A single paragraph can consist of facts only, opinions only, or can contain both facts and opinions.

9. When you evaluate a statement, you must evaluate it as a *whole*. Some statements are clearly facts or opinions:

## Exemplification

### Example: 1

“The term ‘database’ is perhaps one of the most overused and misunderstood terms in today’s business environment.”

This is clearly an opinion because of the word “perhaps” and the judgment words “overused” and “misunderstood.”

### Example: 2

“When you create a database, you first create the data dictionary.”

This is a fact because you could do research to verify that this is the first step in building a computerized database.

“Some statements can seem tricky. Consider these, for example:

### Example: 3

“Some doctors believe a high – protein, low – carbohydrate diet is the healthiest diet.”

This statement may appear to be an opinion; however, it is a fact because you could do a survey to determine whether some doctors have that opinion. It is a fact that some doctors have the opinion that “a high – protein, low – carbohydrate diet is the healthiest diet.”

### Example: 4

“Shakespeare is considered by many critics to be the greatest playwright of all times.”

This is also information that could be verified and, therefore, represents a fact. In other words, it is a fact that some critics have that opinion about Shakespeare. However, if the statement simply said, “Shakespeare is the greatest playwright of all times” then it would be an opinion because the word “greatest” is a judgment word, and there is no way to prove this to everyone’s satisfaction. Remember that you must evaluate a statement *as a whole*. If any part of it is an opinion, you must consider the entire statement to be an opinion.

Look at the following statements, which come from Dee Brown’s

*Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West*.

1. In 1848 gold was discovered in California.
2. In 1860 there were probably 300,000 Indians in the United States and Territories, most of them living west of the Mississippi.
3. Now, in an age without heroes, the Indian leaders are perhaps the most heroic of all Americans.

In sentence 1 we read a statement of fact. We have evidence of the discovery of gold in California in 1848. If we checked sources, we would see that the statement is true.

The use of numbers, dates, and geography in sentence 2 creates a sense of fact. But the word *probably* suggests some doubt, and we cannot accept the statement as completely factual. That doesn't make it wrong or untrue. It just makes it partly an opinion. Because Dee Brown is a scholar in American Indian history, most people would accept his statement as fact. But it is still his educated judgment that 300,000 Indians lived in the United States in 1860. The writer's education and background tell us to rely on his statement, and we accept it as true without much thought. It is possible, though, that some people have other views on this subject.

In sentence 3 we have a clearer example of the author's opinion. The statement is not wrong. It is just clearly not a statement of fact. The word *perhaps* tells us that the author himself believes other ideas are possible. It is true that many people would agree that Indian leaders are the most heroic. Others might say, however, that leaders during World War II or leaders of countries in times of crisis were the most heroic. Others would say that leaders on Vietnam battlefields were the most heroic. None of these statements is incorrect. All, however, are opinions.

To judge a writer's work you have to be able to tell opinion from fact. Often writers mix fact and opinion even within the same sentence, with some words representing facts and others representing opinions. Think about the following sentences:

*Compact discs reproduce truer sound than records. They cannot skip or scratch the way records do. Despite this, there will always be a*

*market for record players because people don't like to change things they're used to for new gadgets they can't understand.*

The first part of this statement is true. Compact-disc players use digital computers, which do reproduce sound more faithfully than records do. Since compact – disc players use lasers and not needles, they can't damage discs or cause scratches or skips.

The next part of the statement is a prediction based on two beliefs that may or may not be true. First, "People don't like to change things they're used to" is not a fact. It isn't true in all cases. For instance, one hundred years ago people traveled by horse and buggy, but today hardly anyone would consider it more practical to travel by horse rather than in an automobile. New inventions take time to become accepted. Elevators, computers, televisions, and airplanes have all been accepted by most people and someday, maybe everyone will own a compact-disc player. The second opinion expressed, that people can't understand new gadgets, is invalid for similar reasons. Years ago people were unfamiliar with calculators, automatic teller banking machines, microwave ovens, and many other "gadgets." While some people avoid objects they find difficult to operate or understand, many people discard old devices and adapt themselves to new gadgets. The fact of the matter is, no one knows for certain whether "there will always be a market for record players."

When you have a mixture of fact and opinion in a single statement, you must decide whether that main point of the statement is essentially fact or opinion. In the last example, the main point of the statement was to make a prediction, so it basically offers an opinion, even though it contains many facts. Consider another example:

Dressed in a beautiful ten thousand dollar dress, Mary Foley looked elegant and serene on her wedding day as she marched down the aisle beside her father. She said, "I must be the happiest woman alive."

Even though the words *beautiful*, *elegant*, and *serene* state the writer's opinion, the sentence states many facts. The woman's name is Mary Foley; she was getting married; her dress cost \$10,000; her father escorted her down the aisle. Yet the writer's main point is to give an opinion about how Mary looked wearing a particular dress on a particular occasion. Thus the first sentence basically presents an opinion.

However, the second sentence reports what Mary said. Mary stated her opinion, but that she said it is a fact. So, the second sentence is basically factual.

## Practice Exercises

### Practice A

#### 1. Judging the Truth of Statements

Read each of the following statements and choose the phrase that best completes each sentence.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. "The cashier at the local supermarket says that it is a fact that wheat prices will be going down soon." This statement gives
- a reliable fact about wheat prices.
  - the writer's own opinion.
  - the opinion of someone who should know.
  - the opinion of someone who is not an expert on the subject.
  - The only opinion anyone could possibly have on the subject.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. "I believe that this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free." (Abraham Lincoln) This statement expresses
- a fact.
  - a guess.
  - the opinion of someone who should know.
  - the opinion of someone who is not an expert on the subject.
  - the opinion of someone other than Abraham Lincoln.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. "Hurting other people is wrong." This statement expresses
- a fact.
  - the opinion of someone who should know.
  - an opinion that should not be believed without further evidence.
  - the opinion of someone who is not an expert on the subject.
  - an opinion that most people would agree with.

### More Practice on Facts and Opinions

You must be able to distinguish between fact and opinion. Look at the difference between the first two statements and the third statement:

Robert Green was born in 1875.

He worked as a teacher, a farmer and a poet.

He is America's finest poet.

Can it be proved whether or not Green was born in 1875?

Can it be proved whether or not he was a teacher, farmer, poet?

Can it be proved whether or not he is America's finest poet?

A statement of fact can be proved true or false by objective means that is, by measurement or by referring to a document that is free of personal feeling. We can consult official records to prove Green's date of birth and whether he worked as a farmer etc. We cannot prove statements of opinion for they deal with attitudes. It is a matter of personal judgment that Green is America's finest poet.

### Practice B

Write F before each statement of fact and O before each statement of opinion.

- \_\_\_\_\_ a) Jim is five feet, eleven inches tall.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b) He is president of the student council.  
\_\_\_\_\_ c) Everybody likes him.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ a) There is an oak tree on the corner of Division and Highland Streets.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b) It is the most beautiful tree in town.  
\_\_\_\_\_ c) It is over forty feet tall.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ a) That motorcycle is red.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b) It is too worn and too old to be of any use.  
\_\_\_\_\_ c) It has two mirrors.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ a) This steak weighs one pound, seven ounces.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b) It looks delicious.  
\_\_\_\_\_ c) It should really be broiled.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ a) "The Miraculous Phonograph Record of 1921" is a story by William Saroyan.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b) It appeared in the magazine 'The Saturday Evening Post'.  
\_\_\_\_\_ c) It is a wonderful story.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ a) Life magazine has pictures on most of its pages.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b) The colour photographs are excellent.  
\_\_\_\_\_ c) Only the best photographers are hired by Life magazine.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ a) "The Mystery of the Stone Towers" is about some towers found in New Mexico.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b) It is fascinating to read about the discoveries made there  
\_\_\_\_\_ c) The article was written by John Smith.  
\_\_\_\_\_ d) Mr. Smith was a professor at the University of New Mexico  
\_\_\_\_\_ e) The story was exciting.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ a) Theodore Roosevelt was the 26<sup>th</sup> president of the U.S.A.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b) He was 42 years old when he became president.  
\_\_\_\_\_ c) He was a strong president.

### Practice C

Even though a statement can be proved false, it is still a statement of fact. "All books have red covers" is a statement of fact although it can be proved wrong. Write F before each statement of fact and O before each statement of opinion.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ a) The human heart beats 400 times per minute.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b) The heart's function is breathing.  
\_\_\_\_\_ c) The heart is the body's blood – pumping organ.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ a) In 1965, more than half the deaths in Thailand were the result of heart disease.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b) In 1965, less than one fourth of the deaths in Thailand were the result of heart disease.  
\_\_\_\_\_ c) People worry too much about heart disease.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ a) More Americans have been killed by cars since 1900 than by all the wars in its history.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b) The car is a dangerous machine.  
\_\_\_\_\_ c) The first car death occurred in 1955.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ a) There has been an increase in the number of crimes per population since 1960.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b) There has been a decrease in the number of crimes per population since 1960.  
\_\_\_\_\_ c) The number of crimes has grown at a fantastic rate.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ a) In 1928, sixty nations signed an agreement not to make war.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b) Those nations were either stupid or untruthful.  
\_\_\_\_\_ c) All sixty nations rearmed.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ a) Susan Jones wrote many beautiful poems.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b) "Time" is a poem by Susan Jones.  
\_\_\_\_\_ c) She wrote one short story.

Many statements are mixed fact and opinion. Look at the following statements.

1. Yesterday Jim said something
2. Mary Jane is a beautiful girl.
3. Yesterday Jim said that Mary Jane is a beautiful girl
4. Most people believe in something.
5. The world is round.
6. Most people believe that the world is round.

#### Practice D

Indicate whether each of the following is a statement of fact (F), a statement of opinion (O), or a mixture of both (B).

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The film "Star Wars" is an exciting film.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2. It cost Star Films over four million dollars to make.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. It has a magnificent cast of thirteen thousand.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. They spent 6 weeks of hard work in the terrible desert heat.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. It should be the most popular film of the year.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Because of delays caused by one stupid person, the film was behind schedule.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. It is the first role for Jim Black Since 1964.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Director Sam Green has a right to be delighted with this film.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. It is his 50<sup>th</sup> film and the best of his career.

F/O

On the lines below write F if the sentence is a factual statement, O if it is a statement of opinion.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. All cakes should be chocolate.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Switzerland is the most beautiful country in the world.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. 6% of the class failed the exam.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. New Year's Day is always on a Thursday.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. It rains too much in Lop Buri
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. He is 170 cm tall.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. John Smith was born on January 27, 1953.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Chiang Rai is the biggest province in Thailand.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Playing football requires more skill than playing rugby.

### The Writer's Techniques

You have learned the advanced critical reading skills of making logical inference, drawing conclusions, predicting outcomes, generalizing, and distinguishing facts from opinions. Now you will add several more advanced skills: the writer's technique, i.e. style, tone, mood, purpose, point of view, and intended audience. You have to apply these skills after you have read a paragraph or selection. An important way to develop critical skills is to be aware of the writer's technique in any selection you read. Once you know what the writer is doing with his or her material-once you know what effect he or she is trying to create-you can judge what is said more fairly and clearly. The writer's technique often involves the features discussed in the following topics. (Wiener, & Bazerman, 1988, pp.213-215)

## 1. Writer's Style

The term **style** is the way a writer picks words and puts them together; it means the expressive qualities that distinguish an author's work, including word choice, phrasing, punctuation, sentence length, tone, dialogue, and arrangement of sentences and paragraphs as well as the use of figurative language and imagery to communicate meanings. Style of writing can reveal an author's purpose and attitude toward his or her subject and audience. An author uses colorful and melodious expressions, painting pictures with descriptive words and providing considerable elaboration. The style usually tells you whom the writer expects to read the work. If the sentences are long and the words are difficult, the writer expects an educated reader. If the language is rich in slang expressions and current phrases, the writer is addressing a more general group. If the words are very technical, the writer is aiming for a specific audience who know the language of the subject being discussed. Some writers pick words with deep emotional appeal in order to urge their readers to act. Other writers choose a more impartial style.

A writer who wants to convince you of how urgent his or her problem is might use short sentences so that as you read along, you become wrapped up in the fast pace. During World War II, Winston Churchill said, "We shall fight them on beaches. We shall fight them street by street. We shall never give up". Here he used repetition and short sentences effectively to show how committed England was to keep fighting. If he had said "We shall fight them on the beaches and in the streets and never give up," the basic message would have been the same, but the style would not have fired up his listener's imagination.

## 2. Writer's Purposes

Writers write for a **reason**; they have a purpose, something they want to accomplish. *An author's **purpose** is simply his or her reason for writing.* An author is usually writing for one of these four purposes: (Elder, 2004, p.212)

2.1 to inform – to give information.

2.2 to instruct – to explain how to do something (that is, to give instructions)

2.3 to persuade – to convince readers to do or believe something.

2.4 to entertain – to present humor or other enjoyable material.

Textbooks are filled with information. Some are designed to explain how to do something. Some wish to give information. Some want to persuade you to believe something. Others try to push you into taking some action related to a subject of deep meaning to them. Some writers write to amuse or entertain.

Advertising is a good example of writing with a purpose—that is, writing to make you buy a certain product. Another example is editorials in newspapers. Editorials aim at gaining public support for a political position. If you think about it for a minute, you will realize that whenever you write something, you have a purpose in doing it. After you have read something, determine the author's purpose by asking yourself, **What is the author's reason for writing this?**

## 3. Writer's Tone

To help them accomplish their purpose, authors choose an appropriate tone. ***Tone** refers to the author's choice of words and writing style to convey his or her attitude toward a topic* (Elder, 2004, p.212). Tone

is the attitude the writer takes toward a subject of a poem, a story, a character, the audience or other literary works. Tone is conveyed through the writer's choice of words and details that express particular emotions and that evoke an emotional response in the reader. Even though we cannot see the author's face or hear a voice, we can tell whether the writer is being serious, funny, sympathetic, personal, impersonal, honest, or sarcastic. Authors may write about something they respect or about something they hate, disagree or agree, foolishness or seriousness. A writer may be angry. A writer may be impatient. A writer may take a humorous view of a subject. Or a writer may be ironic-saying one thing but really meaning the opposite. Tone can be very important in literary works. Tone also helps you understand the author's *intended meaning*: what the author wants readers to understand, even if the words appear to be saying something different. To determine the author's intended meaning, ask yourself, "What is the real meaning behind the author's words?" Authors choose words that help convey a variety of attitudes, including sympathy, objectivity, seriousness, irony, sadness, bitterness, or humor. After you have read something determine the author's tone by asking yourself, *what do the author's word choice and writing style convey about his or her attitude toward the topic?*

Here is a sample of a paragraph taken from an essay about gun control. The author is reacting to the slogan "Guns Don't Kill; People Do." See if you can recognize his *attitude* and *tone*.

Despite the popular misconceptions, most Americans' rifles, for example, are used as tomato stakes. Or as curtain rods, or softball bats. Sometimes as rudders .....on small rafts. Many rifle owners also stuff bundles of straw up the barrels of their rifles and – presto! they've got a child's toy broom.

Notice that the author makes some seemingly rather silly comments: Americans use rifles as tomato stakes, curtain rods, softball bats, rudders, and brooms. But as critical readers we must be aware that his attitude about guns is serious. He does not believe that “guns don’t kill, people do.” We know this because of his *tone*, his exaggeration of what guns are used for. We know he doesn’t really mean what he is saying. His tone is sarcastic, almost angry, and his attitude toward his reader seems to be: “You can’t be fool enough to believe that slogan. If you do, you *are* a fool.” Thus, attitude and tone are closely connected.

Notice how the author’s attitude and tone come out in the following paragraph:

The supermarket is to modern man what the jungle was to primitive people. It is the source of food that has to be sought out with great skill in order to obtain the best quality. Economic traps and threats camouflaged as harmless goodies lurk in every aisle. Shopping, like hunting, is a game of skill with survival as the prize.

Here we get the author’s attitude about supermarkets through his tone. He compares/contrasts the modern supermarket with the jungle. This is our clue; it shows us that his attitude is that supermarkets are dangerous. His attitude toward the reader is that he wants us to wake up and see those dangers. We know this through his tone, which is brought out by such word choices as “economic *traps*” (as opposed to animal traps), “threats *camouflaged*, as harmless goodies” (as opposed to hunters and animals camouflaging themselves), “lurk” (dangerous animals lurk in the bush), “*game of skill*” (hunting). His attitude and tone reveal he is cynical about supermarkets and our ability to survive them. Recognizing attitude and tone requires reading beyond the word.

Some words used to describe tones grouped into categories.

**Words that describe a *neutral* tone**

*(typically used in textbooks, reference material, sets of directions, instructional manuals, most newspaper and magazine articles, and other factual, objective material that is presented in a straightforward manner)*

**dispassionate** devoid of or unaffected by passion, emotion, or bias

**indifferent** appearing to have no preference or concern

**matter-of-fact** straightforward, unemotional

**neutral** unemotional, not indicating a preference for either side in a dispute or controversy

**objective** uninfluenced by emotions or personal prejudices

**unemotional** involving little or no emotion or feeling

**Words that describe a *serious* tone**

*(typically used in important formal announcements such as obituaries, for example)*

**reserved** marked by self-restraint and reticence

**serious** grave, earnest, not trifling or jesting, deeply interested or involved

**solemn** deeply earnest, serious, and sober

**Words that describe an *emotional* tone**

*(typically found in personal articles, political writing, and some persuasive writing, such as editorials)*

**compassionate** showing kindness, mercy, or compassion, sympathetic

**concerned** caring deeply about an issue or person

<b>defiant</b>	resisting authority or force, intentionally contemptuous
<b>emotional</b>	showing strong feeling
<b>impassioned</b>	characterized by passion or zeal
<b>nostalgic</b>	feeling bittersweet longing for things, persons, or situations in the past
<b>remorseful</b>	feeling regret
<b>self-pitying</b>	feeling sorry for oneself
<b>sentimental</b>	based on emotions rather than reason
<b>urgent</b>	calling for immediate attention, instantly important

**Words that describe a *hostile, critical, or disapproving* tone**

*(typically found in movie and book reviews, editorials, and some magazine articles)*

<b>angry</b>	feeling or showing anger, incensed or enraged
<b>critical</b>	inclined to criticize or find fault
<b>disapproving</b>	passing unfavorable judgment upon, condemning
<b>disgusted</b>	filled with disgust or irritated impatience
<b>hostile</b>	antagonistic, showing ill will
<b>indignant</b>	angered by something unjust, mean, or unworthy; irate
<b>intolerant</b>	not allowing difference of opinion or sentiment
<b>insulting</b>	treated with gross insensitivity, insolence, or contemptuous rudeness
<b>negative</b>	marked by hostility, opposition, or resistance
<b>pessimistic</b>	expecting the worst, having a negative attitude or gloomy outlook

**threatening** intended to give a warning

**Words that describe a *humorous, sarcastic, ironic, or satiric* tone**

*(can appear in writing of many sorts, including literature and social criticism, and some newspaper and magazine columns and articles)*

**amused** feeling entertained or occupied in a pleasant manner

**humorous** funny; amusing

**lighthearted** not burdened by trouble, worry, or care, happy and carefree

**bitter** characterized by sharpness, severity, or cruelty

**contemptuous** openly disrespectful, showing haughty disdain

**cynical** scornful of the motives, virtue, or integrity of others expressing scorn and bitter mockery

**disbelieving** not believing, refusing to believe

**disdainful** contemptuous, scornful

**ironic** humorously sarcastic or mocking

**irreverent** disrespectful, critical of what is generally accepted or respected, showing a lack of reverence

**malicious** intended to cause harm or suffering, having wicked or mischievous intentions or motives

**mocking** treating with scorn or contempt

**sarcastic** characterized by the desire to show scorn or contempt, making cutting remarks to show scorn or contempt

<b>satirical</b>	using sarcasm, irony, or caustic wit to expose or ridicule human folly, vice, or stupidity
<b>scornful</b>	treating someone or something as despicable or unworthy, showing utter contempt
<b>skeptical</b>	reluctant to believe, doubting or questioning everything

### Words that describe a supportive tone

*(found in many types of writing, such as certain textbooks, inspirational writing, some magazine articles, and personal correspondence)*

<b>approving</b>	expressing approval or agreement
<b>conciliatory</b>	willing to compromise or give in on some matters
<b>encouraging</b>	showing support
<b>enthusiastic</b>	showing excitement
<b>hopeful</b>	inspiring hope
<b>optimistic</b>	expecting the best, having a positive outlook
<b>positive</b>	in favor of, supportive, optimistic
<b>respectful</b>	showing proper respect, regard, or esteem
<b>sincere</b>	genuine, without hypocrisy or pretense
<b>supportive</b>	showing support or assistance
<b>sympathetic</b>	inclined to sympathy; showing pity, empathic
<b>tolerant</b>	showing respect for the rights, opinions, or practices of others

### Some *other* words that can be used to describe tone

<b>ambivalent</b>	having opposite feelings or attitudes at the same time
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<b>apologetic</b>	self-deprecating, humble, offering or expressing an apology or excuse
<b>arrogant</b>	giving oneself an undue degree of importance, haughty
<b>authoritative</b>	speaking in a definite and confident manner
<b>cautious</b>	careful, not wanting to take chances
<b>conciliatory</b>	willing to give in on some matters
<b>evasive</b>	intentionally vague or ambiguous, not giving a direct answer
<b>gloomy</b>	depressing, dismal
<b>grim</b>	gloomy, stern, forbidding, unnerving
<b>humble</b>	marked by meekness or modesty, not arrogant or prideful
<b>hypocritical</b>	professing beliefs, feelings, or virtues that one does not actually hold or possess

**Do not confuse a description of the topic with a description of the tone.**

An author might write about a sad topic, but present the information in a neutral, unemotional tone. Look at the following two paragraphs, both of which describe a sad event, a tornado's destruction of a small town. The purpose of each of them is to inform readers about what happened. Read the first passage, which is factual, and notice that it has a neutral, unemotional tone.

Yesterday a category 4 tornado swept through Pineville, a town with a population of 1,500. Winds in excess of 140 miles per hour lifted structures off their foundations. The entire town was destroyed and debris was scattered as far as 50 miles. Thirty people lost their lives and another one hundred were injured. Damage is estimated at 1 million dollars.

**Now read this description of the same event:**

Yesterday will go down in history as a horribly tragic nightmare for Pineville, a friendly little town of 1,500. A vicious category 4 tornado smashed the town with winds of more than 140 miles per hour and flung debris for more than 50 miles. Thirty unlucky citizens perished and an additional one hundred suffered injuries at the hands of the killer storm. And as if that were not enough, this monster of mother nature inflicted more than 1 million dollars' worth of damage on hapless Pineville.

The second passage uses emotional language, such as horribly tragic night mare, vicious, smashed, perished, killer, monster, inflicted, and hapless. The author's word choice indicates how sorry and sad the writer feels about what has happened, so the tone could be described as sympathetic, compassionate, or just emotional.

**Practice exercises**

**Practice A**

**Directions:** Read the following paragraph and look for the author's attitude and tone.

A. If the family is indeed the basic unit of civilized society, then one thing can be done: every mother and father must try to be a moral person in the traditional sense of the word. Every parent must practice and teach morality within the family. If they do, America won't go down the drain. If they don't, America will have lost its heart and soul.

1. The attitude of the author toward the family as a unit shows

- a. regret
- b. hysteria
- c. deep concern
- d. humor

2. The tone of the paragraph is

- a. humorous
- b. unpleasant
- c. sarcastic
- d. authoritative

B. The usual demands made by .....parents' love are: compliance, cooperation, conformity, being like somebody, doing one's best always, being a success, working hard, causing no trouble, glorifying the family name, making one's parents proud, etc. Of course, when all the conditions are added up they are just too much. Under conditions like these one can only fail.....After all, failure means that you didn't pay the

necessary price of admission to love. This, of course, leads to self-hatred whether admitted or not. And this self-hatred is the beginning of a sad and self-destructive life.

1. The author's attitude toward the usual demands made by parents is that
  - a. they are realistic demands
  - b. they are unrealistic demands
  - c. they are not serious
  - d. they are necessary

2. The author's tone is
  - a. angry
  - b. threatening
  - c. insulting
  - d. critical

C. It used to be that women were sexy if they made a good soufflé and men were sexy if they tossed a ball, ran a mile, and went out with the fellows. My father belonged to a men's club where he could play squash and talk on politics and high finance while we at home talked intimately. Now my mate and I talk politics together as I help place the apples in the crust. I want to fling them in. He wants to place them in a neat circle. It's a character difference, not a sexual one.

1. The author's attitude toward the sex roles of today is
  - a. traditional, the same as twenty-thirty years ago
  - b. fathers have it made
  - c. there are no real sex roles
  - d. women should do the cooking

2. The author's tone in the paragraph is mostly
  - a. disgust toward men
  - b. bitter toward fathers
  - c. proud of her awareness
  - d. detached; disinterested

D. I tell my daughters that they can be pilots as well as stewardesses, doctors as well as nurses. I don't want them to limit their goals just because they are female. There has to be plenty to reach for.

1. The attitude of the speaker toward women is
  - a. fearful
  - b. sympathetic
  - c. idealistic
  - d. proud

2. The tone of the statement is
  - a. complaining
  - b. hostile
  - c. sincere
  - d. foolish

#### 4. Writer's Mood

Mood is a state of mind or feeling that a work of literature creates for readers at a particular time (Wiener & Bazerman, 1988, p.214). **Mood** is a broader term than **tone**, which refers specifically to the attitude of the speaker, or narrator. It also differs from **atmosphere**, which is concerned mainly with the physical qualities that contribute to a mood such as time, place, and weather. Both tone and style set the mood, which can be happy or sad, positive or negative, calm or excited, or at times just neutral.

The mood can suggest a specific emotion, such as excitement or fear. Mood can also suggest the quality of a setting, such as sombre or calm. In a poem, word choice, line length, rhythm, and other elements contribute to its mood. Descriptive language and figures of speech also help to establish the mood. Often writers create a mood so that they can make you respond in a certain way.

#### 5. Writer's Point of View

A writer's **point of view** refers to his or her position on an issue or, in other words, the author's opinion, attitude or belief regarding an issue. A point of view is the standpoint from which a story is told (Elder, 2004, p.212). In a story with first-person point of view the narrator is a character in the story and uses the words **I** and **me** to tell the story. The reader sees everything through that character's eyes.

In a story with **third-person omniscient, or all-knowing, point of view**, the narrator is not a character in the story but someone who stands outside the story and comments on the action. He or she knows everything about the characters and the events that go on-including the thoughts,

feelings and observations of the characters and may reveal details that the characters themselves could not reveal. In a story with a **third-person limited point of view**, the narrator is outside the story and reveals the thoughts, feelings and observations of only one character, referring to that character as “he” or “she”

However, a concern here is for the way a writer’s own interests and beliefs influence the writing we read. Sometimes an author’s point of view forces him or her to *slant* the writing. In other words, the writers have a bias. Slanted writing leans toward one way of looking at a problem and leaves out ideas that might disagree. We need to be aware of the bias. We must figure it out by looking at the information they present and leave out and the way they present that information. Sometimes authors take a neutral tone, an unbiased position and present both sides of the issue objectively. For example, various writers would have different points of view on environmental issues, health issues, political issues, social issues, and so forth. If you read carefully and then think about what you have read, you should be able to figure out the author’s point of view. Authors often *tell* the reader what their position is. And the author’s point of view is often the main idea. After you have read a selection, determine the author’s point of view by asking yourself. *What is the author’s position or belief regarding the issue?*

These techniques often blend together in any sample of writing. Style and tone are not often possible to separate, and they both clearly relate to purpose and point of view. Also, the writer’s style often creates a mood.

Furthermore, an author's technique often yields many results. Writing may be both humorous and ironic. An author may wish to give information in order to persuade you to do something, and in so doing he or she may write in a style that is very emotional.

The point in seeing a writer's technique is to help you notice that *what* an author says relates to *how* the author feels about it.

### Practice B

*The Writer's Technique:* Read the following statements. In the blank space write the letter of the remark that answers the questions. You may use the same letter more than once. You may use more than one letter for each answer.

- a. Magazine editors frequently complain to us about the unsuitability of many manuscripts submitted to them. Not only are the manuscripts unsuitable, but no postage is sent for their return. In their own interests, writers and others are advised *to enclose postage for the return of unsuitable material.*
- b. A mother bird sat on her egg. The egg jumped. "Oh, oh!" said the mother bird. "My baby will be here! He will want to eat. I must get something for my baby to eat!" she said. "I will be back!" So away she went.
- c. Try a little *peripate* - a little strolling – with a friend in Greece this spring. Beaches are warm; villages, scenic at Greek Easter; temples and tavernas, open to the air. You can swim, sail in warm crystal – blue waters, even island-hop.
- d. The diseases brought about by pollution can be conquered. The waters of our lakes and rivers can be clean again, our land fertile, and air fragrant. All this lies within our grasp.
- e. The black community and black women especially must begin raising questions about the kind of society we wish to see established.
- f. Shall we sit by and watch the cancer of poverty destroy our young? Shall we watch babies starving, young children with swollen bellies full of air, families by the thousands burying their newborn in unnamed graves? Is this America the beautiful?

- g. If you visit an American city, you will find it very pretty. Just two things of which you must beware: Don't drink the water and don't breathe the air.
- h. More women than men own stock; 51 percent of all shareholders are women.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Which statement is written in a highly emotional style?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Which statement is written in a humorous tone?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Which statement presents an ironic tone?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Which statement is designed to persuade you to believe something?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Which statement is written from the point of view of a speaker for women's liberation?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Which statement is written in a style suited for people who are writers?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Which statement tries to force you to take some action?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Which statement sets a mood of rest and pleasure?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Which statement is designed to give information?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Which statement is written in a style suited for children under exit?

### Practice C

Read the following opening sentences of short stories. Then complete the statement that follows each with the best answer.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. "The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could, but when he ventured upon insult I vowed revenge." (Edgar Allan Poe)  
The tone of the person speaking is
  - a. matter of fact
  - b. ironic
  - c. one of annoyance
  - d. humorous and silly
  - e. sad
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. "One view called me to another; one hill top to its fellow, half across the county, and since I could answer at no more trouble than the snapping forward of a lever, I let the country flow under my wheels." (Rudyard Kipling)  
This opening sentence sets a mood of
  - a. quiet peacefulness
  - b. hurried discovery
  - c. uncertain fear
  - d. friendliness
  - e. disappointment
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. "In the Bureau of ... but it might be better not to mention the Bureau by its precise name. There is nothing more touchy than all these bureaus, regiments, and government offices, and in fact any sort of official body." (Nikolai Gogol)

The point of view of the teller of this story is that of a person who

- a. is afraid of getting officials upset
- b. is an outspoken enemy of the government
- c. is an army officer
- d. knows no fear
- e. is a criminal

- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. "If I was sitting in the High Court in Washington," said Simple, "where they do not give out no sentences for crimes, but where they give out promulgations, I would promulgate. Up them long white steps behind them tall white pillars in the great big marble hall with the eagle of the U.S.A., where at I would bang my gavel and promulgate." (Langston Hughes)

Simple speaks in the style of someone who

- a. knows a great deal
- b. is very powerful
- c. speaks a foreign language
- d. is trying to sound like he knows more than he actually does
- e. is very old

#### Practice D

**Style:** Read the following sentences about shoes and doors.

Then answer the questions after them.

- a. One, two, button my shoe;  
Three, Four, shut the door.
  - b. After tying my shoelaces, I went out the door and locked it firmly.
  - c. In the early years the child still has difficulties with basic tasks like opening and shutting doors; the child cannot even begin to do such delicate tasks as putting on shoes and tying them.
  - d. I heard a noise. I was startled. I jumped out of bed, nearly tripping on the shoes I had left in the middle of the floor. I went downstairs to check the front door. It was swinging wide open. I slammed it shut and wondered what to do next.
  - e. It was an old pair of shoes, the high buttoned kind, the kind my grandmother used to wear. She was a proud woman who always chose her clothes carefully. And she kept many secrets, too. Often in the middle of the day I would see her closing the door to her sewing room and staying their for hours.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Which version sounds as if it comes from a mystery story?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Which version is from a children's nursery rhyme?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Which version sounds as if it is spoken by a person who is determined?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Which version sounds as if it is the beginning of a personal memory?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Which version sounds as if it comes from an article on child development?

## Techniques that twist the truth - Propaganda techniques.

In this topic you are going to be reading about advertising and propaganda techniques. We are all aware of these techniques, but nevertheless we sometimes become victims of them. As a critical reader, you have to be able to judge unfair writing. Sometimes a piece of writing will not use truthful methods if its purpose is to persuade you to have a certain opinion about a subject. Propaganda is defined as *any systematic, widespread, deliberate indoctrination* (the act of causing one to be impressed and eventually filled with some view) *or plan for indoctrination*. The term *propaganda* connotes deception or distortion. In other words, people who use propaganda are trying to influence others by using deceptive methods. Propaganda is often developed by the use of unfair writing and logic. Any information that leaves out or alters facts in order to press a special point of view is called biased, prejudiced or slanted. In other words, bias refers to *a mental leaning, a partiality, a prejudice or a slanting of something*.

Propaganda is information and ideas that are used to persuade people to think a certain way about a person, a cause, or an institution. Propagandists try to get a person to do what they want, especially in voting or in buying products. Often they distort the facts or make statements that are not completely true.

From the definitions, you can see that people interested in propagandizing have a certain bias. They use propaganda techniques to distort information and to indoctrinate people to their view or bias.

Since propaganda is used to change or convert people to a particular view, advertisers use propaganda techniques to convince you to buy a product, or at least to make the product so well known that people will buy it without thinking. But propaganda is also used by parents, teachers, newspapers, magazines, the government, the church-by practically everyone and every group. We are hit by propaganda in one form or another every day in all media from radio to billboards.

Propaganda itself is not bad, although it is often misused and our own ignorance about propaganda techniques get us into trouble sometimes. Propaganda is often used for “good” purposes. It is used to raise money for good causes, such as campaigns to fight cancer, multiple sclerosis, alcoholism, and other diseases. It is also used to develop healthy, positive attitudes toward other people’s problems and needs.

However, clever propagandists know that most people are not critical listeners, readers, or thinkers. They use these human weaknesses to get people to react with their emotions rather than with their minds. Reading beyond the word requires an understanding of some common propaganda techniques. As propaganda techniques reflect flawed reasoning, a non-thinking, non-critical reader is likely not to notice and, consequently, to be taken in by the author.

### **Types of propaganda techniques & Exemplifications**

Some of the most common propaganda techniques you need to know if you are to critically detect how propagandists try to use you are: (Rubin, 1980, pp.239 – 241)

1. **Name Calling** – This technique uses bad words or untruthful statements about a person, idea, or thing that have bad or negative connotations or meanings by using labels widely disapproved of such as “fink”, “anarchist”, “square”, “warmonger”, “communist”, “racist”, “commie”, “bleeding heart”, “right-winger”, “geek”, “airhead”, “druggie”, “extremist,” “Red”, “miser”, “reactionary”, “radical”, “stooge”, “pig-headed”, “sexist”, “fascist”, “hippie”, all have negative feelings behind them to many people.

**Example:**

Senator Smithers is soft when it comes to dealing with the Vietnam draft dodgers. In fact, if elected, he will probably allow those hippie deserters who ran from their duty and supported the Red cause to return home with a brass – band parade.

The implication here is that if you vote for senator Smithers, you will be voting for someone who is anti – American in some respects. No facts are presented, but Smithers’ name is being linked by the name-calling technique to draft dodgers, hippies, and Reds. If this sort of thing is said often enough, Smithers’ name will soon be connected to those generally unpopular groups whether there is any real connection or not.

2. **Glittering Compliments / Glittering Generalities** – seeking acceptance of ideas by using widely admired labels, very positive, good, wonderful words or things that suggest shining ideals about a person, thing / or idea so that only general statements appear. This technique is used to win you over by using words or phrases that stand for good things and are acceptable to most people without question. “motherhood”,

“success”, “justice”, “truth”, “honor”, “duty”, “our founding fathers”, “America”, “honesty”, “faith in God”, “brave young soldiers”, “freedom”, “Christian”, “red-blooded”, “democratic”, “businesslike”. Words and phrases such as these are overused. They are usually vague, and therefore, meaningless.

What does this statement really say?

**Example:**

And so I say to you, my fellow Americans, that we have right on our side. Our faith in God and the wisdom of our founding fathers will carry us through these troubled times.

The words here “glitter” with nice sounds, but their sparkle is not real because the meaning is empty. Yet not many people want to argue with “right on our side” (but right about what?), or “faith in God” (Whose God?), or wisdom of our founding fathers” (who are they and what wisdom is meant? Our founding fathers were rebels!).

**Example:**

Every driver loves this stunning, efficient, and completely safe automobile. Add a bit of sunshine to your life – take a ride in a glamorous, high-fashion car.

3. **Bandwagon** – seeking acceptance through appealing to pluralities, claiming that everyone is doing the same thing (or thinking in the same way) and that you should do it too. This technique is based on the idea that everybody likes to be on the winning side.

**Example:**

“Most people prefer **Dazzles**. They know what’s good! Do you?” In the Bandwagon approach you “go along “because everyone else does.

**Example:**

Every farmer, every hard – working city resident knows the dangers of the welfare system.

4. **Card Stacking or stacking the card** - distortion or twisting – seeking acceptance by presenting or building only half-truths

or part – truths of a person or thing rather than telling the whole truth or all the facts, propagandists sometimes pick only what sounds good or bad and use (twist) part of the facts in the way that best fits the purpose. Only favorable facts are presented, whereas anything unfavorable is deliberately omitted, or vice versa.

**Example:**

When the United States discovers that a Russian submarine is in American waters spying on us, the government gives press releases that loudly protest such activities. Yet when an American submarine is caught in Russian waters on a spying mission, little is said, or the government puts out news releases explaining why we need to spy, or claiming that it was all an accident. Distortion or twisting often occurs in movie, play, or book reviews. A movie critic might write a review that says, "What could have been the best movie of the year turns out to be a bomb." The movie advertiser then might select only what sounds good for advertising purposes and say, "Critic says," "...the best movie of the year," leaving out the negative parts of the statement.

**Example:**

There is nothing wrong with drinking before driving. Not one person at our party was hurt on the way home and believe me, not too many people there were sober!

5. **Transfer or Association** – The general idea of transfer is to use a picture, name, or sign (symbol) of someone or something famous to make people think that they agree with the particular person, idea, or thing, i.e. to suggest that a noted symbol, respected source of authority, prestige, or reverence such as the home, the Constitution, the flag, the Church, or an anthem, applies to an unrelated situation in such a way as to make it appear that they approve the proposal.

**Example:**

In an advertisement, it is stated, "Our forefathers ate hearty breakfasts. Our country is built on strength. Our forefathers would want you

to be strong. Eat Product X for strength. Product X will provide you a hearty breakfast.”

“Let’s fly the flag so that we will be a united people dedicated to certain causes.” The prestige of a religion might also be used for transfer.

**Example:**

Why have the beasts of the jungle suddenly become so popular with today’s car buyer? Why do we want a wildcat under our hood and a tiger in our tank? Propagandists know that symbols such as these stir up our emotions and stimulate exciting mental pictures of raw, naked fury when we press the accelerator. So, by using this Transfer device, the propagandist uses the cat’s qualities of sleekness, power, and speed to sell us the latest set of wheels.

The label “approved for the U.S. Olympic team” has been very successful in selling everything from thermal underwear to bathing suits. Most people have great respect and admiration for Olympic athletes. When they see that a product is considered good enough for the Olympic team, most people buy. The non – commercial image of the Olympics also helps sell the product by leading people to believe that the price must therefore be absolutely fair. Thus, by means of the Transfer device; the respect which people have for Olympic teams is transferred to the product for sale.

6. **Plain Folks** (“I’m just like you.”) Using talk, dress, or customs to show that the person speaking or writing is the same as everyone else. The author presents himself or herself as being just like the readers (rather than being an authority who is superior to them), and suggests that because they are alike (have similar values), readers should automatically accept the argument just as the author has.

**Example:**

A presidential candidate is photographed milking a cow, kissing babies, wearing work clothes, and so on.

7. **Testimonial (endorsement)** – using a person’s statement or a famous person who endorses the author’s viewpoint, cause, or product in order to build confidence in a product by showing or creating a feeling of how good a person, an event, a product or

an idea is. The famous person, however, may have no particular knowledge or direct experience with what he or she is endorsing. In some cases, commercial products are promoted by persons who never use the products.

For example; in T.V. commercials actors, athletes, and other famous personalities are used to endorse a product

8. **Begging the question (circular reasoning)** –the author goes in a circle by restating the argument or conclusion instead of providing any relevant support.

**Consider the passage that follows:**

We Americans like to brag about progress, but in fact, life was better in the nineteenth century than in the twentieth. People were happier and more at peace with themselves. There just wasn't the same kind of anxiety and tension that there is today. If we had a chance, we would probably all get into a time machine and go backward in time, rather than forward. All of our highly touted technological progress has not brought us an increased measure of contentment.

The author of the paragraph believes that life was better a century ago. However, she, like our friend who suggests garlic for headaches, offers no justification for that opinion. In support of her claim, she might have noted that there was hardly any divorce a century ago or that aging parents lived with their children, not in a nursing home. But instead of offering the factual support that could justify her opinion, she repeats the same claim in different words. This tactic, called **circular reasoning**, or **begging the question**, would rightly make critical readers skeptical of the opinion being offered.

Circular reasoning also suggests that the author is overly biased toward her own position. Convinced of her own rightness, she cannot

imagine disagreement. Consequently, she considers justification unnecessary.

The author of the following paragraph has the same unfortunate tendency toward *excessive bias*. Convinced of his own rightness,

The government of the United States should regulate the number of hours a worker can complete on a night shift. It is a disgrace that this has not been done already. The United States is one of only six industrialized countries that does not regulate night shift hours. This lack of regulation is a dangerous and costly oversight.

It is easy to determine the opinion expressed in this paragraph:

The United States government should regulate night shift hours. What's not so easy to determine is why the author takes this position. Most of the paragraph simply repeats the opening opinion, thereby offering another example of circular reasoning.

But imagine now that the author had recognized his lack of justification and revised the above paragraph to make it more convincing:

The government of the United States should regulate the number of hours a worker can complete on a night shift. According to studies completed by the National Commission on Sleep Disorders, the loss of sleep, whether voluntary or involuntary, is a dangerous and deadly threat. The commission concluded that literally millions of accidents are caused every year by drivers and workers trying to function normally on too little sleep. Yet another study by the Congressional Office of Technology pointed to the importance that changes in the sleep cycle play in human errors within the work place. Additional studies suggest that people are more likely to make errors of all kinds if they have not slept seven to eight hours within the last twenty-four hours. These studies strongly suggest that limits be placed on disturbances in the human sleep cycle. Although the government cannot determine how many hours employees sleep, it can and should place limits on the number of hours they spend on night shifts.

In this paragraph the author now anticipates and answers the question he rightly assumes his readers might pose: "Why should I accept

this opinion?" To justify his claim, he provides his readers with some studies on which he based his conclusion. Although critical readers might not immediately embrace the author's opinion as their own, they would certainly give it serious consideration.

To evaluate an author's opinions, ask yourself these questions:

1. Does the author make it clear that he or she is presenting an opinion rather than a fact?
2. What justification does the author provide?
3. Is the justification **relevant** or related to the opinion expressed?  
Or is it **irrelevant** and not related to the opinion expressed?

### Example

**Direction** each exercise opens with an opinion. Label the statements that follow *R* for relevant, *I* for irrelevant, or *C* for circular reasoning.

**EXAMPLE** Walking is an excellent form of exercise.

- a. Walkers run practically no risk of damaging muscles or tendons.\_\_\_\_\_
- b. Walking is a great way to get daily exercise.\_\_\_\_\_
- c. Walking burns calories and increases the heart rate.\_\_\_\_\_
- d. Those new to walking need to purchase a good pair of walking shoes.\_\_\_\_\_

### Explanation

Statements **a** and **c** all help justify the opening statement of opinion – that walking is an excellent form of exercise. Sentence **b** however simply restates the opening opinion in different words. Sentence **d** is irrelevant. It doesn't help prove that walking is an excellent form of exercise.

We can see the effect of slanted writing in the following statements.  
There is no point in working. The money just goes to the no good government and the cheating landlord. You break your back to make the boss rich.

Look, you do the best you can. Taxes are high and rent is impossible. But if you do not work, you give up your pride and the few comforts you have. Of course, the boss has to make a fair profit from your work; otherwise, you would not be hired. You just have to live on what is left over.

Every American should be proud to work and support the system. Your taxes go to making this country great. And by helping the landowners and the factory owners make money, you are strengthening the backbone of one nation. Hard work makes good Americans.

The first version is slanted against work by telling only part of the story and by name-calling – making it appear that everybody is out to take advantage of the poor worker. The third version slants the case in the opposite direction by “stacking the deck” in favor of those benefiting from the worker’s labor, by using only positive language, and by pressuring the reader to follow a group. Only the second version gives a balanced view, expressed truthfully.

#### Practice E

Read the following sentences. Write *T* before those sentences that use only truthful methods. Write *S* before those sentences that use slanted writing techniques.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. That sleazy crook has been ripping off this neighborhood for years.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. He was arrested three times on burglary charges, but he was never brought to trial because of lack of evidence.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. He hangs out with the worst crowd, so you can bet he is into something illegal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. He is a good guy. He has never done anything bad when he has been with me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. He is the most popular guy on the block; everyone likes him and he is always helping out his friends. How can you say he has done anything bad?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I don’t really know what this guy is like, but he has been very kind to me.

On the blank lines after each statement that follows, write a brief description of how the statement slants the truth.

1. Anybody who voted for that candidate is just a bigot who would probably be glad if a nuclear war started.

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2. Our won senator enjoys the coastline and visits it weekly for rest and relaxation. How could anyone urge the construction of a solid mile of high-rise apartment houses right at the beach?

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3. I don't earn very much and we don't have too much money in the bank, but simple folk like us must support the local clubhouse with all the cash we can.

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4. Because 50 percent of all deaths involving college students are violent, we know that college students are reckless and have no regard for their own safety.

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5. Mickey Juanez of the Chicago Hawks says, "I drink *Bebida* beer after all my rough games." Everyone is drinking *Bebida* beer. Isn't it time you tried it?

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### Practice F

Name the propaganda technique used in each statement.

1. Don't be the last one to get this fabulous product.

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2. A famous former judge says, "I think that you'll like this car. I drive one, too."

---

3. Would you trust someone who is such a spendthrift?

---

4. This lovely set of furniture can be installed in your home as soon as you agree to the purchase. For a very small deposit and a monthly payment of twenty dollars, it's a steal.

---

5. "Mommy, you have to let me go, all the mothers are letting their children go."

---

6. In the name of justice, do what every good American should: vote for John S.

---

7. A famous football player says, "This airline is my kind of airline."

---

8. Howdy, everyone. I'm delighted to be able to spend this terrific summer day with you in your lovely town. I grew up in a town just like this. Why we even had the same general store in my town. I knew I was doing the right thing coming here to meet you folks. Don't forget to vote for me in two weeks. You're my kind of people.

---

9. This nutritious, delicious candy bar is more than a candy bar, it's a meal in itself. Together with a glass of milk you'll get all the calcium, iron, and calories you need for almost a day.

---

10. The Church is against violence. Vote for this bill to do away with violence.

---

11. Why that's as American as apple pie. You have to vote for it.

---

12. Would you really back something that was proposed by a reactionary?

---

13. As a poor country boy, I know what it's like to be without. You can trust me with your money. I won't squander it.

---

14. The Constitution guarantees our rights. Vote for this bill to continue what the Constitution guarantees.

---

15. We have to vote for her because she is so businesslike and American.

---

## Practice G

Directions: Read the following paragraphs. Circle the letter of the correct type of propaganda.

1. Vote for Rick Smick. He is a very wonderful man. Rick has no bad habits. He is our man.
  - a. Glittering Compliments
  - b. Name-Calling
  - c. Bandwagon
  - d. Transfer or Association
  
2. Do not vote for Sam Sunker for mayor. He did not try to lower the taxes. Sam did not work to fix the streets and roads. He missed a lot of the meetings and did not vote for any good things for our city. We do not need four more years of Sam Sunker. Do not vote for him.
  - a. Glittering Compliments
  - b. Card Stacking
  - c. Bandwagon
  - d. Transfer or Association
  
3. Come to the store and buy these great new shoes. Hurry! We are almost out of them. Every man, woman, and child in towns is rushing to get into the store for our great new shoes!
  - a. Transfer or Association
  - b. Card Stacking
  - c. Bandwagon
  - d. None of the above
  
4. Today, we have Slugger Jones with us. He is the greatest baseball player alive today. He is going to talk to you about buying this super, new baseball bat. We know that you will buy it after Slugger tells you about it.
  - a. Card Stacking
  - b. Testimonial
  - c. Bandwagon
  - d. Plain Folks
  
5. Use our medicated soap. All the doctors and hospitals in two cities do.
  - a. Transfer or Association
  - b. Card Stacking
  - c. Testimonial
  - d. None of the above

6. Ken Roberts is running for the United States Senate. He is one of us. Ken was raised right here in this town. Ken is plain and “down to earth.” He’s like a brother to all of us. Give him your vote!
  - a. Plain Folks
  - b. Card Stacking
  - c. Glittering Compliments
  - d. Bandwagon
  
7. James Abernathy is the worst person who has ever wanted to be our mayor. He has no money. He has no friends. In fact, he lost all his friends. Abernathy is not an honest person. For those and other reasons, do not vote for James Abernathy.
  - a. Plain Folks
  - b. Bandwagon
  - c. Transfer or Association
  - d. Name-Calling
  
8. Buy our fresh, wonderful bread. It is so-o-o-o good! You will find it in every restaurant in towns and in all the school and hospital dining rooms, also. Meals are not complete without *Morning Rise Bread*.
  - a. Transfer or Association
  - b. Name-Calling
  - c. Plain Folks
  - d. Glittering Compliments
  
9. This kitchen knife was autographed by a lady, Betty Hoyle, who is world famous for her cooking. You can get her autographed picture if you buy a knife. She says it’s the best knife made.
  - a. Transfer or Association
  - b. Testimonial
  - c. Card Stacking
  - d. Plain Folks
  
10. The best football players in the pros and in the major colleges use our thick, long-lasting athletic socks. Why don’t you?
  - a. Transfer or Association
  - b. Card Stacking
  - c. Plain Folks
  - d. All of the above (a-c)
  
11. Gerald Adams believes that the people in Mount Wilson need to have cable television put into the city. No one should listen to Mr. Adams. Mr. Adams is a rude man and has never been kind to the people who come into his television shop. Mr. Adams was also in jail for one day when he sped through a red light three years ago. Mr. Adams is not the kind of person that

decent people should listen to. Some people think he is dishonest, also.

- a. Name-Calling
- b. Testimonial
- c. Bandwagon
- d. Glittering Compliments

12. Maxine Jackson is a world-famous expert on growing house plants. She will be in our nursery on Saturday, June 13, to show you why our house plants are the best ones sold in town. Attend the meeting and see Maxine as she gives hints on how to grow house plants. She will also autograph her picture for you if you buy \$5.00 worth or more of our plants.

- a. Name-Calling
- b. Bandwagon
- c. Transfer or Association
- d. Testimonial

13. Every person in this town is going to vote for Raymond Black. He is the best man for the office. Everyone knows that he is the best person. Since everyone else is going to vote for him, would you want to be left out? Vote Black!

- a. Plain Folks
- b. Transfer or Association
- c. Glittering Compliments
- d. Bandwagon

14. Donald Jolley is a wonderful man and should be elected as our next school board resident. The way he dresses is wonderful. Mr. Jolley also stands so straight and tall. Mr. Jolley has a wonderful wife and family. There is not a better person in this town than Donald Jolley. Please give him your vote.

- a. Bandwagon
- b. Glittering Compliments
- c. Transfer
- d. Card Stacking

15. The next time you go walking in the rain, look to see the kind of raincoat that everyone is wearing. Everyone is wearing the Duckback Super Raincoat. We have trouble keeping them in the store because everyone is rushing to buy them. Don't be wet in the rain. Come in today and buy one. All of your friends and neighbors have them. Do you want to be different?

- a. Card Stacking
- b. Transfer

- c. Glittering Compliments
- d. Bandwagon

16. Come to us to buy your car. We give excellent service at the White Cross Used Car Company. All of the lawyers, doctors, and ministers in town buy our used cars. Teachers also come to us when they need a good car. And, guess where the school and church people come to buy a van or bus? You're right, to us! Come see us, won't you" White Cross Used Car Company.

- a. Bandwagon
- b. Transfer or Association
- c. Card Stacking
- d. Glittering Compliments

### Practice H

**Directions:** In the spaces in front of each statement below, write the name of the propaganda technique you think is being used.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Those cowards who were afraid to fight for our country should be forced to live in a communist country. They'd soon see how they were duped by those Red leftists.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Right-thinking persons know that Harry Hairy has devoted his long and productive political career to fighting criminal elements in this state. He stands against the sins of organized crime.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. We urge you to vote against the school-bond issue. It will only fill the pockets of the rich landowners at the expense of the poor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The brave young officer has shown his dedication and devotion to duty and has helped keep this country strong and moral. He's a model for this wonderful country's young people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Notwithstanding libelous statements and false information appearing in a few publications, the National Rifle Association of America is composed of loyal, law-abiding American citizens. Anyone who has an affection for guns and shooting, and anyone who believes in the right to keep and bear arms, belongs in the NRA, because *united we stand*.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. You had better think twice about taking the Topsall correspondence course in interior decorating. In Chicago, a correspondence school took in more than \$3 million a year from students enrolled in its law course. But not one graduate was able to qualify for the bar exam. A New York nurses' training school collected \$500 tuition fees for a course in nurse's aid, but

not one graduate of the course could obtain a job in any New York hospital. A St. Louis school advertised an aircraft mechanics course that promised high pay and jobs at a time when the airlines were not hiring, but laying off. So think twice about signing up for a correspondence course that may sound too good to be true.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Smoker's cough may be a sign of advanced emphysema. The end can be strangulation: a type of drowning in trapped mucus. In addition to cancer-causing substances, inhaled cigarette smoke contains two volatile gases – nitrogen dioxide and hydrogen cyanide-which are so destructive that they were primary ingredients for poison gases used in World War I.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. But most of what we saw in 2500 miles of crisscrossing the state of Iowa was rolling prairie under its green-and –gold blanket of tasseling corn... Heading home, we realized that our Iowa pilgrimage had renewed our respect for the strength and solidity, the beauty and bounty of the American Midwest.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. If Rudnick is not a Communist, then he's certainly a Fascist. His subversive activities have supported the takeover of dictators in at least three Latin American countries. The rabble-rousing speech he gave last May created a riot during which twenty-three people were injured. We must rid ourselves of this leftist reactionary.

### Practice I

Read each of the following questions and the three sentences below it. Choose the sentence you think best answers the question.

1. Which sentence expresses an opinion?
  - a. Rain has fallen for six days in a row this week
  - b. This is the worst rainfall in fifteen years.
  - c. Fifteen years ago it rained for five days in a row.
2. Which statement provides police with facts they can use to identify a robber?
  - a. He was almost as tall as my brother Sam.
  - b. He waved a gun around as if he really meant business.
  - c. He was about six feet tall and had red hair, freckles, and blue eyes.
3. Which sentence suggests that Roy works harder than Larry?
  - a. Larry is easily distracted, but Roy sticks with the job.
  - b. Larry and Roy work well on their projects.
  - c. Larry starts a project, but Roy usually has to help him get started.

4. Which statement is the most reliable basis on which to try a new product?
  - a. New-Face is now offered at the lowest price in town.
  - b. New-Face will clear up acne, warts, moles, and burns.
  - c. New-Face was tested by doctors in leading hospitals in this country.
  
5. Which sentence suggests wasted time?
  - a. Ted is very clever at thinking of new designs for model cars.
  - b. Ted continually thinks of different designs for model planes.
  - c. Ted spends too much time day dreaming about building model cars.
  
6. Which statement gives the most reliable recommendation of a TV program?
  - a. Three-fourths of the class enjoyed the program last week.
  - b. My sister's friend heard from a friend of hers that it was good.
  - c. I didn't see it, but the television guide listed the program.
  
7. In which sentence does a person express his or her opinion?
  - a. "This is the second time I have seen the movie," remarked Barb.
  - b. Terry said, "I didn't like the movie at all."
  - c. "I'll see the movie this Saturday night," stated Bob.
  
8. Which sentence tells a fact about some pottery found by a scientist?
  - a. The marks on this vase mean that it is three thousand years old.
  - b. A skilled craftsman probably made this piece.
  - c. This was not the most exciting pottery found at the site.

## Test

### Writer's Purpose

For better understanding of a paragraph, it is helpful for the reader to know what the author is trying to accomplish. The author's purpose may be

- a. to inform,
- b. to entertain,
- c. to persuade,
- d. to share an experience.

Read each paragraph below carefully and decide what the author's main purpose was in writing it. Then on the line before each paragraph write the letter a, b, c, or d.

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind." As he spoke these words, Neil Armstrong became the first man to set foot on the moon. The historic date was July 20, 1969. Almost as amazing was the fact that the whole world was watching the event on TV.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. "When I was your age, my family lived near the Mississippi River. Every afternoon, on the way home from school, I'd stop and watch all that water rolling by on its way southward, and I'd wonder about all the other people who must have done the same thing. I could never feel lonely because I knew that somewhere along its hundreds of miles of banks there was someone else looking at the river and perhaps wondering about me."

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Captain Brave of the Cosmic Patrol raced to the time machine and set the dial for Egypt, 3000 B.C. He had to find the builder of the dreaded "Pharaoh's Man-trap" and learn its secret. If he didn't learn the secret, courageous Lieutenant Daring would remain trapped inside forever. Captain Brave wondered, "Is it still possible that I can save my lifelong friend?" Then, just moments later the captain stepped out into the shadows of the Pyramids. His work could begin!

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. Lucy looked up from her book. The whole class was laughing at something. She turned around and asked Maureen what was so funny. Maureen tried to explain, but she couldn't stop giggling. Everyone was looking at Lucy's feet. Lucy glanced down at her feet and saw a red shoe on one foot and a brown shoe on the other foot.

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. Every student at Smithfield Junior High School has an opinion about what needs to be done to make this a better school. When student council elections are held next week, every student should express his opinion by voting for a candidate with the same views. Remember that it takes much less effort to mark your ballot than it does to grumble throughout the rest of the school year. Make your mark in the world-vote!

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. Norway is a beautiful country in northern Europe. Mountains cover 75 percent of the country, but the most famous feature of the landscape is the fiord. Hundreds of these narrow bays indent the coast of Norway, making it resemble the teeth of a comb. Many fiords are so deep that ocean steamers can travel far inland on them. Waterfalls add beauty to the sheer rock walls of some Norwegian fiords.

## Test

### Writer's Tone

Often an author's purpose is simply to express his/her own feelings about a subject. To do this, he/she may write in a *fanciful*, *humorous*, or *serious tone*. You must be able to recognize the author's tone when you read, or you may miss part of his meaning.

Read each of the following paragraphs and identify the author's tone. Then write *fanciful*, *humorous*, or *serious* on the line provided.

1. The safety pin was invented in 1846. Now, you are probably asking, what's the point of knowing that? I say the safety pin can hold its own among the great inventions of mankind. People of all ages make use of the safety pin. Take just one example-mothers all over the country confidently sending their children off to school knowing that the milk money is safely pinned inside their pockets. I'm not claiming that the safety pin is the most famous of man's inventions. My point is that it deserves more credit than it gets.  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. There is just too much water on the face of the earth, and it seems that man is trying to spoil as much of it as possible. The oceans may be used as a source of water supply for humans in the future, but right now man must rely on fresh water supplies. The rivers and lakes must be kept free from pollution. Factories and cities should be planned and built so that they do not pollute the very sources from which they must draw water.  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. My aunt makes lemonade the strangest way. Now you all know the way people usually make lemonade: they open an envelope of artificial flavoring, coloring, and sweetener and add it to water. Well, my aunt squeezes juice from real lemons and even adds real sugar to the juice. What some people won't do!  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. In this age of automation and mechanical marvels, my car would be the one to develop a mind of its own! I take the family to a drive-in movie. We all dislike the picture, but my car likes it. There we sit until the movie is over. Only then will the car start. I rent parking space in a new underground garage. The car doesn't like it and stops in the driveway every time. I plead with it. I kick the tires and pound the hood. I tell it exhaust fumes are piped in from the streets so cars will feel at home. Nothing!  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. After a long migratory flight, it would seem that birds would be completely exhausted. Actually this is not so. If they have not met with any severe storms along the route, the birds recover quickly. After a few hours of resting and feeding, the birds appear to be completely refreshed. Credit for this seems to belong to a bird's ability to soar and glide with the wind currents for long periods of time, making the trip less tiring.
- 

6. The Painter

A roving painter passed this way last night.  
His works are hanging now within my sight.  
Though famous o'er the world, there is no cost:  
All own the masterpieces of Jack Frost.

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## Test

### Writer's Qualification / Reliability of Writer.

Much of the information we receive comes from other people rather than from our personal experience. In order to make a sound judgment about the reliability of information we read, we must know whether the author is qualified to write about the subject. We should know whether his training and experience make him an authority on the subject. We should also note whether he is presently in a position to know the most recent facts.

Read each statement below and then put a check on the line in front of the name of the individual who would seem to be the best authority.

1. "Hazardous Journey" is the best TV show on the air.  
 a. Noah Braverman, star of "Hazardous Journey"  
 b. Lewis Inkhorn, a TV critic  
 c. Brad Benson, a twelve-year-old boy
2. To eliminate jealousy, all professional pitchers should receive the same salary.  
 a. Ed Hill, a Las Vegas Lions rookie  
 b. Joe Green, a retired coach  
 c. Hal Kenton, a sports columnist
3. The site for the new high school is the best location for a school in the area.  
 a. Mr. White, owner of a lot located next to the new site  
 b. Mr. Jensen, a science teacher in the present school  
 c. Mr. Engle, designer of the new school building
4. Jane Austen was one of the most important novelists of the nineteenth century.  
 a. Mrs. Rosalind Quill, a high-school English teacher  
 b. Stephanie March, a junior who read *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen  
 c. Austen Perry, a magazine writer and distant relative of Jane Austen
5. The president's three-week campaign was a complete success.  
 a. Judy Fanshaw, a campaign worker  
 b. Herbert Diamond, a respected TV news analyst  
 c. Bob Winkel, the campaign organizer

6. This method of stretching yeast dough is the secret of the best way to make pizza.
- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Luigi Donatelli, an Italian chef  
 \_\_\_\_\_ b. Mrs. Brown, who collects recipes  
 \_\_\_\_\_ c. Skip Best, who loves pizza
7. The corn should be planted as early as possible in May.
- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Mr. B. T. Franklin, the manager of the grocery store  
 \_\_\_\_\_ b. Dick Bowles, who spent the summer on his uncle's farm  
 \_\_\_\_\_ c. Omer Davis, a farmer with forty years of farming experience
8. The buffalo was one of the most important animals to the Great Plains Indians.
- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Ed Spotted Horse, student at Cheyenne High School  
 \_\_\_\_\_ b. Dr. A. R. Woodland, a professor of early American history  
 \_\_\_\_\_ c. Mr. Talbot, a social studies teacher and amateur zoologist

Each paragraph below describes the qualifications of a person.

Read each paragraph and the list that follows it and put a check on the line before each topic on which the person is qualified to write.

1. John B. Jones is an industrial arts teacher at a junior high school. He also flies radio controlled model airplanes as a hobby, and has been a member of the Model Fliers' Club for twelve years. Mr. Jones would be qualified to write\_\_\_\_\_ .
- \_\_\_\_\_ a. a biography of the Wright brothers  
 \_\_\_\_\_ b. an article telling how to build a model airplane  
 \_\_\_\_\_ c. a historical novel about the French and Indian War  
 \_\_\_\_\_ d. a newspaper column for weekend handyman projects  
 \_\_\_\_\_ e. a booklet on the history of the Model Fliers' Club  
 \_\_\_\_\_ f. a leaflet about special projects to make in industrial arts classes
2. Mary Conrad had been the head accountant at a large department store for twenty years. Each year she earns extra money by helping people with their income-tax returns. In 1968 she spent five weeks touring Europe for both business and pleasure. She planned the entire trip herself. Mrs. Conrad would be qualified to write\_\_\_\_\_ .
- \_\_\_\_\_ a. a newspaper article entitled "Your Income Tax and you"  
 \_\_\_\_\_ b. a speech on federal spending  
 \_\_\_\_\_ c. an outline of bookkeeping methods  
 \_\_\_\_\_ d. a series of books on how to tour European countries inexpensively  
 \_\_\_\_\_ e. a study comparing European and American business methods  
 \_\_\_\_\_ f. a mystery story set in a large department store

3. Dr. Dennis O'mara is head of the chemical research department at Multi-Plastics, Inc. Both his undergraduate and graduate work were done at Yale University. In his spare time he writes poetry and has won several awards for his poems. He recently won a national award for his latest poem. Dr. O'Mara would be qualified to write\_\_\_\_\_ .

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. a report in a technical journal about a new kind of plastic
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. a three-volume history of Ireland
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. a book of stories about Yale
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. a geological description of the Appalachian Mountains
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. a very detailed book about Edgar Allan Poe's short stories
- \_\_\_\_\_ f. a book of poetry

4. Sylvia Dawson is a senior at Sand Lake High School. She has excellent grades in English composition and creative writing. Sylvia's father has taken the family many places. Last year and the year before, Sylvia attended schools in Rome, Italy. She has also lived in California and Florida. Sylvia is qualified to write\_\_\_\_\_ .

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. a short story about a girl in Rome
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. a brief summary of Italian history as taught in Italian schools
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. a comprehensive comparison of the American and Italian school systems
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. a theme comparing the beaches of California, Florida, and Italy
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. a newspaper column on travel
- \_\_\_\_\_ f. a complete history of Italian social customs in the twentieth century

**Carefully read each paragraph. Then choose the best answer.**

Autumn in this area has been especially dry. If you go into the woods, remember the great danger of fires. If you can avoid it, do not even light a campfire. Be more careful than usual. Only you can prevent forest fires.

1. What was the writer's purpose in writing the paragraph above?
  - a. to entertain
  - b. to persuade
  - c. to share an experience
2. Which of the following people has the best qualifications for writing such a paragraph?
  - a. a Cub Scout leader
  - b. a biology teacher
  - c. a forest ranger

Geysers are hot springs that erupt from time to time, shooting up columns of steaming water. There are three places in the world where large

and notable groups of active geysers can be found. These places are Wyoming, Iceland, and New Zealand.

3. What was the author's purpose in writing the paragraph above?
  - a. to persuade
  - b. to entertain
  - c. to inform
4. Which of the following people has the best qualifications for writing such a paragraph?
  - a. a tourist
  - b. a geology teacher
  - c. a man who bottles mineral water

One of the things we enjoyed most about Europe was the peaceful little country inns. At one tiny village in Switzerland we were awakened on a clear, sunny morning by the faraway clanking of cowbells.

5. What was the author's purpose in writing the paragraph above?
  - a. to share an experience
  - b. to persuade
  - c. to inform
6. Which of the following people has the best qualifications for writing such a paragraph?
  - a. a young woman who read *Heide*
  - b. a person who has lived in Europe
  - c. a man who imports Swiss watches

Once upon a time, long ago, there was a fair land called Endella. Every June, when the bright days of summer had come once more, the king of Endella would send forth a proclamation inviting all the knights and ladies to a grand tournament.

7. Which of the following words could be used to describe the paragraph above?
  - a. fanciful
  - b. serious
  - c. humorous
8. What was the author's purpose in writing the paragraph above?
  - a. to share an experience
  - b. to persuade
  - c. to entertain

## Test

Editorials, advertisement, and book reviews are the kinds of writing in which you often find a mixture of fact and opinion. In the ( ) following each sentence below, write F for a factual statement, O for a statement of opinion.

### Advertisement

Soft as the sea mists of Ireland, Kiss of Killarney Hand Lotion is the very best thing you can use for your hands ( ). Many women's hands are rough, red and dry from washing dishes ( ). Nothing can be more harmful to your hands than harsh detergents ( ). The best way to fight detergent roughness is by smoothing a gentle green film of Kiss of Killarney on your hands several times a day ( ). Kiss of Killarney comes in plastic bottles or convenient squeeze tubes ( ). It is available at your local drugstore ( ).

### Letter to the Editor

That editorial you wrote on city planning was the stupidest thing that ever appeared in print! ( ) It was fifty lines long ( ). That was fifty lines too much ( ). You said, "Establishment of a city planning board is essential to the progress of this community ( ). Everybody knows that's just a lot of nonsense ( ). What is wrong with this community now is that it has had too much of your so-called progress ( ). Most of the other citizens of this town agree with me ( ). If you don't like this town the way it is, you ought to move out ( ). I've lived here fifty-eight years ( ). I guess I know better than you what's good for this town ( ).

## Book Review

“The Light in the Forest” is a novel by Conrad Richter ( ). It is one of the best books I have ever read ( ). The central character is True Son, a white boy who has been raised by the Indians ( ). When he was fifteen, all white prisoners were returned to their families, and True Son had to go and live with people he considered enemies ( ). The author has done an excellent job of making the reader feel True Son's anguish and tension very strongly ( ). The author also makes skillful use of symbolism in the story ( ). A new edition of the book was published in 1966 by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc ( ). It is illustrated by Warren Chappell ( ).

## Test

### A Fatal Accident

*Grocer:* I was in my shop weighing some sugar for a customer. I heard a loud screech of brakes followed by a thud and groans of pain just outside my shop. I rushed out and saw a middle-aged man lying in front of the motor-car. I am not good at recognizing cars, but my son who is a boy scout noted down the number of the car and quickly ran to the telephone.

*Postman:* I was waiting to cross the road to deliver a registered letter, to the Indian jeweler. I saw the victim of the accident lurch out of the bar. He had been drinking heavily. I could tell by his unsteady and swaying gait. He looked neither to the right nor to the left but stepped right in front of the car.

*Insurance Salesman:* I was standing outside the billiard saloon talking to a friend whom I had met casually. I did not actually witness the accident but I heard the screech of brakes. I recognized the car at once. It belonged to none other than Speedy, the notorious playboy. He has had quite a few accidents already to his credit or discredit. Only last week my cousin told me he smashed up a Jaguar racing car and seriously injured his latest girl friend Gloria, an air hostess. It is about time his driving license was suspended to save the public from its number one enemy. Yes, it is true that Speedy insulted me at the club two months ago.

*Housewife:* I was coming out of the Supermarket when the thing happened. Oh it was horrible, to see the man being flung into the air. I screamed and screamed and my groceries fell onto the floor. Do these people ever realize how innocent people are affected by their reckless deeds. I was so upset I fainted.

**Man:** I am sorry but I don't think I have anything useful to say on this matter. Yes, I do realize that I was quite close to the scene of the accident but the fact is, I am one of those who likes to mind his own business. I've never been a witness in my life and I do not want to get mixed up in this unpleasant business.

**Bartender:** I am terribly upset by all this. Mr. Giles was a regular customer of my bar. Came here every morning at eleven for his daily drink before strolling off to the club for his lunch. A very steady man you might call him. Never had more than one glass of beer. You can't get drunk on that I can assure you. Fine gentleman, paid cash each time he had a drink, unlike some nowadays who just keep running bills all year round. He left the bar at 11.20 as was his habit every day. Said he was going over to the post office to post some letters.

**Doctor:** I carried out a postmortem, death was due to shock and loss of blood. My examination revealed that the content of alcohol in the blood was negligible.

**Dr. Parker:** I was Tom Giles' doctor. He had a strong constitution but was sometimes subject to fainting. I often warned him not to cross the street with heavy traffic, but to use the pedestrian crossing.

### Questions

1. Give one example of a statement based on superficial observation, and therefore useless as evidence. What was the real explanation?
2. Pick out one sentence from the text to illustrate each of the following:
  - a) indifference to others.

- b) impartial and useful evidence
  - c) a conclusion based on useless evidence.
  - d) belief based on what someone else said.
  - e) evidence of personal dislike.
3. Who actually saw Mr. Giles being knocked down?
  4. What are the reliable and relevant facts of the accident?
  5. Using only reliable evidence, write a few sentences about the character, habits and health of Mr. Giles.

## Summing up

When you understand the differences between a fact and an opinion, you can begin to understand statements that **express a point of view**. Statements that can be directly proven or disproven with evidence are considered **facts**. **Opinions** cannot be proven or disproven. They express an attitude or feeling about people, places, events, situations, or ideas. The author can use facts as a basis for persuading the reader that the opinion is correct. Distinguishing between facts and opinions will help you to understand a selection. You will achieve a deeper level of comprehension in your reading.

When you read a passage about a controversial topic, reread it, identify the topic and the author's idea (point of view, position, or bias on the topic. Then ask yourself these seven questions).

1. What are the author's **assumptions** (things the author takes for granted and presents without proof)?
2. What **type of support or evidence** (facts, experts' opinions, research, observations, personal experiences, etc.) does the author present?
3. How **relevant** (directly related to the topic) is the support?
4. Is the author's idea **objective** (based on facts and other pertinent evidence)?
5. Is the author's idea **complete** (the author includes and addresses information that could weaken or refute his or her position)?
6. Based on all of the above, is the author's idea **valid** (logical)?
7. Based on all of the above, is the author's idea credible (believable)?

Your answers to these questions will enable you to critically evaluate an author's idea. The author's assumptions, types of support, relevance of support, objectivity, and completeness determine whether or not the argument has validity. A thoughtful reader will not accept illogical ideas because they have no credibility (are not convincing).

Review Test

Give the definitions of the followings:

Fact: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Opinion: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Writer's style \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Writer's tone \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Writer's mood \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Writer's point of view \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name some kinds of propaganda that you meet at school, at work, and at home.

## Test

### Special Pleading

"I wouldn't want to live where everyone had a mizzing, I admit, but I like my mizzing, and I don't intend to give it up. I suppose I wouldn't be too happy about living next door to one, either, and that could be why my next-door neighbours are complaining; nevertheless, I take good care of my mizzing and I don't see why they should complain."

The writer of the above admits that he thinks it's all right for him to do what he's doing, but it wouldn't be all right if someone else did it; he isn't willing to extend the same reasoning to other people which he applies to himself. This is called Special Pleading. It is often used when people what to condemn an action by others which he does himself.

Following are several situations. Decide who, if anyone, is using special pleading.

1. Bill: 'But, Dad, it isn't fair of you to let Mary use the car tonight. I asked you first  
Dad: "I'm sorry, but Mary has convinced me that this is an emergency. You seemed to think it was fair enough last Friday when I let you use the car after Mary had already asked for it."  
Bill: "But that was different. Something came up at the last minute and I had to have it."
1. Teacher: "Jerry, shut up! I'm sick of your constant interruptions"  
Jerry: "You really anger me. You're always complaining about something!"  
Teacher: "Jerry, that's no way to talk. You should always speak politely to other people."
2. Mr. Smith: "Parents should keep their teen-agers from driving. Teen-age drivers are bad drivers."  
Mr. Jones: "But you let your teen-agers drive your car."  
Mr. Smith: "Yes, but I've ridden with them often enough to know that they're safe drivers."
3. Mr. Black: "People without car insurance shouldn't be allowed to drive."  
Mr. White: "But you drive, and you don't have insurance."  
Mr. Black: "Yes, but I shouldn't be allowed to drive."
4. Jim: "Sure, it's O.K. for people to steal, so long as they don't steal from me."
6. Mike: "I don't want to go out with Linda. She's a blonde, and all blondes are stupid."
7. Mike: "I don't want to go out with Linda. She's a blonde, and all blondes are stupid."  
Ted: "Then how come you go out with Gail? She's a blonde."  
Mike: She's the exception.

## Test

### CASE STUDY

#### **A part of the diary of a Japanese business executive on a tour**

.....Upon arrival at this gorgeous hotel, I was disappointed with the attitude of a gentleman at the reception desk. Maybe I expected too much. But in Japan, I got used to a smiling face with a few friendly chats. The man who received me appeared polite but unfriendly. He just asked my name and did not say a word and pointed at the registration card. All what he said were "Here is your key. Have a nice day." Only two sentences. In my disappointment, I suspected that Japanese people are not liked in this country.

After washing up I felt so hungry and tried to locate an appropriate restaurant for me, but all information available were in English, a very fancy English which does not communicate well the actual image of each place. I made up my mind to see each restaurant myself. After looking around three restaurants, I decided to enter the Grill Room, but was politely refused by a waiter at the entrance who said it was about time to be closed.

I asked, "I am hungry. Is there any other restaurant opened?" "Sorry, I am afraid there is no place in this hotel." was his reply. Coming back to my room, I found that the room service was still available. I ordered some sandwiches and beer, and went to bed.

Question (1) Please itemize points to be improved about the service of this hotel, especially for a Japanese guest.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Question (2) IN GENERAL, what do you think are important service factors to satisfy Japanese guests staying in a hotel in this country.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

## Test

Below are 14 pairs of remarks that might be made by two different speakers about the same person. One remark in each pair suggests that the speaker likes or approves of the other person, while the other remark suggests dislike or disapproval. Underline the remark that you might make if you liked the person mentioned.

1. a) Caroline is a good conversationalist  
b) Caroline is a chatterbox
2. a) Mrs. Smith is interested in people  
b) Mrs. Smith is a busybody
3. a) Mr. Carr is a cheat  
b) Mr. Carr is a clever businessman
4. a) Mrs. Jones is self-confident  
b) Mrs. Jones is conceited
5. a) The coat you're wearing is very colorful  
b) Your coat is flashy
6. a) Sam is a coward  
b) Sam is very cautious.
7. a) You say such clever things  
b) You're very sarcastic
8. a) Joan is a mousy girl  
b) Joan is a quiet girl
9. a) Pat has a great imagination  
b) Pat is a liar
10. a) Connie works too much  
b) Connie is industrious
11. a) A chattering group of young people got on the bus  
b) A mob of noisy teenagers got on the bus
12. a) Your brother is mean  
b) your brother is careful with his money
13. a) Hal enjoyed the party a lot.  
b) Hal made a fool of himself
14. a) You are pig-headed  
b) You never change your mind

## Test

The paragraphs below represent the opinions of two different people about a third person. Who says which?

1. Doug drives a super car – a gorgeous red Jaguar. When he drives down the street, everybody notices him. He's so different from the other fellows around here. He's always dressed just right – sports jacket and slacks and casual things like that. Yes, he's tall, dark and handsome, with a wonderful physique. He's got warm brown eyes that sort of send shivers up and down your spine when he looks at you. He's a sophisticated man-of-the-world type. And his manners – he has a way of making you feel that you're the most important person in the world!
2. Oh, that guy? He's the showy type all right. He drives this gaudy car and acts like he owns the road and everyone should jump out of his way. What does he look like? Oh, he's not too bad looking, I guess, but I hear he works out with hundred-pound bar bells to develop those bulging muscles. He must spend two hours a day deciding what tie to put on. He feeds the girls a big line and gives them this toothpaste-ad smile and dying-calf look, and they all think he's divine. I think he's a phony. Why, he's an old man. He must be at least twenty-five.

- |                        |                                 |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a) a high-school girl  | b) her mother                   |
| c) her English teacher | d) the girl's former boyfriend. |

Write five descriptive phrases used by speaker 1. And opposite.

Write five phrases used by speaker 2. To refer to the same thing.

Which are favorable and which unfavorable?

## Test

When there is a mystery to be solved, a detective looks for clues.

In piecing clues together and drawing conclusions from them, the detective is making inferences. Note the inferences made by the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes in the following story:

“Good morning, madam,” said Holmes cheerily. “My name is Sherlock Holmes. This is my close friend and associate, Dr. Watson. Draw up to the fire, and I shall order you a cup of hot coffee, for I observe that you are shivering.”

“It is not cold which makes me shiver,” said the woman. “What then?”

“It is fear, Mr. Holmes. It is terror.” It is terror.” She raised her veil as She spoke. She was indeed very upset, her face all drawn and grey, with restless, frightened eyes, like those of some hunted animal. Her features were those of a woman of thirty, but her hair was shot with premature grey, and her expression was weary and haggard. Sherlock Holmes looked at her with one of his quick, all-comprehensive glances.

“You must not fear,” said he soothingly, bending forward and patting her forearm. “We shall soon set matters right, I have no doubt. You have come by train this morning, I see.”

“How did you know?”

“I observe the second half of a return ticket in the palm of your left glove. You must have started early, and yet you had a good drive in a dog-cart, along muddy roads, before you reached the train station.”

The woman gave a violent start and stared in bewilderment.

“There is no mystery, my dear madam,” said he, smiling. “The left arm of your jacket is spattered with mud in at least seven places. The marks are perfectly fresh. There is no vehicle except a dog cart which throws up mud in that way, and then only when you sit on the left-hand side of the driver.”

“Whatever your reasons may be, you are perfectly correct,” said the woman. (Niles, et al., 1981, pp.80-81)

1. How did Sherlock Holmes know that the woman had arrived by train?
2. On what clue did Holmes base the inference that the woman had traveled a long way in a dog – cart?
3. What inference can you make about the way Holmes treats the frightened woman?

## Test

In the murder mystery below, a detective, Dr. Haledjian, spots clues and makes inferences in order to solve a murder.

Death, Dr. Haledjian determined quickly, had been caused by a blunt instrument within the past half hour. He carefully rolled the body of his old friend, Hugh Clark, on its back. Something glinted within the red carnation in Clark's lapel. Haledjian recognized the object instantly—a gold stater of Croesus a rare coin.

The detective replaced the coin in the carnation, rolled the body to its original position lying face down on the floor, and looked thoughtfully at the pockets, which were all turned inside out.

He was examining the kitchen of the dead man's three-room bachelor apartment when Clark's nephew, Jim Mimms, entered.

"Uncle Hugh is lying dead in the living room! What happened, Dr. Haledjian?" the young man cried.

Haledjian handed Mimms an open canister of flour to hold while he picked out the one marked tea.

"Your uncle," he said to Mimms, "telephoned me this morning and asked me to come right over. He was planning to take a rare coin downtown for sale and wanted me along. Apparently somebody arrived first – I found the door open – and slugged your uncle to death.

The killer searched the body but found nothing, because your uncle didn't put the coin in his pocket!"

Haledjian paused to set a kettle of water on the stove. "You might bring the coin to me. It's buried in the flower."

Young Mimms put down the canister he was holding and left the kitchen. In a moment he was back with the coin, taken from the carnation.

"How deeply are you mixed up in this murder?" snapped Haledjian.

(Niles, et al., 1981, pp.82-83)

1. Where is the flower that Mimms goes to search for?
2. From the position of the body, would you expect the flower to be visible? Why or why not?
3. What is Mimms holding when Haledjian asks him to get the coin?
4. If Mimms knew nothing about the murder, where would you expect him to look for the coin? Why?
5. What inference does Haledjian make, based on Mimms' actions?

## Test

Read the mysterious story and then answer the questions that follow.

Of two men who were talking one was a doctor.

"I sent for you, Doctor," said the other, "but I don't think you can do me any good. I think I'm going mad."

"you look all right," the physician said.

"You shall judge – I have hallucinations. I wake every night and see in my room intently watching me, a big black Newfoundland dog with a white forefoot."

"You say you wake; are you sure about that? Hallucinations are sometimes only dreams."

"oh, I wake all right. Sometimes I lie still a long time, looking at the dog as earnestly as the dog looks at me – I always leave the light on. When I can't endure it any longer I sit up in bed – and nothing is there!"

"What is the dog's expression?"

"It seems to me to be threatening....Newfoundland dogs are usually mild looking, you know; what's the matter with this one?"

"Really, my diagnosis would have no value: I am not going to treat the dog."

The doctor laughed at his own joke, but narrowly watched his patient from the corner of his eye. Presently he said: "Fleming, your description fits the dog of the late Atwell Barton."

Fleming rose from his chair, sat again, and made a visible attempt at indifference. "I remember Barton," he said; "I believe he was it was reported that – wasn't there something suspicious in his death?"

Looking squarely now into the eyes of his patient, the doctor said:

"Three years ago the body of your old onemy, Atwell Barton, was found in the woods near his house and yours. He had been stabbed to death. There have been no arrests; there was no clue. Some of us had 'theories I had one. Have you?"

"I?" Why, bless your soul, what could I know about it? You remember that I left for Europe almost immediately afterward – a considerable time afterward. In the few weeks since my return you could not expect me to construct a 'theory'. In fact, I have not given the matter a thought. What about his dog?"

"It was the first to find the body. It died of starvation on his grave."

(Niles, et al., 1981, pp.84-85)

1. What does the doctor have a theory about? What is his theory?
2. What does the doctor probably think is the cause of Fleming's hallucinations?
3. What clues might lead you to infer that Fleming murdered Barton?
4. Do you think these clues are absolutely certain or conclusive evidence that Fleming is guilty? Why or why not?

## Test

Read the letters that follow and answer the questions.

### Thanks

Dear Uncle Arthur,

Thank you for your extremely generous birthday present. I don't know how you guessed, but socks were exactly what I wanted. And what socks too! I have looked up the pattern in the library and found it is the Macpherson tartan. And how clever of you to remember that I take size seven.

Dear Aunt Millie,

How kind of you to remember my birthday. And with socks, too! In fact socks were quite the nicest present I received. Size ten was just right and the pretty shade of mauve will go well with a yellow suit. I must try to get one.

Dear Great Uncle Alexander,

I hardly know what to say! I must admit that I had been hoping that someone would give me socks – and you did. Socks are always useful to have, and a pair with jokes printed on them are most unusual. It is a pity they will be hidden under my trouser legs or in my shoes.

Dear Mrs. Thimble,

It is so kind of you to continue to remember 'us children' every year. I suppose you still think of us as children although I am now nearly thirty. And socks were just what I wanted. I particularly like the blue ribbons they do up with and the little bells on them are delightful. I shall think of you every time I wear them.

Dear Great Aunt Tilly,

I must write at once to thank you for your wonderful present. I can't express my feelings when I opened the huge parcel and found that it contained – a pair of socks.

It was very clever of you to choose a pair with one red sock and one grey one. This makes them very different from most pairs of socks. And it was most thoughtful of you to remember that one of my feet is two inches longer than the other.

I hope you have not been having any more trouble with your eyesight recently.

Dear Aunt Clara,

Socks! I hardly know what to say. What would I do without my annual supply of socks from you. The pattern, of course, is just right. How clever of you to remember after all these years that I was once a boy scout.

## Test

Dear Aunt Lou,

What can I say! Socks! What a surprise.

I am particularly pleased with them because I can see that you knitted them yourself. You can't buy socks like these in the shops. You are so right to make a sock large enough for a foot to move about inside it.

How did you guess that I took size fifteen?

Dear Cousin Harry,

Many happy returns. I hope you'll forgive the present, but I thought this assortment of socks might be useful to you. The large pair with the gaps between the stitches can also be used as a hat in the cold weather.

1. Why did the author write all these letters?
2. Who gave the author a pair of baby socks?
3. What was wrong with Great Aunt Tilly's present?
4. How old is the author?
5. Who gave the author the socks that 'can also be used as a hat'?
6. What do you think the author really feels about his presents?
7. Which pair of socks do you think he might wear?
8. What did he do with all the pairs of socks?
9. Why does he ask about Aunt Tilly's eyesight?
10. What kind of person is the author?

## Test

### Begging the Question or Circular Reasoning.

We know that any conclusion we reach is based on underlying assumptions. When someone asks us "How did you get that idea?" we give the information which we believe proves our conclusion. If we beg the question we give information which is the same as the conclusion. For example, John says 'Some birds can't fly' When Mary says "Why do you think that?" John says "Because not all birds can fly." John had repeated his first statement in different words.

Following are several arguments. Say whether or not the person is begging the question.

1. "Why do you like chemistry better than the other sciences?"  
"Because I don't like the other sciences as well as chemistry."
2. "Why do you think all of Beethoven's music is good?"  
"Because all the music he wrote is good".
3. "Why do you think all of Beethoven's music is good?"  
"Because the music teachers say it is good."
4. "Dogs are the best pets."  
"No, cats are better."  
"No, dogs are better, because they are better than cats."
5. A good teacher knows that in order to encourage his students to think for themselves, he must adopt a questioning attitude of the students and allow his students to question him. Therefore, if a teacher is a good teacher and wishes to help his students to think, he knows that he must ask them many questions and expect many questions from them.
6. A good education for all of its citizens is essential to the life of a free society; therefore a free society must provide a good education for its citizens.

### Exercise

After each question below, circle the letter of the reply which begs the question.

1. Why were you late this morning?  
A. I was ten minutes late leaving home.  
B. My father used the car last night, and my mother couldn't find the keys.

2. Why didn't John go to the party with you?
  - A. His parents wouldn't let him go.
  - B. He couldn't come.
  
3. Why did you copy your essay from the encyclopaedia?
  - A. I didn't copy it all. Besides, everyone copies.
  - B. I couldn't understand the language. I tried, but I didn't know how to write it any other way.
  
4. Kay is popular with everyone. Why is she so popular?
  - A. Oh, everyone likes her and she is everyone's friend.
  - B. She's attractive, a good student, a good dancer and she likes everyone.
  
5. Dear Senator Bates: As one of your constituents, I feel entitled to know how you intend to vote on the bill to establish a new national park in our state. I am interested because my home is in the middle of the proposed site.
  - A. Dear Sir, Thank you for your inquiry about the new national park. I feel it is my duty to our state to support the bill for creating the park. You will, I know, welcome the idea that the beauty of your home will be preserved for many years to come.
  - B. Dear Sir, I understand your concern about the taking of property for a new park. Such parks are the heritage of our country. We must consider carefully whether it is in the best interests of everyone to set this land aside for the enjoyment of generations to come.

### Irrelevant Evidence

Senator Hampton won't get my vote again. He plays golf every Sunday.

How could John be a good singer? He's a communist.

These examples use irrelevant evidence – evidence which has nothing to do with the matter being discussed. Political beliefs do not affect singing ability, and playing golf is no reason for not voting for a politician.

### Practice Exercise

Suppose you are the director of a business, and are considering whether to increase the salaries of two employees whose duties are completely different. Consider each girl separately, and decide which facts are reasons for increasing salary, and which are irrelevant. Consider the nature of the job, which may require different qualities.

1. Inez Doran, who works in the duplicating dept. deserves a raise.  
For \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) Her desk is always piled high with work.
  - b) She is efficient in her work.
  - c) She wears expensive jewelry.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Against_____  | d) Her jewelry is suitable.                       |
| Irrelevant_____   | e) Her hands are often covered with ink.          |
| 2. Collen Jones, the receptionist,<br>deserves a raise. | f) She enjoys talking to people.                  |
| For_____  | g) She wears attractive clothes.                  |
| Against_____  | h) She has lunch in expensive restaurants.        |
| Irrelevant_____   | i) She has four children to support               |
|   | j) She is fast when she operates the<br>machines. |
|   | k) She has a very loud voice.                     |
|   | l) She is sometimes late for work.                |

### Making Assumptions

When we take something for granted or suppose it to be true we are making an assumption. Many assumptions are quite corrects. We correctly assume that the sun will rise tomorrow and that in the hot season it will be hot. But sometimes assumptions are wrong: we assume something for which we have no proof.

Read the statements below. Each is followed by three assumptions.

Decide which assumption must have been made by the speaker of the statement and indicate whether the assumption is probably true or probably false.

1. That book is too thick to be interesting. \_\_\_\_\_
  - A. Thick books are interesting
  - B. Thin books usually contain humor.
  - C. Thick books are usually long and dull.
  
2. It's a real bargain. They've lowered the price 30% for the sale.
  - A. If the price can be lowered 30% it must have been too high.
  - B. The original price was a fair one.
  - C. It's fun to shop for bargains.
  
3. Why don't you give your sister perfume for her birthday? She's sure to like perfume. \_\_\_\_\_
  - A. Since most girls like perfume, your sister will like it, too.
  - B. Perfume is an inexpensive gift.
  - C. If you know what you want to buy you won't waste time.
  
4. Since Mr. Harper works only thirty hours a week, he must have lots of free time. \_\_\_\_\_
  - A. Mr. Harper spends very little time with his family.
  - B. All time not spent working must be free.
  - C. Mr. Harper enjoys fishing in his free time.

5. Why should I stay in school? I can earn just as much without graduating. \_\_\_\_\_
  - A. Getting a good high-school education costs too much money.
  - B. High-school education does not prepare you for life.
  - C. The only reason for getting a good education is to earn money.
  
6. I know he's guilty. Right after the burglary was discovered he left without giving any reason. \_\_\_\_\_
  - A. A person should be considered guilty until proven innocent.
  - B. Innocent people don't make hasty, unexplained departures.
  - C. An innocent person would return to explain why he left.
  
7. "Waikiki Dream" was an excellent movie. Hawaii must be a wonderful place to live. \_\_\_\_\_
  - A. "Waikiki Dream" is based on reality.
  - B. "Waikiki Dream" shows life as it should be.
  - C. A movie is not an accurate gauge of conditions in a country.
  
8. Joyce's aunt must be mad! Why would a fifty-year-old woman want to try and get a college degree? \_\_\_\_\_
  - A. A college degree benefits only younger people.
  - B. Joyce's aunt is not a sensible person.
  - C. When a woman is fifty, she should be a teacher, not a student.
  
9. He must be a Communist. Otherwise why would he refuse to answer?
  - A. Answering does not prove guilt or innocence.
  - B. Communists always answer questions falsely.
  - C. Refusal to answer indicates he is trying to hide his Communist beliefs.
  
10. "The Tangled Web" is a good play. It was favorably reviewed in The New York Times.
  - A. New York play-goers liked the play.
  - B. The New York Times reviewers usually know what they are talking about.
  - C. The New York Times reviews most plays favorably.
  
11. Karen never has any fun. She's always in the library studying.
  - A. Karen's parents must want her to earn good marks.
  - B. No one could possibly enjoy studying.
  - C. Karen is really a dull person.
  
12. It couldn't have been Bill who was involved in that accident. He's gone to Church since he was a child.
  - A. Bill was in church when the accident happened, so he couldn't have been involved.
  - B. People who go to Church never do bad things.
  - C. Church teaches people not to have accidents.

## Test

### Evaluating bias in writing

#### Writer 1

At 2:30 A.M. four courageous police officers braved darkness and the gun-fire of three gangland mobsters to overtake the vicious criminals in their warehouse hideout near the waterfront.

#### Writer 2

In an early-morning shootout-fist fight, three suspects were captured by four city police officers in their warehouse hideout near the waterfront.

#### Writer 3

At 2:30 A.M. four burly and brusque city cops burst in on three helpless alleged burglars. Using unnecessary brute force, the police subdued their victims in a warehouse hideout near the waterfront.

1. Which writer is least sympathetic to the police?  
Writer 1.            Writer 2.            Writer 3.            I don't know.
2. Which writer is the most objective?  
Writer 1.            Writer 2.            Writer 3.            I don't know.
3. Write descriptive phrases used by writer 1,2, or 3 to refer to the same things/persons which / who are favorable and which / who unfavorable?

### RECOGNIZING PREJUDICE

In an earlier exercise you read news stories that revealed their writers' feelings about the news they reported. Sometimes, of course, merely the headline will tell you. Below are ten pairs of headlines. Read each pair and then answer the question opposite it by writing the letter of one of the headlines in the blank.

1. (a) Indians Scalp Sox 5-4            Which headline favors the Sox?.....  
(b) Indians Edge Past Sox 5-4
2. (a) Candidate X Wins by            Which headline favors Candidate X?.....  
Narrow Margin  
(b) Candidate X Triumphs
3. (a) New TV Show Gets Acclaim    Which headline favors the TV show?.....  
(b) New TV Show Liked by Some
4. (a) Plan for New Park Merits      Which headline favors the plan for the  
Lively Discussion                      new park?.....

- (b) Plan for New Park Stirs  
Heated Debate
5. (a) Concert Draws Teen-Agers from Wide Area      Which headline does not favor the people who attended the concert?.....  
(b) Concert Mobbed by out-of-Town Hippies
6. (a) Author's New Book Expected Soon      Which headline favors the author?.....  
(b) Author's Book Eagerly Awaited
7. (a) New Play Takes the Town by storm      Which headline favors the new play?.....  
(b) New Play Is Well Attended
8. (a) Community Fund fails to Reach Goal      Which headline favors the Community Fund raisers?.....  
(b) Community Fund Slightly Below Expectations
9. (a) Weather Perfect for Skiers      Which headline does not favor snow?.....  
(b) Weather Perfect-If You Happen to Be a Ski Buff
- 10.(a) Group Reaches Decision Quickly      Which headlines does not favor the decision made by the group?.....  
(b) Group Makes Hasty Judgment

## Test

### Recognizing propaganda

“It’s not what you say, it’s the way you say it!” –and words a writer chooses to describe a person or event can be a very significant part of that “way.”

Both stories in each pair of news stories below report the same event, but they give the reader different feelings about it. As you read each pair of stories, circle words you think are “loaded” with feelings the writer wants the reader to have. Then answer the questions that follow the stories. (Answers may vary)

- A. A lucky last-minute basket by Riverdale nosed out Westville’s hard-fighting Warriors in a non conference meeting Friday. A rough-and-tumble affair from beginning to end, the game was frequently tied, but Westville lost out to heavy fouling and inefficient officiating by both referees.
- B. Refusing to give up, Riverdale’s plucky heroes fought their way to a two-point victory in a sparkling extra-schedule contest with Westville Friday. Hard fought right down to the wire, the battle was neck-and-neck all the way. Officials showed understanding for rule. Infractions caused by the spirited play.

Which do you think appeared in Riverdale’s school paper, story A or story B?.....  
If you had read only story A, would you consider the game had been played fairly?.....

Read these two stories about a political candidate and a political gathering.

Answer the questions with the names of the newspapers. (Answers may vary)

#### From the Standard:

A smiling Harold Wilkins and his many loyal followers filled the Gold Room last night for one of their impressive dinner meetings. Nagged by reporters at the door, candidate Wilkins graciously clarified his former relations with speculators, and thoughtfully reserved judgment on the pollution uproar. As always, the charming Mrs. Wilkins was at her husband’s side.

#### From the Guardian:

“Happy Harry” Wilkins and his crowd of cronies mobbed the Gold Room last night for still another fifty-dollar-a-plate affair. Questioned by reporters at the door, office-seeker Wilkins denied his long-time association with gamblers and stalled on taking a position on the pollution issue. The ever-present, sugar-sweet Mr. Wilkins accompanied her husband.

Which newspaper would like to see Mr. Wilkins elected?.....

Which one had reporters at the door to challenge him?.....

Which one thinks pollution is an important subject?.....

Would you rely on these papers to help you form a sound opinion?.....

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