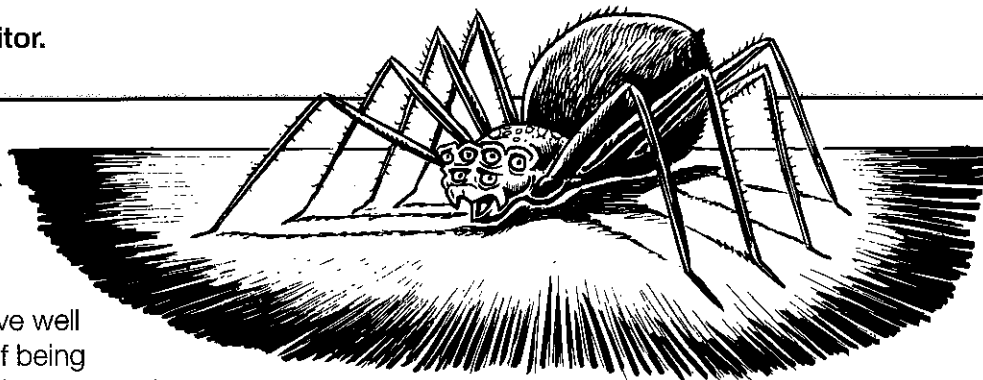


Fact or opinion – 1

When reading, it is important to understand the difference between facts and opinions and to be able to work out which is which.

A **fact** is something that is true. An **opinion** is something that someone believes is true.

Read the letter to the editor.



Dear editor

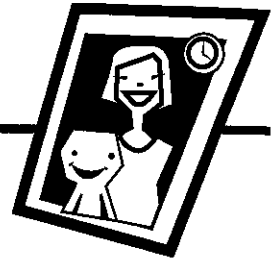
1. I read your article last month in *National insectopia* where you totally vilified spiders. I've well and truly had enough of being made out to be the bad guy every time. It's been happening for absolutely ages and it's not fair. Yeah, I look scary and I have hairy legs, but I'm not that bad! Just because Miss Muffet is a scary cat, everyone else thinks I'm scary too.
2. Really, people, take a look at yourselves. How huge are you compared to little old me? H-U-G-E! I should be scared of you; not the other way round. I know some of us can grow as large as a dinner plate, but most of us are pretty small compared to humans. Most spiders are harmless you know and if you leave us in peace, we'll quite happily go about our own business and leave you to yours. I know, everyone thinks our venom is deadly and all that, and I have to agree, some spiders are venomous and are quite nasty, but not me and that goes for most of us.
3. So many times I'm in the garden minding my own business and I hear, 'Mummy, come and look at the pretty spider!' At first I think, that finally someone appreciates my beauty, then I realise I have to scurry for my life, because here comes Mum with a broomstick to swipe at me! A quiet afternoon turns into a horror movie as I run for my life and watch my beautiful web being destroyed. All my hard work down the drain yet again! You people have no respect for another's property and quite frankly I'm disappointed. Even if I make it inside your home, I don't go around breaking down walls and smashing windows. All I ask is that you give me the same courtesy as I give you. I know sometimes it can be a bit of surprise if I turn up somewhere unexpected, but I'm really not trying to upset you—I just get a little lost occasionally.
4. You know, we were one of the first animals to live on Earth and we have been around for at least 400 million years—that's even before there were dinosaurs! Our life span isn't that long, so it would be great if you could just leave us alone to enjoy the time we have here, rather than making it a constant battle. Those beautiful webs you keep breaking down, because you think they look unsightly, are our specialised weapons for catching our prey and keeping all the insects around your house under control. We work for ages building our webs, spinning the silk and designing the trap. We spend long, quiet hours waiting for our prey so we can wrap them in our silk and suck their body juices later—yum! Every time you get sick of seeing our web, and take to it with your broom, we have to start all over again. Do you have any idea how frustrating that can be for a humble spider like me?
5. As if we don't have enough to contend with, being eaten by birds, lizards and even other spiders; we really don't need to be under constant attack by you humans too. Only a few of us actually make it to adulthood; it's a perilous life for a spider. We aren't asking for special treatment, just to be left alone to get on with making webs and catching and eating prey. I promise, if you let us get on with our job, you'll have fewer insects inside your home—and surely that would make you happy.

Sincerely yours

Fed up

Fact or opinion

Practice page



Use similar strategies to those on page 83 to practise working out facts and opinions. (Clues are given to help you.)

1. Which statement is an opinion?

- (a) You keep breaking down our beautiful webs.
- (b) Most spiders are harmless.
- (c) Spiders can be eaten by other spiders.
- (d) A spider wraps its prey in silk and sucks out its body juices later.

The best answer is .

2. Read the sentence from the text and write one fact and one opinion.

Only a few of us actually make it to adulthood; it's a perilous life for a spider.

Fact: _____

Opinion: _____

3. Read this sentence from the text.

You know, we were some of the first animals to live on the earth and have been around for at least 400 million years ...

- (a) Is it ... a fact or an opinion?
- (b) Explain why you think this.

4. Which sentence has both a fact and an opinion?

- (a) Spiders can be prey to birds.
- (b) Spiders try not to upset people.
- (c) Everybody thinks spiders are scary.
- (d) Some spiders are venomous and are quite nasty.

The best answer is .

Think!
Which statement can't really be checked in factual resources?

Think!
There is one fact and one opinion.
Write each as a sentence.

Think!
A fact is something that can be shown to be true.
Find the sentence in the text and think about it.

Think!
Which sentences contain facts, which contain opinions and which one has both?



On your own

Think about the strategies you have been using and work out these answers.

1. Which sentence is a fact?

- (a) Spiders are made out to be bad guys.
- (b) Most spiders are small compared to humans.
- (c) Spiders often have days that turn into horror movies.
- (d) People think spider webs are unsightly.

The best answer is .

2. Which sentence is not a fact?

- (a) Spiders make webs.
- (b) Spiders have specialised weapons for catching prey.
- (c) Spiders have been around since before the dinosaurs.
- (d) Spiders keep all insects under control.

The best answer is .

3. (a) Is this sentence from the text ... a fact or an opinion?

Just because Miss Muffet is a scaredy cat, everyone else thinks I'm scary too.

(b) Explain your answer.

4. Read the sentence from the text and write one fact and one opinion.

I promise, if you let us get on with our job, you'll have fewer insects inside your home—and surely that would make you happy!

Fact: _____

Opinion: _____

5. Which statement is an opinion?

- (a) Spiders can be killed by broomsticks.
- (b) Spiders' webs can be destroyed by humans.
- (c) Spiders think building webs is hard work.
- (d) Spiders can surprise you.

The best answer is .