



## Look closely! Fact or opinion?

### Lesson plan (45 min)



#### Background:

When opinions are mistakenly taken as facts, it can have significant consequences. In the classroom, it is important to teach students that such misunderstandings can lead to misinformation, prejudice, and rash decisions. When personal views are understood as universal truths, critical thinking can be impaired, and the understanding of complex issues distorted. Therefore, it is crucial to help students distinguish opinions from facts to develop an informed and balanced perspective on the world.

<b>Keywords:</b>	Fact, opinion, social media, posts, feeds, media literacy
<b>Subjects:</b>	Applicable across disciplines
<b>Subject-Specific Learning Objective:</b>	Identifying facts and opinions on a subject-specific topic
<b>Media Literacy:</b>	Identifying facts and opinions in social media posts. Reflecting on the impact of unrecognized opinions.
<b>Target Group:</b>	Secondary school levels I and II
<b>Materials:</b>	Presentation with examples; Materials for a quiz/online quiz; Cards/markers or an interactive whiteboard
<b>Technology:</b>	Laptop and projector; Wi-Fi and students' smartphones (for online quiz)



## PREPARATION FOR INTEGRATION INTO TEACHING SUBJECT

<b>1</b>	<b>Choosing the topic</b>	Which topic from the teaching subject is suitable for practicing the distinction between fact and opinion? On which topic are there differing opinions?
<b>2</b>	<b>Identifying the facts</b>	Which 2-3 facts about the topic should the students learn? Can these be formulated as short social media posts?
	Fact 1	
	Fact 2	
	Fact 3	
<b>3</b>	<b>Identifying the opinions</b>	Which 2-3 opinions about the topic should the students identify? The opinions can be researched on social media or formulated by the students themselves. It is important that the opinions are not too easily recognizable as opinions.
	Opinion 1	
	Opinion 2	
	Opinion 3	
<b>4</b>	<b>Preparing the presentation</b>	<p>Prepare the presentation of facts and opinions.</p> <p><b>Tip 1:</b> Should the facts and opinions look like social media posts? The online platform <a href="https://zeoob.com">https://zeoob.com</a> allows for easy generation of posts, tweets, and private messages in the style of various social media platforms for educational purposes.</p> <p><b>Tip 2:</b> If photos are needed to support the facts or opinions, you can use photos with a public domain license or a creative commons license, e.g., available on <a href="https://pixabay.com">https://pixabay.com</a>.</p> <p><b>Tip 3:</b> If the quiz is prepared using an online quiz tool (e.g., Quizziz, Quizlet, Plickers, Socrative), students can use their smartphones to vote directly on whether the statement is a fact or an opinion.</p>



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## LESSON PLAN | PROCEDURE

Introduction: 'Opinion Recognized?'		Duration
Plenary	At the beginning of the lesson, you present an opinion as a fact to encourage students to engage in critical reflection. The students' contributions form the basis for introducing the topic. The importance of media literacy is emphasized. Together, the class will work on understanding the difference between facts and opinions.	5 min
Elaboration: 'Quiz: Fact or Opinion?'		Duration
Plenary with individual or group work	<p>Invite the students to distinguish between opinions and facts in a quiz. The voting can be done individually or in small groups. Show the students how they can cast their votes.</p> <p>During the quiz, the students vote. After each example, ask why certain decisions were made. The characteristics of the example facts and opinions will be identified (see glossary). At the end, the class reflects on the insights gained and discusses how these can be applied in their everyday lives, especially when using social media.</p>	10 min
Consolidation: 'Recognizing Facts and Opinions in Social Media'		Duration
Group work	<p>Ask whether more facts or opinions are shared on social media. Emphasize that social media is an important tool for expressing opinions, but it also has its disadvantages.</p> <p>Now, the students work in small groups to find one example of a fact and one example of an opinion in their social media feeds. These should be recorded on cards or an interactive whiteboard.</p>	20 min
Conclusion: 'When Opinions Are Taken as Facts'		Duration
Plenary	Discuss with the class the collected facts and opinions, and the level of difficulty in recognizing them. Together, gather reasons why it is important not to confuse opinions with facts on social media. The students will be encouraged to critically question and verify information and posts in an information-rich world. This is important to ensure that personal views, which are spread as truths, are not shared without scrutiny.	10 min

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## GLOSSARY

### **Fact**

A fact is universally valid and can be supported by evidence.

### **Opinion**

An opinion is a personal viewpoint. It is subjective and not universally valid. An opinion is often shaped by feelings or emotions.

### **Opinions on Social Media**

An opinion is a personal viewpoint. It is subjective and not universally valid. An opinion is often shaped by feelings or emotions.

- Advantage: Social media provides citizens with a platform for free expression with a wide reach. They also allow for the discovery of different viewpoints, which can promote opinion formation and understanding of other perspectives.
- Disadvantage: The abundance of opinions makes it more difficult to distinguish reliable facts from personal opinions. Social media is often misused to deliberately influence users' opinions and the public opinion. Algorithms can prioritize certain content based on our usage behavior or push other to the background.

Media literacy is therefore crucial to critically question every piece of information, especially on social media, and to distinguish between well-supported facts and both overt and hidden opinions.