

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This lesson will help you to:

- distinguish between these three types of writing
- distinguish facts from opinions.

FACT, OPINION AND EXPERT ADVICE

Often, the purpose of a text is to inform its audience about something. You have come across several texts with the purpose of informing readers about something, using a mixture of three main types of writing: description, reporting or narrative, and explanation. All of these are types of factual writing.

ACTIVITY 1

A01

SKILLS CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS

▼ TYPES OF FACTUAL WRITING

Look through this book to find examples of these different types of writing, then copy and complete the following table.

▼ TYPE	▼ QUOTATION FROM TEXT	▼ PAGE
Description		
Reporting or narrative		
Explanation		

FACTS AND OPINION



▲ 'The best sport in the world.' Is this a fact or an opinion?

As you have already seen, non-fiction texts often include people's opinions and beliefs, even if they may not be factually true. This includes:

- opinions as statements of belief, such as, 'I think football is the best sport in the world'
- opinions stated as fact such as 'Football is the best sport in the world'.

Be careful when someone states an opinion or belief as though it is a fact. For example, the second statement about football has the form of a factual statement, but it is still really just a statement of belief about football. People often make statements of belief as though they are facts, so you should always ask questions of what you read and analyse what people write as facts when they may in fact be statements of belief.

For example, advertisers may state opinion as fact. Washing products may be advertised as making clothes whiter than other brands of washing detergent, but it is unlikely that these statements can be said to be 'facts'.

In comparison, an argument is an opinion or set of opinions backed up by reasons and evidence. It would be easy to express an opinion that you are the President of the United States, but hard to construct an argument that proves that you are the President of the United States.

- ▶ Over a day or two, write down a collection of opinions stated as facts that you hear or see in the media, among your friends and family or in advertisements.