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# Lesson Plan: Fact Detective vs. Opinion Officer

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## Materials Needed:

- An interesting, unfamiliar object (e.g., a dragon fruit, a geode, an old compass)
  - Plain paper and colored construction paper
  - Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
  - Scissors and glue stick
  - A kid-friendly magazine, newspaper, or comic book
  - Pre-written statements on small strips of paper (see examples below)
  - Two containers or spots on a table labeled "Fact File" and "Opinion Outbox"
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## Lesson Details

**Subject:** English Language Arts / Critical Thinking

**Grade Level:** 4th-5th Grade (Ages 9-11)

**Time Allotment:** 60 minutes

### 1. Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student will be able to:

- **Define** the terms "fact" and "opinion" in their own words.
- **Correctly sort** at least 8 out of 10 provided statements into "fact" or "opinion" categories.
- **Create and write** one original fact and one original opinion about a real-world object or image.

### 2. Alignment with Standards

This lesson aligns with common ELA standards for reading informational text, such as:

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.8:** Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.8:** Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point(s). *(This lesson provides the foundational skill for this standard by teaching the student to first identify the types of statements being used.)*

### 3. Instructional Strategies & Lesson Procedure

The lesson is structured to move from guided discovery to independent application, using a fun, role-playing theme to maintain engagement.

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**Part 1: The Mystery Object Investigation (15 minutes - Engagement & Hook)**

1. **Introduce the Theme:** "Today, you're going to be a top-notch investigator! You'll have two roles: the Fact Detective, who only deals with provable evidence, and the Opinion Officer, who listens to what people think and feel."
2. **Present the Mystery Object:** Place the interesting object (e.g., a dragon fruit) on the table. "Fact Detective, your first case is this mystery object. Let's make some observations about it."
3. **Gather Statements:** Ask the student to describe the object. As they make statements, write them down on a whiteboard or piece of paper. Guide them to make two types of statements:
  - **Facts:** "It is pink and green." "It weighs one pound." "It has seeds inside." (Guide them to make statements you can prove right there).
  - **Opinions:** "It looks weird." "I bet it tastes delicious." "Pink is the prettiest color for a fruit."
4. **Introduce the Core Concepts:** Circle the "fact" statements. "A **fact** is a statement that can be proven true or false. We can prove this fruit is pink by looking at it. We can prove it has seeds by cutting it open." Then, circle the "opinion" statements. "An **opinion** is what someone thinks, feels, or believes. I might think it looks weird, but someone else might think it looks beautiful. We can't prove it! Opinions often use clue words like 'best,' 'worst,' 'beautiful,' or 'I think'."

**Part 2: Case File Sort (15 minutes - Guided Practice)**

1. **The Mission:** "Fact Detective, you've just received a stack of witness statements. Your job is to sort them into the 'Fact File' for things we can prove, and the 'Opinion Outbox' for things that are just someone's feelings."
2. **The Activity:** Give the student the pre-written statement strips. Have them read each one aloud and decide where it belongs. Discuss their reasoning.

*Sample Statements:*

- Spiders have eight legs. (Fact)
- Spiders are the scariest creatures. (Opinion)
- The school day is six hours long. (Fact)
- Math is the hardest subject. (Opinion)
- Chocolate ice cream is the best dessert. (Opinion)
- Water is made of hydrogen and oxygen. (Fact)
- Blue is a primary color. (Fact)
- Weekends are too short. (Opinion)

**Part 3: Media Scavenger Hunt (20 minutes - Independent Application & Creativity)**

1. **Switch Roles:** "Great work, Detective! Now, put on your Opinion Officer hat. Your job is to go out into the world (of this magazine!) and see how people use facts and opinions to inform or persuade others."
2. **The Scavenger Hunt:** Hand the student the magazine, scissors, and glue. "Your mission is to find, cut out, and glue down:
  - **One headline or sentence that is a FACT.** (Look for numbers, dates, or scientific statements).
  - **One headline or sentence that is an OPINION.** (Look for reviews, ads with words like 'best' or 'most amazing,' or letters to the editor)."
3. **Create the Report:** The student will glue their findings onto a piece of paper, labeling each one "FACT" or "OPINION." This creative task allows them to apply their knowledge to a real-world context.

**Part 4: Case Closed (10 minutes - Assessment & Closure)**

1. **Final Report (Exit Ticket):** Take the mystery object from the beginning. On a small piece of paper, ask the student: "To close this case, write one final fact and one final opinion about our

mystery object." This directly assesses the learning objective.

2. **Review:** Briefly recap the main difference: "What's the one big question we ask to tell if something is a fact?" (Answer: "Can it be proven?"). Congratulate them on their excellent investigative work.

## 5. Differentiation and Inclusivity

- **For a student needing more support:**
  - Provide a visual "Clue Words" chart with fact words (numbers, dates, is/are) on one side and opinion words (best, worst, feel, believe, beautiful) on the other.
  - During the scavenger hunt, point to a specific article or advertisement that you know contains clear examples.
  - Focus the statements on a topic the student is passionate about (e.g., Minecraft, horses, space).
- **For a student needing an extension/challenge:**
  - Ask them to find an advertisement and identify how it uses BOTH facts (e.g., "Contains 50% less sugar") and opinions (e.g., "The most delicious taste!") to persuade the reader.
  - Challenge them to write a short paragraph trying to convince you of something (e.g., why a certain movie is the best), requiring them to use at least two facts and two opinions.

## 6. Assessment Methods

- **Formative (Ongoing):**
  - Observing the student's reasoning during the "Mystery Object" discussion.
  - Listening to their explanations during the "Case File Sort" activity to check for understanding and address misconceptions in real-time.
- **Summative (End of Lesson):**
  - The completed "Media Scavenger Hunt" report will serve as a tangible product demonstrating their ability to identify facts and opinions in authentic text.
  - The "Case Closed" exit ticket (writing one fact and one opinion about the object) provides a quick, clear measure of whether they have met the core learning objective.

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