**INVISIBLE INFLUENCE OF MEDIA AND CRITICAL MEDIA CONSUMPTION**

**UNIT 6**

**FACT VS OPINION IN THE MEDIA**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Content**  - define the notions of "news" and "information", their main features, and roles in mass information  - outline the structure of news and where to find news  - learn to distinguish "facts", "opinions", "features", and develop an algorithm for their identification  - main features of interviews.  **Language**  - get acquainted with basic terms, notions, and develop their meaning from context;  - learn to distinguish the phrases that explicitly introduce factual and speculative information  - develop writing skills to create factual and speculative texts  **Critical thinking**  - analyze the current news to find facts, opinions, and speculations to predict clickbait and speculative news;  - rank and range news sources and express opinion on their credibility;  - personalize their experience with media, facts, and speculations. | What is opinion? What is fact? - BBC Teach |

1. **PART 1. Activating prior knowledge**

**Lead-in**

**Discussion (in pairs or in groups of 3)**

**‘You and the News’**

* Do you often read or watch news?
* Where do you get most of your news? (*Newspapers • TV • Magazines • Internet • Billboards • Radio • Letters/Notes etc*) Which of these is most entertaining?
* What source of news is the most accurate?
* Why are people interested in getting news?
* Why do people provide the news?
* Who controls the news?
* What are your fields of interest in news reports?

**Ex. 1. Fill in the spider map and compare it with other students’ maps. Are there any features in common?**

My sources

My interests

**TYPES AND SOURCES OF NEWS**

**Focus on vocabulary**

**Explain the meaning of words and word combinations using synonyms:**

*Tend to watch*

*Check up*

*Follow*

*Consume, consumption*

*Surf*

*Be keen on*

*Prefer*

*Spend time\hours\days doing smth*

*Waste smth on smth*

**Ex. 2.**

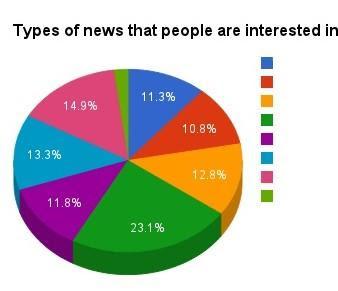
1. **Look at the survey result among 62 people (the USA) about the types of news people are interested in, time spent on news consumption and  ways people consume news today.**
2. **Do the  matching, compare your results with a partner. Then look at the actual survey results. Guess what year this survey was made in.**
3. **Discuss with a partner, share your conclusions:**

Are you surprised with results?

Is there a huge difference in your opinions and actual results?

Why do you think there is\there isn’t one?

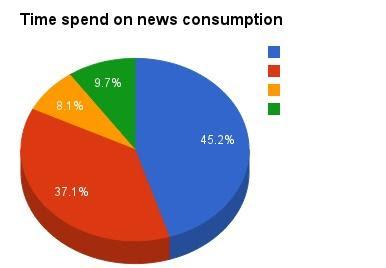
What key factors usually influence the results of surveys?



**Pie chart # 1**

|  |
| --- |
| economics |
| technology |
| entertainment |
| crime |
| politics |
| others |
| education |
| sport |

**Pie chart # 2**

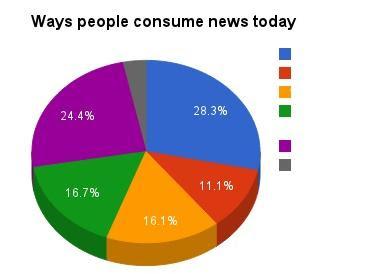


**2 hours**

**1 hour**

**Less than 1 hour**

**More than 2 hours**

**Pie chart # 3**

newspapers

television

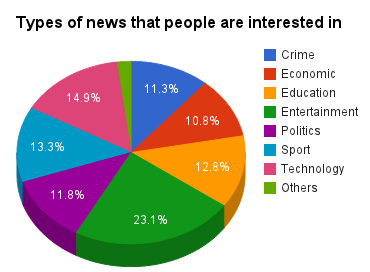
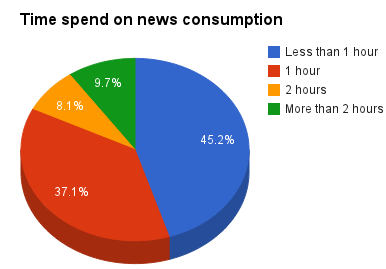
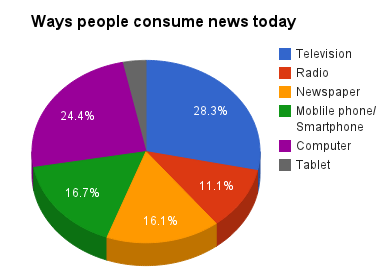
tablet

smartphones

radio

computer

**Actual survey results:**

**PART 2**

**NEWS AND INFORMATION**

**NEWS VS INFORMATION**

**Discuss**

**What in your opinion is the difference between news and information?**

**Which of the notions is more general, which one is more specific?**

**Ex. 3.**

1. **Say whether you agree or disagree with these definitions. Why?**
2. **Which of the definitions of news and information seem to be most relevant? Why?**
3. **News** is representation of facts about an event or incident that has just taken place or is taking place.
4. **News** is a report of a current event. We can define news as a development that has happened in the past 24 hours which was not known outside and which is of wide interest to the people and that which generates curiosity among listeners or readers.
5. **Information** is general and is not that urgent.
6. **News** is meant to make people aware of their surroundings, people, and events taking place.
7. **Information** is regular pieces of facts that do not change with time.
8. **News** is an account about what has recently happened as in a news programme on the tv or radio telling you what has happened in the world.
9. **Information** describes facts and details about a certain subject. When you go to a large store and you want to know where you can buy something, you go to the information desk to find out.

**Ex. 4. a) Say what types of news you know; draw your spider map.**

*Sample spider map:*



1. **Group types of news in three columns\Drag and drop activity**
2. **Explain the meaning of words typed in red**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **•Hard News**  🤔  **(Usually in the first section of the paper)** | • **Soft News**  🧐 | **Obituary Features**  😇  **(type of soft news)** |
| e.g. *World news* |  |  |

*World news*

Celebrity Gossip

City news

Sports

Local news

Business

Entertainment

Events & Issues

Syndicated

Food

State news

Comics

Reviews

Weather & Construction

Death Notices

Facts not opinions

Horoscopes

Travel

Editorials (opinions)

**PART 3**

**Watching video and speaking**

“How to choose the news”

**Ex. 5**

a) **Pre-viewing activity:**

**Discussion:**

* **Do you prefer reading or watching news? Why?**
* **When watching news reports, what do you usually pay attention to in the first place (*facts, intonation, newsreader’s appearance etc*)?**

**Watch the video  “How to choose your news”**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-Y-z6HmRgI&t=3s>



**b) Watch the video again. Form pairs or teams of 3-4 students, fill in the table with issues relevant to the headings\do drag and drop activity:**

Should check for the latest info at several points of the day

Limited to a few papers and the TV channels

Various outlets and perspectives

Shouldn’t follow news in real time

All of us turned into potential reporters

Get original news without middlemen

Broad-based

Find actual material

Delivered at the same reliable time

Allow time for false reports to be refuted

Censored information

Judge for yourself

Read coverage in multiple outlets

Appearance of alternative media

Note the difference in various sources

Misleading

Undermining public faith

Multiplied amount of info and viewpoints

Follow reporters on social media

Follow newscasters and bloggers

Internet

Allow time for complete details to emerge

Put pieces together yourself

Verify before spreading

Have an interest in influencing the coverage

Do a websearch yourself

Find additional information or context

Pay attention to words like ‘think’, ‘probably’,

have the responsibility to curate our own experience

The outlet is being careful

Stop the rumours

The outlet is taking a guess

Sources disagree on opinions and facts

They have little connection to the story

Wait for falsehoods to be refuted

Anonymity makes the sources unaccountable for their info

are more free from major gatekeepers

ensure information flow does not become a flood

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TEAM 1**  **A**  **Decades ago…** | **TEAM  2**  **B**  **This led to…** |
| * **e.g** Limited to a few papers and the TV channels |  |
|  |  |
| **C**  **How do you get the truth?** | **D**  **If the story is chaotic, we…** |
|  |  |
| **TEAM 3**  **F**  **Before sharing news…** | **E**  **How to separate facts from opinion:** |
| * **e.g** Verify before spreading |  |
|  |  |
| **G**  **Watch out for anonymous sources because…** | **For all teams**  **Summing up:**  **Today we…** |
|  | **add 2-3 your own conclusions and observations** |
|  |  |

**Ex. 6**

1. **Group into teams of 3-4 people. Fill in the missing prepositions, then translate the equivalents in Ukrainian.**
2. **Restore contexts in which these word combinations were used.**

**Block A**

1. amount \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ information
2. a click away \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ smth
3. limited \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ smth
4. revelations \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ covert wars
5. breakdown \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ trust
6. compete \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ major outlets
7. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ various perspectives
8. turn sb \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a potential reporter
9. disagree \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ opinions
10. instead \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ doing smth

**Block B**

1. unfiltered \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ middlemen
2. judge \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ yourself
3. follow \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ social media
4. from the midst \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the chaos
5. appear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ articles and broadcasts
6. keep \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ mind
7. input \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ editors
8. lead \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ incorrect information
9. false accusation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ innocent people
10. check \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the latest info
11. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_several points \_\_\_\_\_\_the day
12. to aim \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ objectivity

**Block C**

1. read coverage \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ multiple outlets
2. turn \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_various sources
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a more complete picture
4. it is crucial to separate fact \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ opinion
5. watch out \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ reports
6. rely \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ anonymous sources
7. have little connection \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the story
8. have interest \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_influencing coverage
9. make sb unaccountable \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the information
10. verify news \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ spreading it
11. free \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ old media gatekeepers

Match words  in A with words and expressions in B to make meaningful units or collocations:

**Box A**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. controlled and authoritarian  2. censored  3. mainstream  4. polished  5. natural  6. unavoidable  7. reliable  8. secret  9. our own  10. public | a) sources  b) media bias  c) assassinations  d) disasters  e) responsibility  f) info  g) information  h) faith  i) countries  j) versions |

**Box B (optional)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. sound 2. become 3. mislead 4. undermine 5. media 6. interpret a 7. post updates 8. continue 9. complete details 10. refute 11. employ 12. take 13. spread rumours 14. share 15. ensure 16. take | 1. different reporters 2. the plunge 3. coverage 4. the public 5. emerge 6. and falsehoods 7. false reports 8. outrageous news item 9. study\speech 10. apparent 11. a flow does not become a flood 12. and recordings 13. public faith 14. strange 15. a guess 16. gatekeepers |

**PART 4 WHAT MAKES THE NEWS**



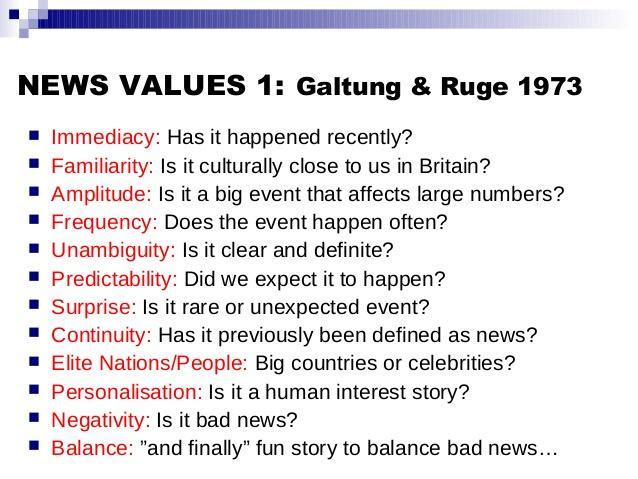
**Ex. 7.**

1. **Read the rubrics ‘**Did you know that…?’ **and answer the following questions:**
2. **What makes a news item perfect?**
3. **When does information become news?**
4. **What is news value? Why is it important?**

* If a news report provides answers to six questions like **When, Where, What, Why, Who** and **How**, it is said to be a perfect news item.

* **INFORMATION** becomes **NEWS** when some news **VALUE** is added to it. A display on railway station regarding timings of train is information. If the trains have introduced in new timings, it becomes news. Thus, news always gives some new facts to the people.
* **NEWS VALUES,** sometimes called **news criteria**, determine how much prominence a news story is given by a media outlet, and the attention it is given by the audience. In Western practice, decisions on the selection and prioritization of news are made by editors on the basis of their experience and intuition.

1. **Look at the following infographics and pay attention**
2. **Explain the meaning of words in red**



**\*Mind!**

**There are different approaches to defining news values.**

**Ex. 8. (Optional for class or for Home Assignment to be done online)**

1. **Read these paragraphs and add values into missing slots. # 1 is done for you.**

**NEWS VALUES**

**A   Prominence C  Currency    E Timeliness       G  Oddity         I  Educational values**

**B   Controversy D Impact F Proximity       H Usefulness   J  Emotion** 

|  |
| --- |
| E  Timeliness |

1. News is something new. Thus, something happening in the present has **relevancy** to be news. But the timeliness variesfor different publications. That is, timeliness for newspaper is different from a weekly or monthly magazine.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

2**.** Impact of an event decides its newsworthiness.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

3. It is a deciding fact which decides whether a news is relevant in this part or not. i.e. something happening within Ukraine is important for every one of us to know. But world news is of not that much importance.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

4. People like **controversies**. Anything that is connected with conflicts, arguments, charges and counter-charges, fights and **tension** becomes news.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

5. If a prominent person is involved in any event, it becomes news. Because  people are interested in the lives of famous persons.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

6. News is about current events. It gets relevant only if it is happening now around us.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

7. Unusual things make news. **Extraordinary** and unexpected events **generate** public interest.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

8. Stories of human interest make good news items. People are **eager** if something hurt their mind. They love to **empathise** such  things.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

9. News helps people in many ways. They make them aware of things

happening around them. Weather forecasts, train timings like information are of public interest. People tend to know and **enquire** more about government policies through news.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

10.  News has also an educational value. In almost all newspapers, you

can find columns about educational and job opportunities. These guide you about  different educational courses, career options **available**, opportunities for higher studies etc. These news items help you become more **knowledgeable**.

**Discuss:**

1. **What news values do you consider essential?**
2. **What news values do you consider optional?**

**Vocabulary focus**

1. **Match the underlined words with their equivalents. Memorize their meanings.**
2. relevancy 1) pressure, strain
3. controversies 2) outstanding, particular, exceptional
4. tension 3) smart, well-informed, well-rounded
5. extraordinary 4) accessible, vacant, feasible
6. generate 5) accordance, importance,
7. eager 6) argument, bickering, difference
8. empathize 7) accentuate, underline, underscore
9. enquire 8) bring about, spawn, develop
10. available 9) inspect, investigate, explore

l. knowledgeable 10) intent, longing, dying to do smth

**Ex. 9.**

**Follow-up activities:**

Have students actively pick out news articles from various sources they find themselves. Analyze the type of news *(home, world etc, hard or soft)* and look for all possible VALUES in them. Get them to compare results and sum up what VALUES are typically highlighted. Students share their findings with the class, and then follow up with a news story about the same topic after doing the same type of analysis. Have them compare what they found in each article.

**PART 5**



### **Vocabulary:**

accurate, fact, opinion, prove, source, verify

**Ex. 10**

**Discussion:**

**a) Discuss with a partner the difference between FACTS and OPINIONS.**

**Read the definitions and check if you were right:**

**A fact** is a statement that can be proven true or false.

**An opinion** is an expression of a person’s feelings that cannot be proven. Opinions can be based on facts or emotions and sometimes they are meant to deliberately mislead others. Therefore, it is important to be aware of the author’s purpose and choice of language. Sometimes, the author lets the facts speak for themselves.

Sometimes the author may use descriptive language to appeal to your emotions and sway your thinking.

**c) Which of these examples are**

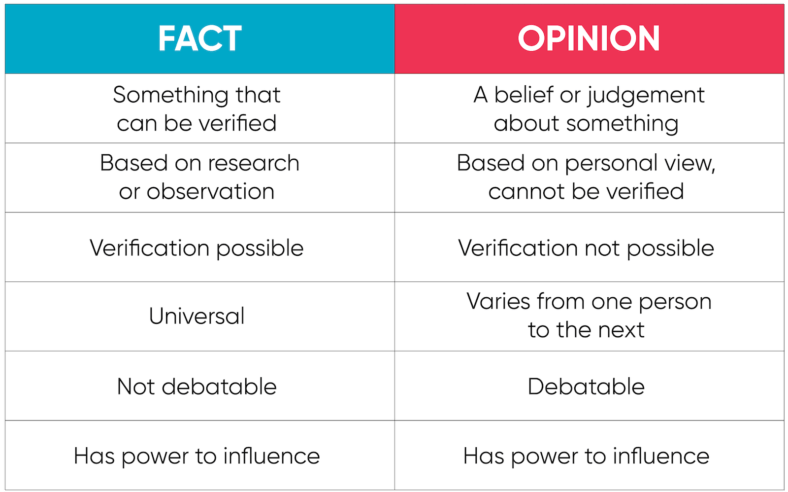
**- a fact?**

**- an opinion? Why? Support your answer with evidence.**

*• Do you like looking at a smoggy view from a congested highway? How do you feel about fighting road hugs and bumper to bumper traffic everyday? Mass transportation is the solution to all these problems.*

*• With fewer cars on the road, there would be less air pollution and traffic noise; therefore, the use of mass transportation should be encouraged.*

**b)  Read and pay attention!**



**c) Fill in the table about facts and opinions in the news:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Facts** | **Opinions** |
|  |  |

* prove
* can't prove
* opposite point of view
* persuade
* it's good, or it's bad
* might not be true
* measurement
* scientific data
* historical records

**Ex. 11.**

1. **read the excerpt**
2. **say what evidence in the news is**
3. **say why evidence is important**

**What is evidence?**

Emotional language is **neither** **right nor wrong**, but the way in which it is used can be positive or negative;  it is up to you to **make reasonable judgement** about the material you are reading and to **draw your own conclusion**. Therefore, when you read, it is important to judge facts and opinions carefully in order to **come to the right conclusion**. Ask yourself, “are the facts reliable?” or “are the opinions **based on the facts**?” Once you answer these questions, you may **be on the right track for** finding and **sticking to the facts**; you **be the judge**.

**d) look at the highlighted words and group them in clusters with similar meaning**

### **PAY ATTENTION!**

### **Fact Clues**

*The research confirms…*

*The doctors recently discovered that COVID-19 is airborne…,*

*COVID-19 is ...*

*"According to [source]"* is usually followed by a fact. But it can also be followed by an opinion statement. You need to know your source.

The source of a fact has to be credible. It cannot simply be your mother or your relatives—unless they are a recognized authority.

### **Opinion Clues**

*I think, I believe, I feel,*

*In my opinion,*

*Some people think,*

*My friends think,*

*My parents think,*

*Some people claim,*

*He/she claims*

*Always/Never,*

*Awful/Wonderful,*

*Beautiful/Ugly,*

*Better/Best/Worst,*

*Delicious/Disgusting,*

*Enjoyable/Horrible/Favorite,*

*For/Against, Good/Bad,*

*Inferior/Superior,*

*Oppose/Support,*

*Terrible/Unfair,*

*Worthwhile*

**Ex. 12**

1. **Fill in the table with fact and opinion words. Check with a partner.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Opinion  adjectives**  describe what you think or how you feel about something | **Fact adjectives**  give information about something that can be proven |
| **Opinion adjectives**    **Opinion words** | **Quantity:**  **Size:**  **Age:**  **Shape:**  **Colour:**  **Origin:**  **Material:** |

more than…        small          beautiful many young

old pretty many believe ugly it is likely that

friendly apparently definitely large definitely

awesome cool perhaps yellow ten

square   terrible glass let’s assume…

gross best wooden should might

French              worst probably obviously plastic

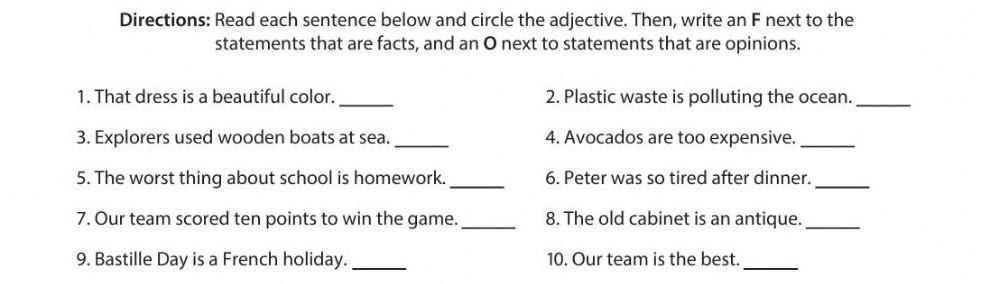
most amazing  Chinese tallest       better than…

dirty expensive yummy multicoloured tired

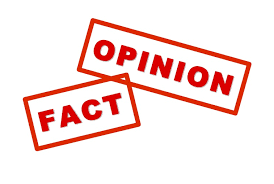
new African few most experts agree…

shorter than…  flat      blue round

**b)**

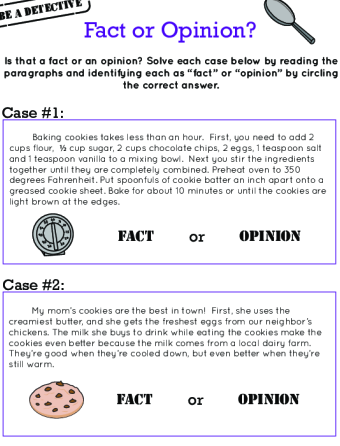


**c) Are these opinions or facts?** **Explain your choice.**

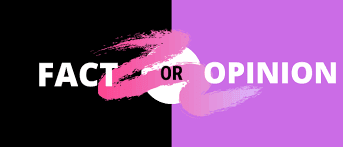
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1. Chocolate is the best flavor for ice cream.
2. The beach is more fun than the mountains.
3. The fires are burning north of Sacramento.
4. Football is a dangerous sport.
5. Tennis is a great sport for kids to learn.
6. Audio books are an easier way to read a book.
7. School uniforms make most kids happier.
8. It is difficult for sea turtles to lay their eggs on land.
9. A university education is the key to success.
10. Abraham Lincoln was President of the United States during the Civil War.
11. English is an easy language to learn.

**d)**



**e) Fill in the blanks  with an adjective to complete each statement. Then, circle fact or opinion.**



1. These shoes are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  Fact – Opinion.

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_bees live in hives. Fact – Opinion.

3. Some \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_teachers are here. Fact – Opinion.

4. We are having  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ croissants for brunch. Fact – Opinion.

5. My granny is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Fact – Opinion.

6. The trip to Hawaii was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Fact – Opinion.

7. The President made a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ speech.    Fact – Opinion.

8. Rice grows in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ climate. Fact – Opinion.

9. Yesterday weather was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  Fact – Opinion.

**f)  Click the link and do an online test. Save the screen and send it to the teacher\show to your partner and compare results\redo the test if necessary.**

**Test 1**

<https://www.liveworksheets.com/worksheets/en/English_as_a_Second_Language_(ESL)/Adjectives/Fact_vs_opinion_fx966711tu>

 or 

**Test 2** <https://www.liveworksheets.com/ym1078807vc>

**Ex. 13. Read paragraphs about Facts and opinions. Underline correct options.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **A**  **1) Opinions\facts** are statements that reflect the views or ideas that people have about subjects and topics. For example, your friend says that all ice cream is tasty. This is their 2)**fact\opinion**, because not everyone may think the same way, nor can it be proven to be true. 3) **Opinions\facts** may not be rooted in fact or be supported by strong 4) **evidence\opinion**, though there are exceptions, such as in the case of expert 5) **opinions\facts**. | **C**  Here are some tips on how to differentiate 9) **between\with** fact and opinion. Firstly, ask yourself, “Can it be proven”? 10) **Evidence\opinion**s to support 11) **a fact\an opinion** can be easily found in books in a library’s reference section, as well as by searching online using 12) **reliable\objectionable** sources of information, such as the websites of reputable educational institutions. These sources will provide 13) **evidence\opinion** for the same fact. However, for 14) **opinions\facts**, what is stated may differ across sources of information. |
| **B**  Sometimes, the language used in 6) **opinions\facts** can be deliberately emotional to mislead others. Therefore, we need to know the purpose of the message or information. Is it to 7) **inform\deform** or 8) **persuade\invade** you to do something or buy a product? | **D**  Facts will also be 15) **unbiased\biased.** They do not support only one perspective and present the information in an 16) **objective\subjective** manner. For opinions, the author’s writing might be 17) **biased**\**unbiased** and written in a way to try to persuade the reader to believe in what he or she is saying.  When doing research, try to look for facts instead of opinions as they are supported by evidence. |

1. **Compare your answers with a partner. Correct mistakes if necessary.**
2. **Read the paragraphs again and do the test:**

**1. Which of the following are signs that what you are reading is an opinion? (There is more than one answer)**

**A** The author writes about what he or she thinks, believes or feels about the topic.

**B** The same information can be found across many reliable sources.

**C** You disagree with some of the views of the author.

**D** The information presented is universally agreed to be true

1. **You need to search for some facts to support your homework on the uses of electricity. Which of the following is a fact about electricity?**

**A** People cannot cook without electricity.

**B** Electricity travels at the speed of light.

**C** Families could be using more electricity than necessary.

**D** Everyone should save on their usage of electricity.

1. **With fewer cars on the road, there is less air pollution. Is this a fact or opinion?**

**A** Fact

**B** Opinion

1. **Which of the following statements are opinions? (There is more than one answer)**

**A** Pulau Ubin is an island that is part of Singapore.

**B** Sir Stamford Raffles came to Singapore in 1819.

**C** The Internet is the best place to search for sources of information.

**D** The history of Singapore is very interesting.

Ex 14. **Video**  “**The Blur Between Facts and Opinions in the Media”**

**Vocabulary focus**

subjective view

editorial

op-ed

commentary

blur the line

tell the difference between smth and smth

fade away

detect smth

properly labeled

content creators

provide new context

misinterpret information

**a) Watch the video. Define if the statements are true or false.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BcuLq0O2GP8>



**True or False?**

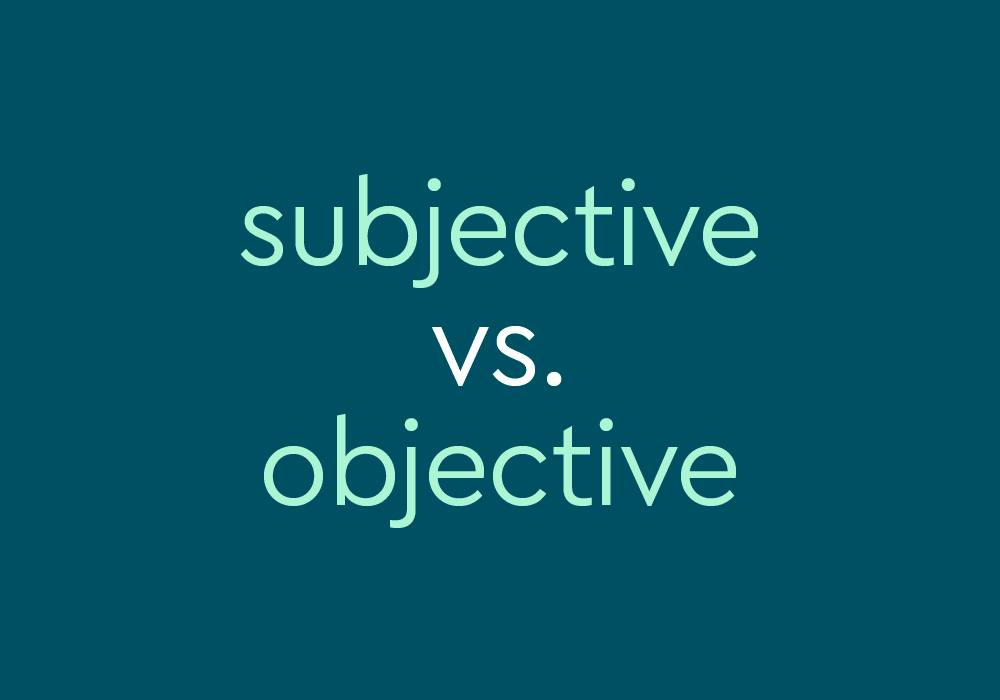
1. Opinions are not inherently bad things.
2. Opinions can distort new context or different perspective.
3. Facts played influential part in history.
4. Content creators mix opinions with facts to make the perspective seem more credible.
5. Too many facts in the context keep you engaged and fire up your emotion.
6. Everyone can easily tell the difference between fact and opinion.
7. Misinterpretations of facts and opinions can lead to confusion and difficulty in discussing the news with others.
8. According to the study, people are likely to view the fact as opinion if it matched their existing beliefs.

**b) Match the beginning of idea with its continuation:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1) It’s up to us to  2) Don’t rely on editorials to  3) Watch out for statements that may  4) Avoid sources that actually  5) Recording facts and opinion in the media can make a tremendous | *a) help you distinguish fact and opinion.*  *b) impact on how you see the word.*  *c) fuel up your anger and fears over reporting objective news.*  *d) spot the difference between fact and opinion.*  *e) seem factual but that are actually opinions that that favour certain perspective.* |

**c) Sum up the key points of the video.**

**PART 6**



**Ex. 15.**

**Read the excerpt and fill in the table below.**

We rely heavily on the news media to **keep us up-to-date and current** about **a range of topics and issues** that are important to us as **citizens**.

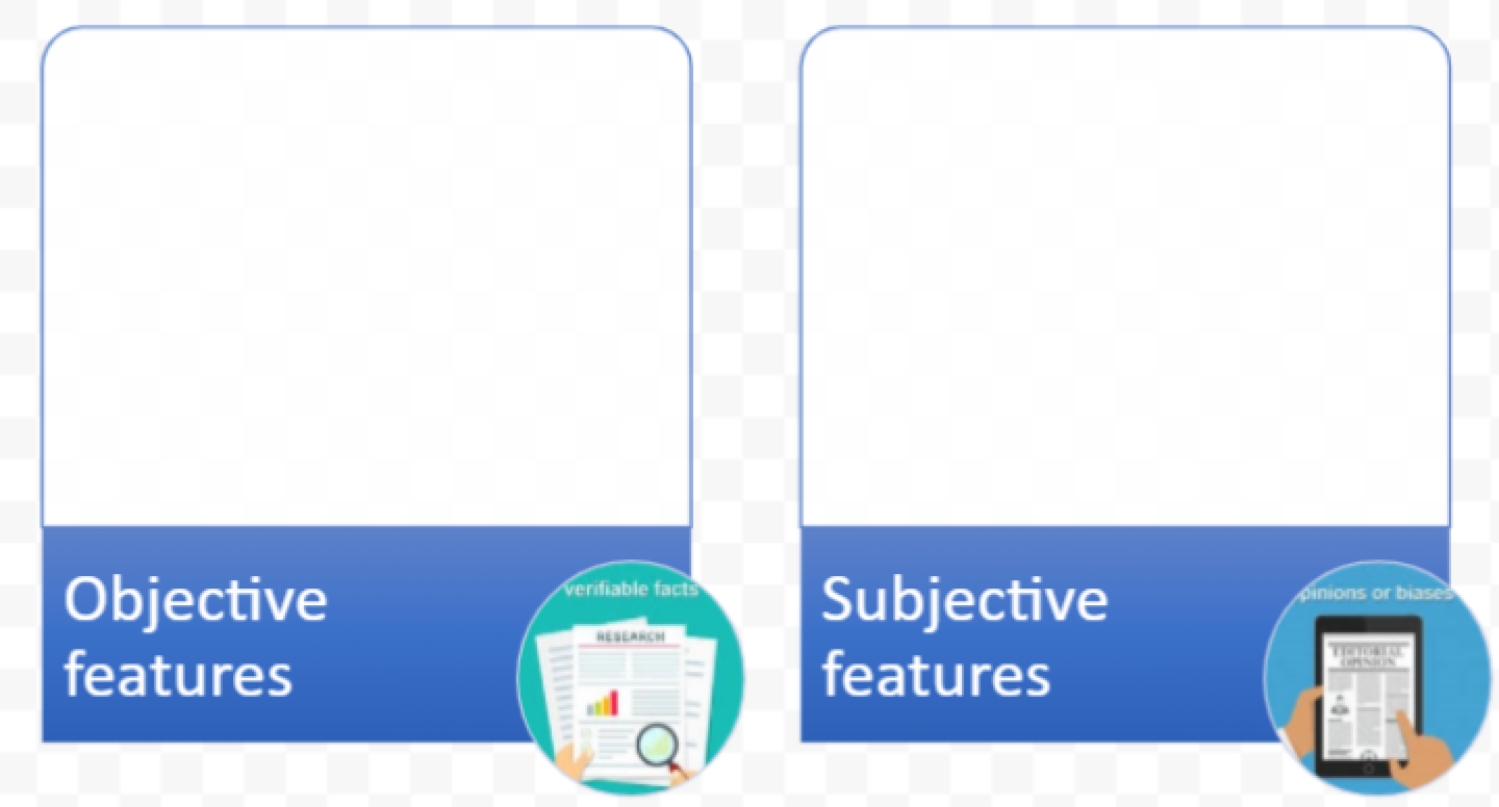
As we **wade through** this form of media, we must **have a critical eye**. News articles **bombard us with facts** and figures, opinions and projections. It is up to us to **create order within this chaos** and **find the patterns** that will help us to understand what is true, what could be true, and what is outright false. In order to do all this, you need to **have a firm grip on** what is objective and what is subjective.

**Definition of Objective and Subjective**

**Objective** is a statement that is completely **unbiased**. It is not **touched by** the writer’s previous experiences or tastes. It is **verifiable** by looking up facts (things that can be proven).

Subjective is a statement that has been **coloured by** the viewpoint of the writer. It often has a basis in reality, but **reflects the perspective** through which the writer views an issue or topic. It cannot be verified using concrete facts and figures.

It is okay to have an opinion. In newspapers, writer’s views and perspectives are typically found in the **editorial or opinion section**. As readers we should be able to tell if a news article is objective or subjective.



**Focus on vocabulary**

**Ex. 16**

1. **Explain the same in English using synonyms.**
2. **Restore the context where these expressions were used.**

keep sb up-to-date and current

a range of topics and issues

wade through

citizens

have a critical eye

bombard us with facts

create order within this chaos

find the patterns

outright false

have a firm grip on smth

completely unbiased

touched by the writer’s previous experiences

coloured by the viewpoint

reflects the perspective through smth

concrete facts and figures

editorial or opinion section

**Ex. 17.**

**a) Read the article and  analyze it in terms of values, facts and opinions, objective and subjective views**

### **[Could Your Morning Coffee Be a Weight-Loss Tool?](https://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=227355)**

By Alan Mozes  
*Health Day Reporter*

MONDAY, Jan. 13, 2020 (HealthDay News) -- If [losing weight](https://www.webmd.com/diet/default.htm) sits high atop your New Year's [resolution](https://www.webmd.com/diet/ss/slideshow-healthy-eating-resolutions) list, you might want to reach for a piping-hot cup of joe.

Why? New research suggests that just 4 cups of [coffee](https://www.webmd.com/diet/features/does-coffee-have-nutritional-value-you-bet) a day can actually help shed some body [fat](https://www.webmd.com/diet/features/good-fat-bad-fat).

The finding follows a 24-week investigation that tracked [coffee](https://www.webmd.com/food-recipes/rm-quiz-coffee)'s impact among 126 [overweight](https://www.webmd.com/diet/obesity/features/am-i-obese) men and women in Singapore.

Investigators initially set out to see if coffee could help lower the risk for [type 2 diabetes risk](https://www.webmd.com/diabetes/risk-diabetes) by lowering the risk for developing [insulin](https://www.webmd.com/diabetes/diabetes-types-insulin) resistance, which can lead to dramatic spikes in [blood sugar](https://www.webmd.com/diabetes/how-sugar-affects-diabetes) and, ultimately, diabetes.

In the end, the researchers did *not* find evidence that coffee had such a protective effect. But there was an unexpected upside: Those who drank 4 cups of caffeinated coffee per day over six months saw a nearly 4% drop in overall body fat.

"We were indeed surprised by the observed weight loss that was specifically due to fat mass loss among coffee drinkers," said study author Derrick Johnston Alperet, a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Nutrition at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Alperet said it suggests that "this loss in fat mass was *not* likely to be due to changes in lifestyle, namely diet and [physical activity](https://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/ss/slideshow-7-most-effective-exercises)."

Rather, he and his colleagues think that coffee-fueled fat loss may be the result of a "metabolic reaction," in which caffeine causes the drinker's metabolic process to ramp up. The end result, said Alperet, is the burning of more calories and a notable drop in body fat.

**b)**

∙ Find a news article with current news.

∙ Cut out or print the article. You will need to staple the article to this worksheet.

∙ Underline all the **facts** in the article in **red**. (*Remember, facts are statements which can be proven)*

∙ Underline all the **opinions** in **blue**. *(Remember, opinions are statements that reflect a writer’s view)*

Record your information below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **News article title:** |  |
| **Newspaper:** |  |
| **Date:** | **Writer:** |
| **Summary:**  *In a couple sentences, summarize the article.* |  |
| **Number of facts cited**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  *Cite one fact:* | **Number of opinions offered: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  *Cite one opinion:* |
| If the article has more facts than opinions it is *objective*.  If the article has more opinions than facts it is *subjective*.  If the article has an equal number of facts and opinions it is *balanced*. | *Objective*  *Subjective*  *balanced* |
| The article you read about Treaties is: (circle one) | *objective           subjective             balanced* |

**Ex. 18. Follow-up activities in class or for home assignments (depending on students’ levels)**

* **Analyze News Stories vs. Editorials:**As a straightforward and effective activity, have students actively pick out the opinions and facts from an editorial they find themselves. Students share their findings with the class, and then follow up with a news story about the same topic after doing the same type of analysis. Have them compare what they found in each article. A teacher can also find a digital news story and engage the entire class with the same article. Students should have a routine where they find a news story and analyze it at least once a week for the semester. After a semester of doing that, they will have embedded that learning.
* **Have Students Practice Writing:**Recognizing a biased story is one skill, but going one step further is being able to write balanced news. If students learn to write balanced news and then editorials, they don’t forget the distinction. For example, have them choose a topic they are interested in and then write an objective article on that topic, followed by an editorial where they voice their opinion. When students actually do something, they tend to learn it.
* **Choose and Analyze Opinion Columns:**Tell students to pick out two of their favorite columnists, analyze their writing, and state how the columnists supported their opinions. Just finding their favorite columnists will take a lot of researching, and they will learn a lot just in that process. They can then find news stories on the same topic and compare the two types of articles.
* **Analyze Speeches from Political Candidates:** Have students look for examples of opinions in speeches given by various political candidates and determine whether they back up their statements with facts. What do they claim? Is it factual? How do they support their statements? Use a movie that is still available on Netflix called *OutFoxed*, which shows how Fox News treats opinion as fact. *[Here it is on YouTube](https://youtu.be/P74oHhU5MDk).*
* **Hold a Competition:**Have students organize into groups or have classes compete in an activity where they earn a point for every fact or opinion they correctly identify.

**Ex. 19.**

**Optional Ex. \Home assignment online Ex. :**

**Video** ‘HOW TO SPOT A MISLEADING GRAPH’

**For video click here:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E91bGT9BjYk>



* **Watch the video.**
* **DO the test. Compare your answers with a partner.**
* **If necessary, watch it again and correct your mistakes.**

TEST on video contents

1. **Distorting the scale on a graph is one of the most common methods of presenting which of the following form(s) of misleading information?**

**A**An inconsistent scale on the X axis

**B**Zooming in on a small portion of the Y axis

**C**Bar graphs that minimize differences

**D**All of the above

1. **Which of the following is an example of “cherry picking” data?**

**A**Presenting the data on a complete scale

**B**Choosing specific data points that present the desired point of view

**C**Leaving out certain data points

**D**All of the above

**E**Both B and C

1. **Why are graphs commonly used to present claims?**

**A**Graphs represent data and data isn’t an opinion

**B**They cannot be distorted easily

**C**Visuals, like graphs, often do a better job persuading people

**D**It is more difficult to argue with numbers

**E**Both A and D

1. **When looking at the graph that presents data on truck reliability, which statement is true?**

**A**Chevy trucks are far more dependable than Ford Trucks

**B**The difference in dependability among Chevy, Ford, and Toyota trucks is approximately 1%

**C**The actual scale is shown

**D**The category “other” trucks is about 25% as dependable as Toyota trucks

1. **What is the best way to protect yourself against misleading graphs?**

**A**Look at the visual representation only

**B**Never trust graphed data again

**C**Read the labels, the scale, the numbers, and the context

**D**Look only at the curves and the trend of the data

1. **Why might a person trying to persuade you toward their point of view use a graph to present information? (write your answer)**

1. **How can graphs present an opinion?** (write your answer)

1. **List three methods of “cherry picking data” and the advantages each provides** (write your answer)

**Summative assessment for UNIT 6**

* 1. What is more general: *news or information*?
  2. What words make news in the media sound objective? (Fact words)
  3. Give 5 examples of Opinion Clues.
  4. What values are given in this piece of information?

“The City Council of Oakland, California started 2021 by strengthening its prohibitions on community surveillance through an amendment to its municipal code. The amendment, passed unanimously, prohibits the city’s police department from using biometric and predictive policing technology”.

*A) immediacy B) frequency C) personalization D) negativity E) timeliness*

5) Opinion in news is  *A) verifiable B) universal*

*C) based on research or observation D) debatable*

6) Both fact and opinion are

*A) verifiable B) Debatable*

*C) has power to influence D) varies from person to the next*

**REFLECTION**

**Ask yourself:**

1. What have I learnt in this seminar? What was new to me?
2. How will this knowledge and skill help me in the future?
3. Where can I apply new knowledge and skill?

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  9. <https://ed.ted.com/lessons/how-to-spot-a-misleading-graph-lea-gaslowitz/review_open#question-1>
  10. <https://www.hmhco.com/blog/teaching-fact-versus-opinion>

**Samples of articles to be analyzed in groups or in pairs:**

**#1**

**Oakland, California Extends Protections against Predictive Policing and Biometric Surveillance** April 23, 2021

The City Council of Oakland, California started 2021 by strengthening its prohibitions on community surveillance through an amendment to its municipal code. The amendment, passed unanimously, prohibits the city’s police department from using biometric and predictive policing technology. Both practices have raised concerns over invasion of privacy, racial bias, and the targeting of minority communities. This follows a recent trend of local governments adopting anti-surveillance legislation that ranges from regulation of surveillance technology to an outright ban.

Although other cities have passed ordinances regulating the use of surveillance and facial recognition technology, as Nathan Sheard of the Electronic Frontier Society points out, Oakland is “the first city to incorporate these prohibitions into a more comprehensive Community Control of Police Surveillance ([CCOPS](http://communityctrl.com/)) framework.” The types of technology banned include those that can “identify a person based on ‘physiological, biological, or behavioral characteristics ascertained from a distance.’” Additionally, Sheard quoted the San Francisco Council on American-Islamic Relations to the effect that “[n]ot only are these methods intrusive and don’t work, they also have a disproportionate impact on Black and brown communities—leading to over-policing.”

Establishment media coverage of Oakland’s new policy has been sparse. Oakland’s [Fox KTVU 2](https://www.ktvu.com/news/oakland-bans-predictive-policing-biometric-surveillance-tech) reported on the City Council’s imposition of restrictions on police use of biometric and predictive technology, as did [SFGate.com](https://www.sfgate.com/news/bayarea/article/City-First-In-Nation-To-Ban-Predictive-Policing-15872642.php). When Oakland’s ban is covered by a major outlet it is often only mentioned in passing as part of a broader story about surveillance regulation. For examples, a January 27, 2021 article in  [ZDNet](https://www.zdnet.com/article/predictive-policing-is-just-racist-21st-century-cyber-phrenology/) about the racist biases embedded in predictive policing algorithms mentions Oakland as one of several cities that have banned facial recognition for policing. Coverage that focuses strictly on Oakland’s approach, such as the article by Sheard from the Electronic Frontier Foundation, is limited. Further, these articles usually come from other non-corporate media sources, like [State Scoop](https://statescoop.com/oakland-calif-set-to-ban-predictive-policing-biometric-surveillance-tools/).

**Source:** Nathan Sheard, “Oakland’s Progressive Fight to Protect Residents from Government Surveillance,” Electronic Frontier Foundation, January 20, 2021, <https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2021/01/oaklands-progressive-fight-protect-residents-government-surveillance>.

**Student Researcher:** Analisa Chudzik (North Central College)

# 2

Zoom Classrooms Raise Concerns about Law Enforcement Surveillance and 4th Amendment Rights

April 22, 2021

Zoom’s popularity skyrocketed as the COVID-19 pandemic intensified in Spring 2020, and the company’s revenues rose more than 169 percent. Online conferencing has enabled people to continue their work, school, and social lives, ultimately making Zoom an essential service. However, as John Whitehead reported for OpEdNews in September 2020, “the Fourth Amendment ramifications of having students attend school online via video classes from the privacy of their homes” add another “troubling layer to the ways in which students (and their families) can run afoul of a police state education now that school (virtual or in-person) is back in session.”

The free version of Zoom does not grant end-to-end encryption or guarantee secure private connections without possible surveillance by law enforcement, and third-party affiliates. Those who opt for the free version of Zoom are often low income, struggling students, the elderly, and the disabled. Zoom has offered to provide end-to-end encryption for all users, as long as they verified their phone number first. Yet, many users do not do this or know that such an option exists.

Zoom classrooms allow teachers, government officials, and law enforcement visual access to the insides of students’ homes, without a warrant. Anything teachers or other officials see, hear, or record via a Zoom virtual classroom can be investigated without a warrant. For example, Whitehead reported on the case of an 11-year-old boy in Maryland: Police came to his home in search of weapons after school officials observed a BB gun mounted on his bedroom wall during a virtual class. Across the country, growing numbers of parents are being visited by social services after being reported by school officials, all because their kids failed to sign in for some of their online classes.

This can lead to possible interference from government agencies to which  information can be relayed including local police, social services, animal control, and the FBI.

Most of the Zoom conferencing security issues discussed in the corporate media are about “Zoom-bombing,” the hijacking of Zoom conference calls, but corporate media have been less diligent about addressing the Fourth Amendment ramifications for students of online schooling via video conferencing platforms such as Zoom.

**Sources:**

John Whitehead, “Virtual School Hazards of a Police State Education During COVID-19,” OpEdNews.com, September 15, 2020, <https://www.opednews.com/articles/1/Virtual-School-Dangers-Th-by-John-Whitehead-Covid-19_Education_Police_Surveillance-200915-799.html>

# 3

### **[Could Your Morning Coffee Be a Weight-Loss Tool?](https://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=227355)**

By Alan Mozes  
*Health Day Reporter*

MONDAY, Jan. 13, 2020 (HealthDay News) -- If [losing weight](https://www.webmd.com/diet/default.htm) sits high atop your New Year's [resolution](https://www.webmd.com/diet/ss/slideshow-healthy-eating-resolutions) list, you might want to reach for a piping-hot cup of joe.

Why? New research suggests that just 4 cups of [coffee](https://www.webmd.com/diet/features/does-coffee-have-nutritional-value-you-bet) a day can actually help shed some body [fat](https://www.webmd.com/diet/features/good-fat-bad-fat).

The finding follows a 24-week investigation that tracked [coffee](https://www.webmd.com/food-recipes/rm-quiz-coffee)'s impact among 126 [overweight](https://www.webmd.com/diet/obesity/features/am-i-obese) men and women in Singapore.

Investigators initially set out to see if coffee could help lower the risk for [type 2 diabetes risk](https://www.webmd.com/diabetes/risk-diabetes) by lowering the risk for developing [insulin](https://www.webmd.com/diabetes/diabetes-types-insulin) resistance, which can lead to dramatic spikes in [blood sugar](https://www.webmd.com/diabetes/how-sugar-affects-diabetes) and, ultimately, diabetes.

In the end, the researchers did *not* find evidence that coffee had such a protective effect. But there was an unexpected upside: Those who drank 4 cups of caffeinated coffee per day over six months saw a nearly 4% drop in overall body fat.

"We were indeed surprised by the observed weight loss that was specifically due to fat mass loss among coffee drinkers," said study author Derrick Johnston Alperet, a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Nutrition at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Alperet said it suggests that "this loss in fat mass was *not* likely to be due to changes in lifestyle, namely diet and [physical activity](https://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/ss/slideshow-7-most-effective-exercises)."

Rather, he and his colleagues think that coffee-fueled fat loss may be the result of a "metabolic reaction," in which caffeine causes the drinker's metabolic process to ramp up. The end result, said Alperet, is the burning of more calories and a notable drop in body fat.

#4

**How Effective Is Online Learning? What the Research Does and Doesn’t Tell Us**

Students who struggle will likely struggle more online.

By [Susanna Loeb](https://www.edweek.org/by/susanna-loeb) — March 20, 2020

The use of virtual courses among K-12 students has grown rapidly in recent years. Florida, for example, requires all high school students to take at least one online course. Online learning can take a number of different forms. Often people think of Massive Open Online Courses, or MOOCs, where thousands of students watch a video online and fill out questionnaires or take exams based on those lectures.

Most online courses, however, particularly those serving K-12 students, have a format much more similar to in-person courses. The teacher helps to run virtual discussion among the students, assigns homework, and follows up with individual students. Sometimes these courses are synchronous (teachers and students all meet at the same time) and sometimes they are asynchronous (non-concurrent). In both cases, the teacher is supposed to provide opportunities for students to engage thoughtfully with subject matter, and students, in most cases, are required to interact with each other virtually.

Online courses provide opportunities for students. Students in a school that doesn’t offer statistics classes may be able to learn statistics with virtual lessons. If students fail algebra, they may be able to catch up during evenings or summer using online classes, and not disrupt their math trajectory at school. So, almost certainly, online classes sometimes benefit students.

In comparisons of online and in-person classes, however, online classes aren’t as effective as in-person classes for most students. Only a little research has assessed the effects of online lessons for elementary and high school students, and even less has used the “gold standard” method of comparing the results for students assigned randomly to online or in-person courses. [Jessica Heppen and colleagues](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19345747.2016.1168500?journalCode=uree20) at the American Institutes for Research and the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research randomly assigned students who had failed second semester Algebra I to either face-to-face or online credit recovery courses over the summer. Students’ credit-recovery success rates and algebra test scores were lower in the online setting. Students assigned to the online option also rated their class as more difficult than did their peers assigned to the face-to-face option.

It is not surprising that in-person courses are, on average, more effective. Being in person with teachers and other students creates social pressures and benefits that can help motivate students to engage. Some students do as well in online courses as in in-person courses, some may actually do better, but, on average, students do worse in the online setting, and this is particularly true for students with weaker academic backgrounds.

Students who struggle in in-person classes are likely to struggle even more online. While the research on virtual schools in K-12 education doesn’t address these differences directly, a study of college students that I worked on with Stanford colleagues found very little difference in learning for high-performing students in the online and in-person settings. On the other hand, lower performing students performed meaningfully worse in online courses than in in-person courses.

But just because students who struggle in in-person classes are even more likely to struggle online doesn’t mean that’s inevitable. Online teachers will need to consider the needs of less-engaged students and work to engage them. Online courses might be made to work for these students on average, even if they have not in the past.

Just like in brick-and-mortar classrooms, online courses need a strong curriculum and strong pedagogical practices. Teachers need to understand what students know and what they don’t know, as well as how to help them learn new material. What is different in the online setting is that students may have more distractions and less oversight, which can reduce their motivation. The teacher will need to set norms for engagement—such as requiring students to regularly ask questions and respond to their peers—that are different than the norms in the in-person setting.

Online courses are generally not as effective as in-person classes, but they are certainly better than no classes. A substantial research base developed by Karl Alexander at Johns Hopkins University and many others shows that students, especially students with fewer resources at home, learn less when they are not in school. Right now, virtual courses are allowing students to access lessons and exercises and interact with teachers in ways that would have been impossible if an epidemic had closed schools even a decade or two earlier. So we may be skeptical of online learning, but it is also time to embrace and improve it.