



SKILLBUILDER

Distinguishing Fact from Opinion

►► Defining the Skill

A fact is a piece of information that can be proved to be true. Statements, statistics, and dates all may be facts. An opinion, on the other hand, is a belief, feeling, or judgment that is expressed by someone. An opinion cannot be proved to be true. Being able to distinguish fact from opinion is one part of critical thinking. It helps you know whether to trust an argument or to change your own opinion when someone is trying to influence you.

►► Applying the Skill

The passage to the right tells about an unusual law in the country of Singapore. Use the strategies below to help you distinguish fact from opinion.

How to Distinguish Fact from Opinion

Strategy 1 Look for facts, or information that can be proved to be true.

Strategy 2 Look for statements that express a person's opinion, judgment, or feeling.

Strategy 3 Think about how the facts in the passage could be checked for accuracy. Where might you look to see if they are true? Identify the facts and opinions expressed in the passage. List the facts and opinions in a chart. Also list where you could look to prove a fact.

A SINGAPORE LAW

1 In 1992, Singapore began a program to stop littering. People caught tossing litter have to put on bright yellow vests and spend 12 hours sweeping up garbage. They may also be fined up to \$2,940. And if they are caught several times, they have to attend a meeting where they learn about the costs of pollution. The punishment seems to be working. One woman who was sweeping garbage said, **2** "Anyway, it is very embarrassing."

Make a Chart

The chart below lists some of the statements from the passage and shows whether they are facts or opinions.

Statement	3 Can It Be Proved?	Fact or Opinion?
In 1992, Singapore began a program to stop littering.	Yes. Check a newspaper story or the laws in Singapore.	Fact
People caught littering have to sweep garbage for up to 12 hours.	Yes. Check a newspaper story or a magazine article.	Fact
"Anyway, it is very embarrassing."	No. This statement expresses a person's feelings.	Opinion

►► Practicing the Skill

Turn to page 437 in Chapter 15, Section 1, and read the Dateline. Make a chart like the one above in which you list key statements and then determine whether they are facts or opinions.