

***How I used this strategy with my class***

Prior to the lesson we discussed what constitutes fact or opinion. Students were given sentences to sort into fact or opinion categories. They were then asked to make up a sentence stating a fact and then, using the same sentence content, rewrite it as an opinion.

I decided to show the class a video on government in early Australia. The lesson began by brainstorming what the program might be about. We then watched the program in its entirety. After a brief discussion of the main points students watched the program again and took notes of "important" information. Students then worked in groups to amalgamate their notes.

Students worked in pairs with the work sheet to:

- jot down the main points
- decide on whether each point was a fact or an opinion
- record any other topic information that they had, either from their own experiences or previous lessons.

Pairs joined into groups of four and discussed:

- why they decided if the point was a fact or an opinion
- what clues in the program supported these decisions
- why they thought some information was included and other information was left out.

***My thoughts on the strategy***

This strategy raised an awareness that we cannot take everything on face value. When the students wrote their own fact or opinion sentences, an issue arose in relation to what the difference is between opinion and fiction. Most students thought that if it wasn't a fact then it must be made up. It required a lot of discussion to arrive at definitions of fact, opinion and fiction.

From the information that students wrote as not being included in the program it became obvious that the field building activities completed earlier in the unit were worthwhile. However, whilst students could identify that the program was one person's point of view, many found it difficult to identify specifically why certain information was omitted.

It was interesting to note that in ensuing discussions on current affairs topics, students spontaneously questioned other students on whether what they were saying was fact or opinion.

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

What information did the program give you?

Information	was it Fact	or Opinion?
1786-Arthur Phillip		
made Governor of NSW	✓	
NSW was a penal colony	✓	
The Governor's authority		
was supreme	✓	
Governor did not have to		
listen to advice from		✓
anyone NSW was not		
democratic by today's		✓
standards		

List any information you know that wasn't included in the program.

The law systems of the Aboriginal peoples-  
no mention of Aboriginal culture in the text  
How individual people felt about laws.

In a group discuss:

- How did you decide if it was fact or opinion?
- How did the program lead you to decide this?
- If you know information was missing, why do you think it wasn't included?