

Class: Contemporary Issues

Lesson #1: April 6, 2020

Learning Target: The student will be able to identify different kinds of news stories: reporting and commentary.

Warm Up

In this lesson you'll be learning about different kinds of news articles, but before you do that it may be helpful to review the difference between **facts** and **opinions**. A *fact* is a statement that is known or proven to be true. An *opinion* is a view or judgement formed about something.

Look at the six statements on the right. On a separate sheet of paper, number 1-6 and determine whether each statement is a fact or an opinion (see answer key on the next slide).

We'll use sports as an example!

1. Soccer is the most widely played sport in the world.
2. Baseball is very boring to watch.
3. Lebron James is the highest paid basketball player.
4. Some sports commentators say that Tiger Woods is the greatest golfer alive.
5. Michael Phelps is the greatest swimmer ever.
6. Serena Williams is an entertaining, American tennis player.

Warm Up: Answer Key

1. Soccer is the most widely played sport in the world. - **Fact; this can be proven with data and research.**
2. Baseball is very boring to watch. - **Opinion; You cannot prove that baseball is boring. “Boring” means something different to everyone.**
3. LeBron James is the highest paid basketball player. - **Fact; this can be proven with research**
4. Some sports commentators say that Tiger Woods is the greatest golfer alive. - **Fact; This one is tricky. It may be an opinion that Tiger Woods is the greatest, but it can be proven that commentators have said this about him.**
5. Michael Phelps is the greatest swimmer ever. -**Opinion; Even though he has many Olympic medals you cannot prove that he is great. “Great” is a judgement.**
6. Serena Williams is an entertaining, American tennis player. - **Opinion and Fact; It is an opinion to say that Serena is entertaining, but it is a fact that she is an American tennis player.**

Lesson Activity

News companies and media use both facts and opinions in different ways. When a news article *states factual things that have happened or are happening*, this is known as **reporting**. When a news outlet publishes an article where *the writer gives their opinions, judgments, or predictions about things that have happened* this is known as **commentary**.

On the next slide you will be given excerpts from two different articles about how the Tokyo Olympics has been moved from the summer of 2020 to the summer of 2021 due to the coronavirus outbreak. Please answer the following questions while you read:

1. Which article has more opinions? Why do you think this is?
2. What are some differences in how these pieces are written? Which has more of the author's "voice?"

Lesson Activity

Reporting Article: The Tokyo Olympics will open next year in the same time slot scheduled for this year's games. Tokyo organizers said Monday the opening ceremony will take place on July 23, 2021 -- almost exactly one year after the games were due to start this year. "The schedule for the games is key to preparing for the games," Tokyo organizing committee president Yoshiro Mori said. "This will only accelerate our progress." Last week, the IOC and Japanese organizers postponed the Olympics until 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Source: https://www.espn.com/olympics/story/_/id/28969950/tokyo-olympic-opening-ceremony-rescheduled-july-23-2021

Commentary Article: Re-scheduling an Olympics is not so easy as sending out a new Evite. Athletes need to rebuild their training schedules – yes, even if they're still not able to train yet. The international sports federations need to move their own events. Organizers need to lock down venues for an additional year, secure hotel rooms again, figure out what to do about those tickets that were already sold, rework the hundreds and hundreds of contracts that were already signed ... and on and on it goes. The ripple effects are massive, and the sooner everyone can start wading through them, the better.

Source: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/columnist/nancy-armour/2020/03/30/tokyo-olympics-no-reason-ioc-wait-announcing-new-dates/5086544002/>

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Practice

Pick a big event that has been in the news lately (or make up a fake event of your own). Pretend you are a journalist and write one reporting paragraph and one commentary paragraph about your chosen event. Each paragraph should be about 3-4 sentences.

Reflection

1. Why might it be problematic if people think that all news is factual reporting?
2. Do you think news outlets should focus more on reporting or commentary? Why?