

Fact, Opinion and Bias

English

Level 2 Reading

Sorting statements, spotting bias, judging reliability · 3 parts · 22 marks

Remember

Fact – can be checked and proved true or false. Often contains numbers, dates, names or measurable things. *"The centre opened in 2019."*

Opinion – a belief, view or judgement. Look for words like *best, worst, should, I think, clearly, terrible, wonderful*. *"The centre is the best in the area."*

Bias – when a writer presents only one side, or uses loaded language, so you are pushed towards their view. A biased text can still contain facts – it just chooses which ones to show you.

Careful: a statement can be false and still be a fact (it can be *checked*). And "Experts agree that..." is often an opinion dressed up as a fact.

Part 1 – Fact or opinion? (10 marks)

Write **F** (fact) or **O** (opinion) next to each statement.

	Statement	F / O
1	The Level 2 Functional Skills English reading exam lasts 60 minutes.	
2	Reading exams are far more stressful than writing exams.	
3	Bristol is in the south-west of England.	
4	Everyone should learn to drive before they are 21.	
5	The café sold 212 flat whites last Saturday.	
6	Our flat whites are obviously the best in town.	
7	The new timetable starts on 3 November.	
8	The new timetable is a disaster for anyone who works shifts.	
9	Water boils at 100 °C at sea level.	
10	It is clear that nobody enjoys working weekends.	

Part 2 – Spot the disguised opinion (4 marks)

Each sentence below is written to *sound* like a fact. Underline the word or phrase that shows it is really an opinion.

11. Experts agree that four-day weeks make people happier.

12. It is a well-known fact that this is the most beautiful beach in Wales.

13. Any sensible person can see that the road needs closing.
14. The evidence clearly shows the new app is a waste of money.

Part 3 – Bias and reliability (8 marks)

Text A – post on a residents' Facebook group

Another week, another pointless "consultation" from the council about closing Mill Lane to cars. Let's be clear: this scheme is a disaster waiting to happen. It will strangle local businesses, trap elderly residents in their homes and turn Station Road into a car park. A handful of cycling fanatics have been shouting loudest, and the council – as usual – has listened only to them. The so-called survey they keep quoting was answered by just 312 people, out of a town of 20,000. Wake up, Brookford. Sign the petition before it's too late.

Text B – from the council's information page

Brookford Council is consulting on a proposal to restrict through-traffic on Mill Lane between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Of the 312 residents who responded to the initial survey, 58% supported the proposal, 31% opposed it and 11% were undecided. Similar schemes in Ashby and Redmere led to a 22% fall in traffic on the restricted roads and an 8% rise in traffic on neighbouring streets. Some local businesses have raised concerns about deliveries; the council is reviewing loading-bay options. The consultation closes on 14 March. All residents are invited to respond online or at the library.

15. Give **two** examples of language in Text A that show the writer is biased against the scheme. Explain what each one does. (4 marks)
- _____
- _____
- _____
16. Both texts mention the figure **312**. Explain how each writer uses it differently. (2 marks)
- _____
- _____
17. Which text is more reliable as a source of information about the Mill Lane scheme? Give **two** reasons. (2 marks)
- _____
- _____

Exam tip: when a question asks you to compare how reliable two texts are, look at (1) who wrote it and why, (2) whether it gives both sides, (3) whether the facts can be checked, and (4) the type of language used.

Fact, Opinion and Bias – Answers

Level 2 Reading

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Part 1

1 F 2 O 3 F 4 O 5 F 6 O 7 F 8 O 9 F 10 O

Note 10: "It is clear that" does not make it a fact – you cannot check what "nobody" enjoys.

Part 2

11. "Experts agree" (which experts? "happier" cannot be measured)
12. "It is a well-known fact" and "most beautiful"
13. "Any sensible person can see"
14. "clearly" and "a waste of money"

Part 3

15. Any two, with explanation, e.g.: *"pointless 'consultation'"* – the quotation marks sneer at the council and suggest it is not genuine; *"disaster waiting to happen"* – emotive exaggeration with no evidence; *"strangle local businesses, trap elderly residents"* – emotive rule of three that presents predictions as certainties; *"cycling fanatics"* – insulting label that dismisses the other side; *"so-called survey"* – undermines the evidence without explaining why. 1 mark per example + 1 per explanation.
16. Text A uses 312 to make the survey seem tiny and worthless ("just 312... out of 20,000"). Text B uses 312 as the base for its percentages (58% supported) and presents it neutrally. Same fact, opposite purpose.
17. **Text B**, because: it comes from the official body running the scheme and gives verifiable figures (percentages, named towns, dates); it includes the arguments *against* (business concerns, traffic rising on other streets) so it is more balanced; its language is neutral rather than emotive. Text A is anonymous, one-sided and uses insults and exaggeration. (Any two.)

Where students lose marks on fact/opinion questions

- Assuming anything with a number in it is a fact. "A handful of cycling fanatics" contains no checkable number – it is opinion.
- Saying a text is "biased" without quoting the words that show it.
- Saying a text is reliable "because it's from the council" – give a reason from the *text itself* (balance, figures, neutral language).