

# Be Media Savvy

## Key Terms and Concepts

television      radio      newspaper      news magazine  
Internet      medium/media      news sources      fact versus opinion

## Purpose

To identify, compare and evaluate news sources.

## Objectives

### Students will—

- Translate a newspaper story into a story for other media.
- Analyze the impact of different media on the story and the information seeker.
- Present and evaluate media stories.
- Identify and compare statements of fact or opinion.

### Activities

- “Across the Media”
- “Say It With Sound and Pictures”
- “Fact Versus Opinion”

### Home Connection

- Get the News Survey

### Linking Across the Curriculum

- Science



## Materials

- Copies of a relevant newspaper article or an article from “Checking the Facts” on page 20.

## “Across the Media” Activity

(set up: 10 minutes; conduct: 45 minutes)

1. Divide the class into four groups. Assign each a news medium: radio, television, news magazine or the Internet.

**TEACHING NOTE:** If your groups are too large to allow for a productive, cooperative team, you may wish to divide them once again.

2. As you read the news article to the class, have students take notes. Distribute copies of the article and have each group follow the steps for its assigned medium.
  - Radio: Write a one-minute radio script that describes the scene and makes use of quotes from the article.
  - Television: Draw or describe a series of images that would be used to tell the story.
  - News magazine: Write the captions for several possible photos that might be included in a news magazine cover article.
  - Internet: Draw a diagram for an Internet story, including a list of “highlighted” terms, buttons for resource links and other buttons that illustrate electronic enhancements that could be used to make the story interactive.
3. After the groups have completed their assignments, have them present them to the class. After all the presentations, have students discuss the differences among the media. What is the impact of each? Are there times you would prefer to use one medium rather than another? Why?
4. Create a class chart that describes the strengths and weaknesses of each medium as a source of news and information. Does the medium affect the message? How does the medium affect the user or information seeker?



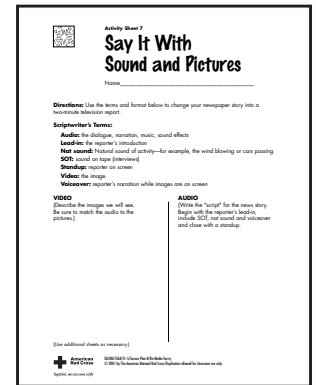
## Materials

- Several newspapers and magazines
- **Activity Sheet 7:** *Say It With Sound and Pictures* (1 page)

## “Say It With Sound and Pictures” Activity

(set up: 5 minutes; conduct: two class periods)

1. As a class, brainstorm about the elements of an effective television news story (powerful, colorful or dramatic images; effective interviews; sounds at the scene; clear, concise reporting).
2. Divide the class into production teams. Have each team go through stories from newspapers and magazines to find one that would make an effective two-minute television news story.
3. Distribute Activity Sheet 7. Have students complete the handout, using the scriptwriter’s terms and illustrating or describing the images for their story.
4. Have students present their scripts with on-screen talent (the reporter), sound engineer (for natural sound effects), interviewee to deliver “quoted” material and video editor to describe the changing images.
5. As a class, discuss the changes that occurred from the written word to the video production. What information was left out because of time limits? How would on-the-scene video and sound make the story more dramatic? How were quotes cut to make more effective “sound bites” and keep the story moving?
6. Have students consider how these changes affect the viewer. Is it important to get your information from more than one medium? Why?



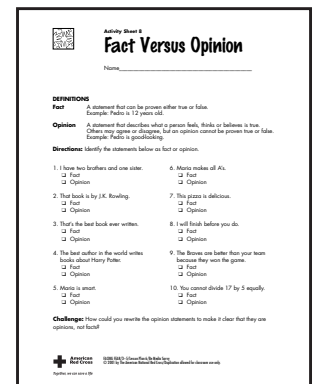
## Materials

- **Activity Sheet 8:** *Fact Versus Opinion* (1 page)
- Newspapers and magazines

## “Fact Versus Opinion” Activity

(set up: 10 minutes; conduct: 30-40 minutes)

1. Have students complete Activity Sheet 8. (Answers on page 26.) As a class, discuss the statements and the student designations. Were some statements more difficult to distinguish? Why?
2. Have student groups go through magazines and newspapers to find statements they would designate as fact or opinion. Determine the appropriateness of the use of opinion within the articles.
3. Have students share their statements with the class and see if the class agrees with their designations. Have students create a list of clues for differentiating between fact and opinion.



Examples include—

- The use of phrases such as “I believe” and “It seems to me”
- Descriptors such as “unattractive,” “beautiful” and “frightening”

4. Is it ever appropriate to use opinion in a news story? Why or why not? Where are opinions found in newspapers, in magazines or on radio and television broadcasts?



## Home Connection

### Get the News Survey

Have students survey family members to determine their two most often used news media sources. Have students include within their survey the gender and age of each family member interviewed.



## Wrap-up

As a class, correlate the data from the Get the News Survey. Have students create pie charts to illustrate their findings. Challenge students to use the data, the student analysis and the charts in a newspaper feature article entitled “How We Get Our News.”



## Linking Across the Curriculum

### SCIENCE

Set up three groups. One group watches and listens to a taped video news segment. One group only listens to the video. One group reads a newspaper account of the same story. Give each group the same quick quiz on the material. Which group is better able to answer the questions? What does this imply for learning? What does this imply for evaluating how the general public receives its information?

**TEACHING NOTE:** For a more scientific study, have students set this up several times with different stories and with students changing groups to allow for different learning styles and prior knowledge. This is an excellent tool to help students understand how they learn.

Answers to Activity Sheet 8

1. Fact, 2. Fact, 3. Opinion, 4. Opinion, 5. Opinion, 6. Fact, 7. Opinion, 8. Opinion, 9. Opinion, 10. Fact

If you add “I believe,” “I think,” “In my opinion,” “To me,” or other phrases, you clarify that your statement is an opinion.