

Facts or Feelings?: Objective vs. Subjective Information

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Whether you're writing a report, reading a book, or talking to a friend, *there are two types of information*: **objective information** and **subjective information**, and it's incredibly important to be able to distinguish between the two!

Objective information is information that is purely facts, and isn't influenced by personal opinions whatsoever. On the other hand, **subjective information** is based entirely on feelings and experiences, and may or may not be true all the time.

You may be wondering *why it's so important* that you're able to distinguish between the two. Well, not being able to tell the difference between real information or someone's opinion can hurt someone or even spread **fake news**.

Let's look at a real-world example. If you've ever been in school, you probably know the weight that teasing or spreading rumors can hold. If someone says that they think another kid is ugly, this is obviously a personal opinion (although it's very hurtful and even, depending on the context, bullying). But regardless of whether this is factually true, the "fact" that someone is ugly can spread around a class or even a grade level frighteningly quickly.

When it comes to reading pieces of writing or writing something yourself, it's just as important that you pay attention to objective information and subjective points of view. If you aren't careful enough, you could mistakenly cite someone's opinion as absolute fact, or you could make a solid fact sound opinionated. Here are some things to look out for in someone else's writing when judging whether it's facts or feelings:

*Please keep in mind that sentences with these phrases are almost certainly subjective or objective, but writing could actually be in a category without key phrases. If you're reading something (ESPECIALLY something on the Internet, which may or may not be written by an expert) and you're not sure whether something is credible or not, please double check using the steps show in **this article**.*

Key Phrases for Subjective Writing:

- I (don't) think...
- I (don't) feel...
- I (don't) believe...

- I (don't) like...

Key Phrases for Objective Writing:

- It's been proven that...
- It's been shown that...
- _____ is _____...
- (Scientists, doctors, lawyers, studies, or some other credible source with attribution) have shown that...

Another thing that makes distinguishing between subjective and objective writing important is when you are told to do something for a test or essay. The instructions of a prompt may or not be clear in whether you need to show your opinion, or simply state facts. Looking for keywords can be very helpful in this situation. Here are some keywords to look for in essay prompts:

Keywords for Subjective Writing:

- ...you believe...
- ...show why you think that
- ...appreciate...
- ...how/why YOU _____...
- ...agree... / ...disagree...

Keywords for Objective Writing:

- ...describe...
- ...summarize...
- ...demonstrate...
- ...compare...

I feel like you understand this now, so that's all for today!
See you next time.

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