

Introduction

- A. Background
- B. Rationale
- C. Evaluating information
- D. Distinguishing fact from opinion, assumption, generalization
- E. Promoting facts in writing
- F. Conclusion

Evaluating Information

Examine materials by Stanford History Education Group's study in online reasoning (from <https://sheg.stanford.edu/> >> Civic Online Reasoning-Assessments)

Expository Writing for ESL Reading and Writing Courses

A. Distinguishing Fact from Opinion and Specific Details:

Read each sentence and label it O (opinion), F-NP (fact that needs proof), or SSD (specific supporting detail).

1. _____ People who steal identities do a lot of damage before their victims become aware of it.
2. _____ Punishment for identity thieves is not severe enough.
3. _____ As of 2010, credit card fraud accounted for 17 percent of reported identity theft.
4. _____ Identity theft is more serious than any other type of theft.
5. _____ Identity theft is increasing at a rapid rate.
6. _____ In 2000, 31,000 cases of identity theft were reported to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC); in 2009, the number was 278,000.
7. _____ Many people do not report identity theft to the police.
8. _____ In 2009, 28 percent of identity theft victims did not notify the police, according to the FTC.
9. _____ Identity theft happens to ordinary people, not just to the wealthy.
10. _____ The police should do more to protect citizens from identity theft.

(from *Longman Academic Writing 4* by Oshima and Hogue, Pearson: 5th ed. 2017.)

B. Recognizing Truth Twisting: *Write T if the statement uses only truthful methods; write S if the statement is slanted by bias, prejudice, or propaganda.*

11. _____ Tom Hanks arrived at the awards dinner wearing a handsome, double-breasted suit designed by Giorgio Armani.
12. _____ Oh, she's your typical feminist—she complains and causes trouble.
13. _____ I'm considering all points of view before I decide.
14. _____ There's nothing wrong with overeating. All of my relatives are overweight, and they've lived to a ripe old age.

(from *All of Us* by Wiener and Bazerman, Houghton Mifflin, 1999.)

Fact-based writing at work

Explicit directions in writing using facts.
 Use short models and side-by-side comparisons. Vocabulary is the key.

Describing a person using facts

Work with a partner. Put a check ✓ next to the sentences that are factual. Put an X next to sentences that are not factual.

1. _____ Clara looks so cute when she smiles.
2. _____ Clara crawls over to the basket and the toys.
3. _____ Clara, a toddler, can stand with support.
4. _____ Clara loves the basket with colored balls.
5. _____ Those balls are interesting toys for boys and girls.
6. _____ Clara puts the ball into the box.
7. _____ She played with the ball and the box for about 10 minutes.
8. _____ Clara is a happy baby with an easy temperament.
9. _____ (your own fact) _____.
10. _____ (your own opinion) _____.

(English for Child Development, by Brems, Chan, & Rosner, Sunburst Media, 2017)

Describing an environment objectively

<p><u>Model 1:</u> room / well-lit A: Is the room <u>well-lit</u> ? B: Yes, it is. It's <u>well-lit</u>. It's not <u>poorly-lit</u>.</p>	<p><u>Model 2:</u> chairs / adult-sized A: Are the chairs <u>adult-sized</u> ? B: No, they aren't. They're <u>child-sized</u>. or room / chilly A: Is the room chilly? B: I'm not sure. I can't tell from the picture. It seems warm and sunny.</p>
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1. furniture / new?
2. environment / spacious?
3. classroom / poorly-lit?
4. room / crowded?
5. environment/ noisy?
6. walls / painted?
7. furniture / adult-sized?
8. chairs / in good condition?
9. room / warm
10. classroom / poorly maintained



Summary and Conclusion

1. This **is** / **is not** (circle one) an advertisement because _____

2. This **is** / **is not** (circle one) an advertisement because _____

3. This **is** / **is not** (circle one) an advertisement because _____

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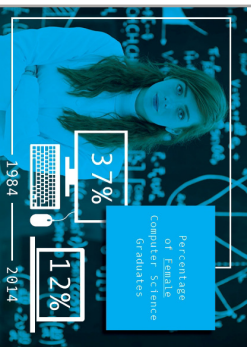
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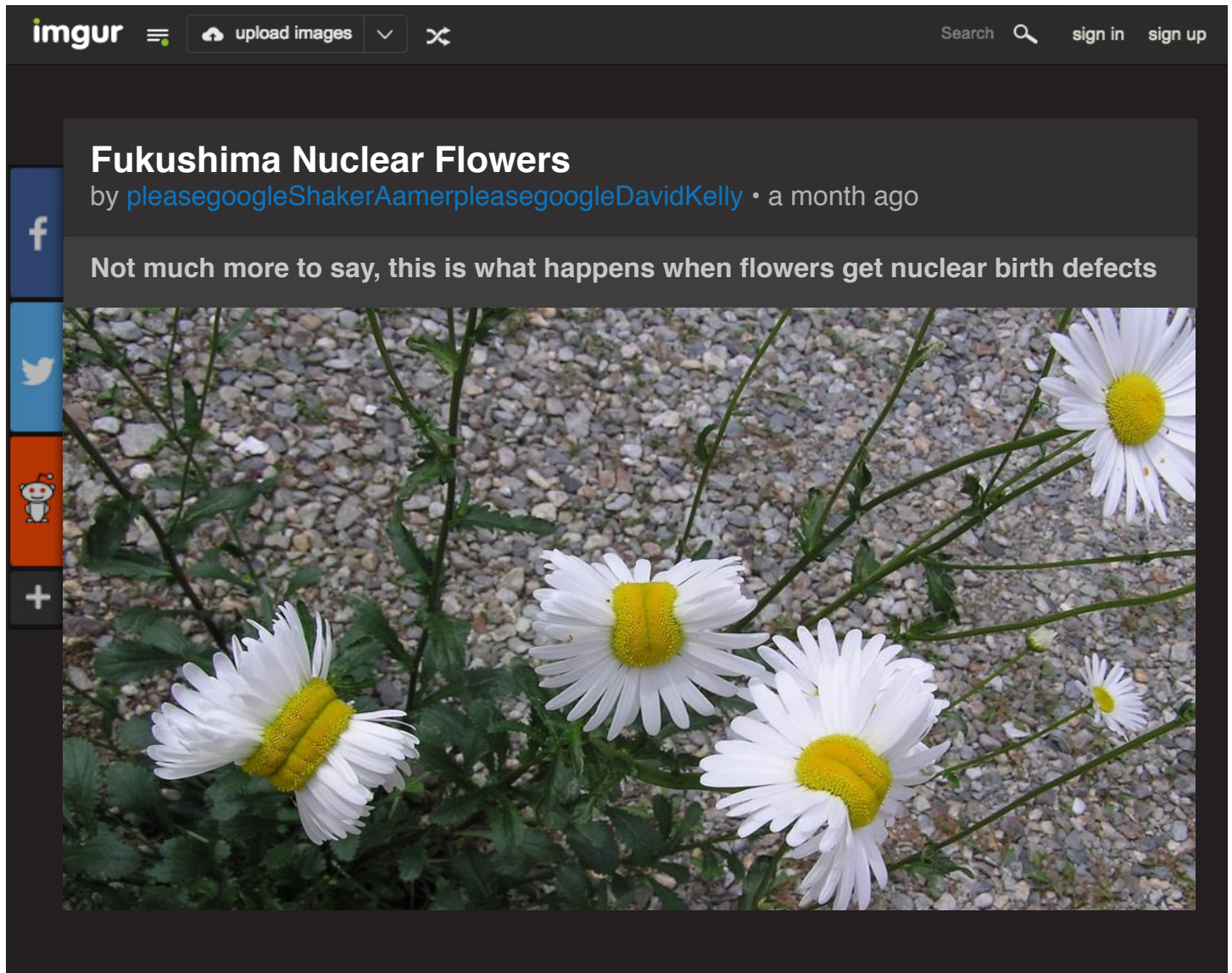
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On March 11, 2011, there was a large nuclear disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant in Japan. This image was posted on Imgur, a photo sharing website, in July 2015.



The image is a screenshot of an Imgur post. At the top, the Imgur logo is on the left, and 'upload images' with a dropdown arrow and a close icon are in the center. On the right, there are links for 'Search', 'sign in', and 'sign up'. The post title is 'Fukushima Nuclear Flowers' in bold white text on a dark background. Below the title, it says 'by pleasegoogleShakerAamerpleasegoogleDavidKelly • a month ago'. A social media sharing bar on the left includes icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit. The main content of the post is a photograph of several white daisies with yellow centers growing from a gravelly ground. The caption below the photo reads: 'Not much more to say, this is what happens when flowers get nuclear birth defects'.

Does this post provide strong evidence about the conditions near the Fukushima Daiichi Power Plant? Explain your reasoning.
