

Fact vs. Interpretation

This activity will help you to practice how to differentiate facts from interpretations so you can live a life based on reality rather than fiction.

Remember: an accurate observation of a person's behavior is a fact while a judgement of the person's behavior or situation is based on our interpretation of it.

Read the following statements and determine whether you think the statement is a fact ("F") or an interpretation ("I"). On the second page you will find the correct answer.

1. _____ Ana was lying.
2. _____ Mark didn't paint the walls right.
3. _____ That is the second time Maria takes the dog out for a walk today.
4. _____ Holly kept talking even after Ana asked her to stop.
5. _____ My mom was discouraged to peruse that job.
6. _____ Linda talked about politics during dinner.
7. _____ My brother is disappointed in me.
8. _____ I think Amy forgot that we had plans for dinner tonight.
9. _____ My husband and I misinterpreted what we were saying to each other.
10. _____ Kelly was upset during the meeting.

Answers to **Fact vs. Interpretation**

1. I Ana was lying.
We can never be certain if someone is being completely sincere or is lying.
2. I Mark didn't paint the walls right.
This interpretation is based on standards of what good/right might be or should be for the observer. A fact of this statement would be "there are 4 parts of the wall that you can see were not painted."
3. F That is the second time Maria takes the dog out for a walk today.
You can count the times that Maria has taken the dog out in one day.
4. F Holly kept talking even after Ana asked her to stop.
This is an accurate description of the event. You're not adding judgement or providing an explanation or opinion about it.
5. I My mom was discouraged to peruse that job.
This may be an accurate interpretation, but it is still a guess about why she didn't peruse that job. A fact would be "My mom didn't peruse that job."
6. F Linda talked about politics during dinner.
It is an accurate description of what Linda talked about.
7. I My brother is disappointed in me.
This may be an accurate interpretation, but it is still a guess about his emotional state.
8. I I think Amy forgot that we had plans for dinner tonight.
This may be an accurate interpretation, but it is still a guess about why she missed dinner plans. There might be other possibilities besides forgetting (i.e. getting sick, having an emergency).
9. I My husband and I misinterpreted what we were saying to each other.
This could be an accurate interpretation, but there are still other possibilities, it's not a fact that information was misinterpreted.
10. I Kelly was upset during the meeting.
This could be an accurate interpretation, but there are still other possibilities about what was happening to Kelly during the meeting.