

Reading – Facts vs. Opinions

1) You will be working with the following advertisement.

- a) Skim through the text. What does the text advertise?
- b) Read it in a more detail and write down the features of the program.
- c) Go through the text once more and focus on the language of the advertisement. You might want to pay attention to the grammatical person or to repetition.

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(adapted from Jones, Leo. *New Cambridge Advanced English*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998.)

Identifying fact and opinion

- 1) *Read texts 1-3. Find one or more examples of the following material in **each** text.*
 - a. A fact based on reliable evidence
 - b. The author's opinion

(adapted from De Chazal, Edward and Sam McCarter. *Oxford EAP: A Course in English for Academic Purposes*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012.)

Text 1:

Are vegetarians more healthy or less? The answer depends first on the degree of vegetarianism. Vegans, who eat no animal products, are at risk of Vitamin B-12 deficiency.

Supplements are essential during pregnancy and for infants of vegans. Vegans lack the best dietary sources of calcium – milk, yogurt, and cheese.

Lacto-ovo-vegetarians have no absolute nutritional risk. They miss the best absorbed form of iron in the diet, haem iron, but may largely compensate because ascorbic acid enhances the absorption of non—haem iron. [...]

On the whole vegetarians appear to have lower risk of obesity, coronary heart disease [7], hypertension, and possibly some cancers.

References

[7]. Thorogood, M., Mann, J.I., Appleby, P., & McPherson, K. (1994). Risk of death from cancer and ischaemic heart disease in meat and non-meat eaters. *British Medical Journal*, 308, 1667-71.

Source: Truswell, A. S. (2003), p. 039. *ABC of Nutrition* (4th ed.). London: BMJ Books.

Text 2:

Vegetarian diets have also been promoted for their apparent cardioprotective effect. Vegetarians are indeed at lower risk of CHD than meat eaters, but it has not been established which attributes of the vegetarian diet might be protective since there are many aspects other than the avoidance of meat that characterizes these diets. One study suggests that the lower rates might be due to the relatively low intake of saturated fatty acids rather than meat avoidance.

Source: Truswell, A. S. & Mann, J. (Eds.). (2007)./ *Essentials of Human Nutrition* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Text 3:

A varied wholefood vegan diet contains adequate levels of energy and protein to sustain good health in all age groups, as evidenced by studies of vegans across the world. National and international recommendations for protein intake can be easily met on a vegan diet. [...] Vegans eat the recommended amounts of protein and energy, unlike most omnivores who consume too much protein, which can have health disadvantages. And, from a wider health perspective, it is significant that animal protein is often associated with saturated fat, while plant protein is usually associated with fiber.

Source: Langley, G. (1995). *Vegan Nutrition* (2nd ed.). St Leonards-on-Sea: The Vegan Society.

2) Compare texts 1-3 and write short answers to the following questions.

- a. How objective does the text appear to be?
- b. Which text has the most opinion in it?
- c. How clearly presented is the cited material?

Read Text 4, a textbook extract. Identify a) cited material, b) references to cited material, and c) the authors' own material.

Text 4:

An almost universal finding has been that vegetarians and vegans are lighter in weight than their meat-eating counterparts. The Oxford cohort of the EPIC Study found a difference of 1 unit of BMI [Spencer et al 2003]. The lower BMI would be expected to be associated with a decreased risk of type 2 diabetes and gallstones. However, BMI tends to fall abruptly over the age of 60 in vegetarians and especially vegans compared with meat-eaters, which suggests that elderly vegans may have difficulty maintaining muscle mass in old age. This is of concern as a low body mass is associated with increased mortality particularly from respiratory disorders. As vegans have a low proportion of body fat, the decrease in BMI with age is likely to be due to a decrease in muscle mass. This finding would be consistent with the lower reported concentrations of insulin-like growth factor 1 (IGF-1) in vegans compared with omnivores [Allen et al 2000].

References:

- Allen, N. E., Appleby, P. N., Davey, G. K., & Key, T. J. (2000). Hormones and diet: low insulin-like growth factor-I but abnormal bioavailable androgens in vegan men. *British Journal of Cancer*, 83, 095-7.
- Spencer, E. A., Appleby, P. N., Davey, G. K., & Key, T. J. (2003). Diet and body mass index in 38000 EPIC-Oxford meat-eaters, fish-eaters, vegetarians and vegans. *International Journal of Obesity and Related Metabolic Disorders*, 27, 728-34.

- 1) Work in pairs and discuss the following questions.
 - a) Is the authors' material clearly distinguished from the cited material?
 - b) How did you work out which material was the authors' and which was citation?
 - c) Why do the in-text references come *after* the citations in this text?

- 2) Select two sentences from Text 4 to paraphrase. Then exchange paraphrases and answer the following questions.
 - a) How easy is it to identify the original sentences in Text 2?
 - b) How clear is the meaning and language of the paraphrases?