

SKILL: Contrast and Evaluate Fact and Opinion

Bold Plans, Big Dreams, City Progress

7th Grade Nonfiction

Center for Urban Education at DePaul University © 2008

2009 was a very important year in Chicago. Barack Obama became President. This newly elected leader brought a bold plan to the Presidency. He proposed major changes. He is Chicago's great leader for this century. Barack Obama started his career in Chicago as a community organizer. Community organizers work with people to make progress as a group. Barack Obama has brought a new vision to government, emphasizing the importance of each person working together to bring about change. He is asking communities to work together to change the nation. Now some people are calling him the "national organizer".

2009 was important to Chicago for another reason, too. It was the 100th anniversary of a change that led to great Chicago progress. That was the Burnham Plan, which is named for an architect, Daniel Burnham. Usually architects plan buildings, and he did that, but he planned cities. It is because of his work as a city planner that we remember him—he made a great difference to everyone who lives in Chicago. Daniel Burnham worked with other leaders. They planned to improve Chicago's transportation, parks, health, water, and housing. Burnham's plan would help solve Chicago problems, problems that were very serious.

Burnham saw big problems. When he saw crowded streets, he didn't just think of making the road wider. He thought "out of the box"—he thought of ways to solve the problems that would change the city. For example, he said Chicago should have two levels of its main streets downtown so that trucks could travel on the lower level. He thought of solutions that changed the systems of the city. He was a visionary, he was a really clever person who thinks about things differently, who sees what is and looks ahead what could be. He looked at the city and saw problems and possibilities.

Burnham made drawings to show his ideas to people. He needed to get their support. He talked with other leaders about the problems and plans. He made speeches. He was persuasive. He was persistent. That really dedicated man never gave up on his plans. A friend of his named Charles Wacker helped. He put together a wonderful book called the Wacker Manual. It told about the Burnham plan. Every 8th grade student read that book. It was their social studies textbook.

Plans don't make progress. People do. Leaders and citizens make the changes. In 1909, city leaders adopted Burnham's big plan. Then they had to get money to pay for the changes he wanted. It took years, and some of the plans didn't work out, but many of Burnham's ideas are part of Chicago today. Of course, that is disappointing that some of his ideas did not take place. They would have really helped the city.

One person did not make that progress. Leaders worked to support it. Citizens voted to fund it. It takes a lot of work to make big changes. It takes leadership, and it takes collaboration. It takes determination to make a difference, and that's hard to do in a big city. But if Burnham did it, we can, too, so let's work together to make Chicago even greater.

Directions: Choose the best answer for each question

1. Which of these words tells you this statement is an opinion? "This newly elected leader brought a bold plan to the Presidency."

- a. newly
- b. leader
- c. bold
- d. Presidency

2. Which of these words tells you this is an opinion?

- a. visionary
- b. clever
- c. differently
- d. ahead

3. Which of these is a statement of fact?

- a. That really dedicated man never gave up.
- b. He put together a wonderful book.
- c. Of course, that is disappointing.
- d. One person did not make that progress.

4. Which of these phrases is an opinion?

- a. great leader for this century
- b. worked to support
- c. plan buildings
- d. community organizer

5. *Write your own answer to this question.*

Choose a statement from the passage that is an opinion. Write it here.

How do you know it is an opinion?

TEACHER NOTES: Develop Students' Skills: Exercise Thinking

These questions have not been validated, so decisions about student's achievement should not be made based on their responses. They are intended to exercise skills. Recommended activities include: students work in pairs to choose the best response; give students the questions without the responses so they generate their own answers; students make up additional questions; students make up questions like these for another passage.

Answers: You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.

Item	1	2	3	4
Answer	c	b	d	a

Question 5 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

5. Students should identify a statement of opinion and explain that it is not a fact.

SKILL: Contrast and Evaluate Fact and Opinion

The Republic of Kenya is a country in East Africa. Ethiopia borders Kenya to the north. Kenya is bordered by Somalia to the northeast, Tanzania to the south, Uganda to the west. On the Southeast is the Indian Ocean.

Mount Kenya is the highest point in this country. It is a wonderful place to see a great country. It really is the second highest mountain peak in Africa. Kenyans have much to be proud of, including a history of great cultures. This area was a trading center. And it still is a nature center. There are many acres of wildlife habitat where you can see native animals of Africa, especially lions, leopards, and elephants.

Part of their history was a time of problems. At some times, other countries attacked to take over the country. There was much fighting. Kenya was made a British colony. That meant that Kenyans did not rule their own land.

The native people of Kenya believed in independence. They did not want to be a colony. It took years, but they got their land back. Kenya became independent in 1963, and the Kenyan people declared not only their independence but formed a country. They took the name Kenya as the name of their country.

Kenya has a long history, and people lived there for thousands of years before the British took over. If you go to a museum in Kenya, you will see objects that people made hundreds of years ago. You will see that there were great leaders in the past. You will find that there are several different cultures within this one country.

Today Kenya's economy relies on tourism and agriculture. The country exports many food products. Kenya has some of the most beautiful game parks and national parks on the continent. People come to see the animals living as they have lived for centuries.

There are different groups of people in Kenya. It was not one country before it became a colony. Different groups lived in different places and had their own languages and ways of living. After independence, they joined together in one country, but they still have differences.

The Kikuyu are one group in Kenya. They have lived there for centuries. When the area became a colony, one of the Kikuyu leaders helped bring about progress. That leader was named Jomo Kenyatta. He would become the first president of Kenya. Another Kikuyu has been a world leader. She is Wangari Maathai. She won the Nobel Peace Prize for her accomplishments to help people work together for progress.

There are other culture groups within Kenya. While they are from the same region they have different histories. Each has its own traditions. Traditions should be respected. While most people in Kenya speak and write in English because of the colonial years, each culture has its own language and history. There still are problems having a united country.

In 2008, all the people of Kenya joined together in pride. That was the year that the son of a Kenyan was elected the President of the United States. Barack Obama's family includes people living in Kenya today as well as in the United States. We now have a very special connection to this great African country.

Directions: Choose the best answer for each question.

6. Which of these is an opinion?
- a. This area was a trading center.
 - b. It still is a nature center.
 - c. Traditions should be respected.
 - d. They did not want to be a colony.

8. Why would a writer include opinions when writing about a topic?
- a. To make the facts clear.
 - b. To get the reader to believe something.
 - c. To use the facts to tell a story.
 - d. To question the facts.

7. Which of these is a fact?
- a. We now have a very special connection to this great African country.
 - b. While they are from the same region, they have different histories.
 - c. Kenyans have much to be proud of, including a history of great cultures.
 - d. It is a wonderful place to see a great country.

9. How do you know this is a fact? "Mount Kenya is the second highest mountain in Africa."
- a. It tells information you can check.
 - b. It tells about something special.
 - c. It is about the topic.
 - d. It uses the word really.

10. Write your own answer to this question.

Choose a statement from the passage that is a fact. Write it here.

How do you know it is a fact?

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Recommended activities include: students work in pairs to choose the best response; give students the questions without the responses so they generate their own answers; students make up additional questions; students make up questions like these for another passage.

Answers: You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.

Item	6	7	8	9
Answer	c	b	b	a

Question 10 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

10. Students should identify a statement of fact and explain that it is verifiable.