Name _____ Date _____

Fact and Opinion: Can You Tell the Difference?

People use both facts and opinions when they are talking about history. Here's how you tell the difference:

- A **fact** is something you can prove. For example, facts can be measured, observed, or looked up in official records.
- An **opinion** is something a person believes, thinks, or feels. An opinion can be supported by evidence, but it can't be proved true for everyone.

Take a look at examples of a fact and an opinion about the Declaration of Independence.

John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Josiah Bartlett all signed the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

This statement is a **fact**. It can be proved by looking at the original document and seeing those three names among the many signatures.

The Declaration of Independence is the most significant document on display at the National Archives Museum.

This statement is an **opinion**. The words "most significant" show this is what one person believes. Another person might think that the U.S. Constitution or the Bill of Rights is more important.

Practice

Read each of the statements below and decide whether it is a fact or an opinion. Using the explanations above as your model, write a sentence to justify your answer.

1. The Revolutionary War lasted longer than the War of 1812.

2. Alexander Hamilton's contributions to the U.S. financial system are difficult to explain.

3. In 1959, Hawaii became the 50th state in the United States.

4. Once United States citizens turn eighteen, they should all vote in every election.

5. William Harding became president of the United States in 1921.

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