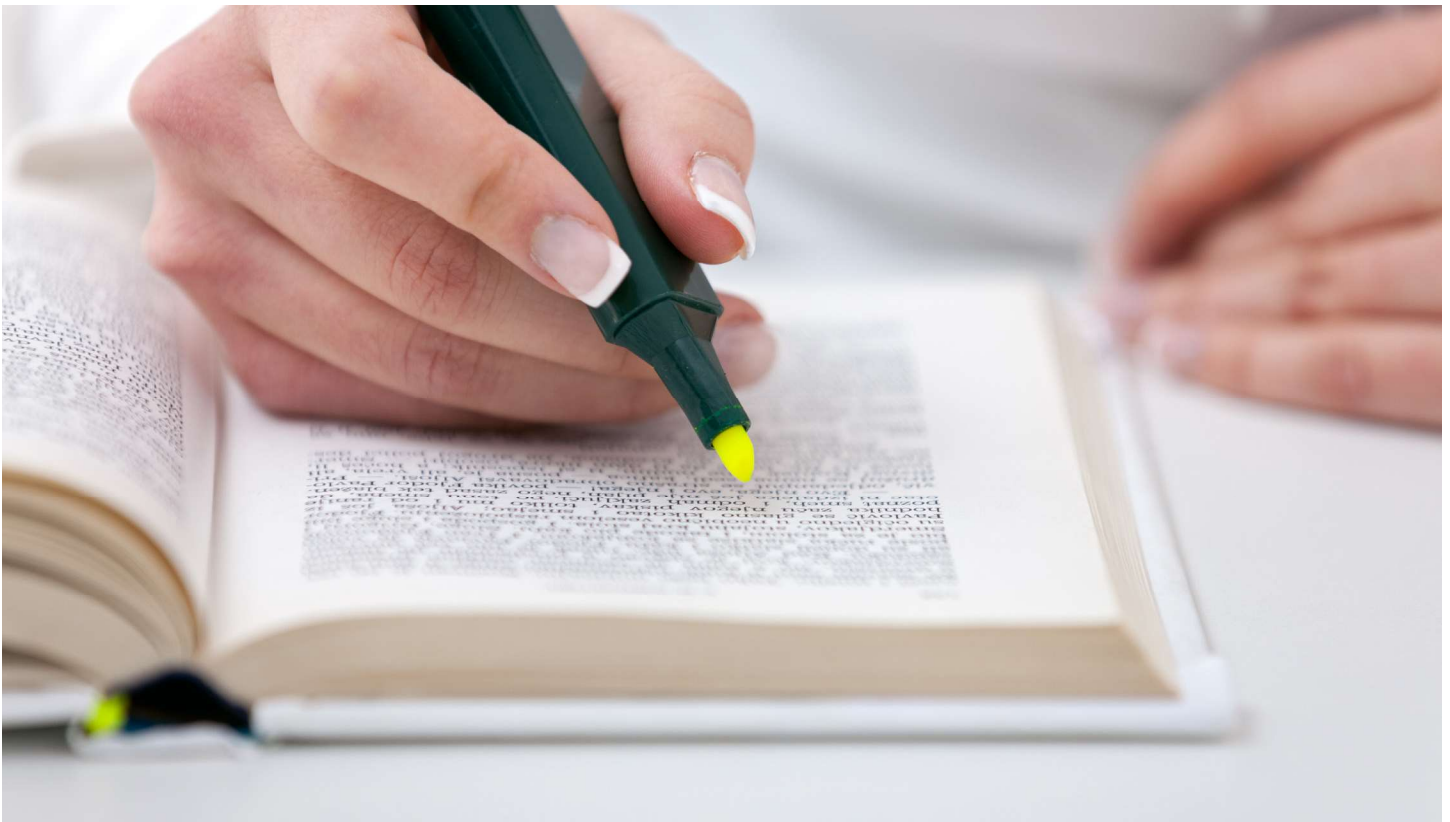


## FACT-FINDER EXERCISE

Our reality is largely made up of our perceptions and beliefs, not facts. Most ideas and theories are based on experience and opinion, so much so that we come to view opinions and judgments as facts. Since we're all having our own experience, how can we know what's fact and what's opinion?



## SO, WHAT IS A FACT?

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It's something that's measurable or always true. For example, saying one plus one equals two or Nebraska is a state. An opinion, however, is a view or judgment not necessarily based on fact.

When pursuing a goal, what you view as fact about yourself can get in the way of your success. What we tell ourselves and what we've heard others say about us can become so ingrained that we view these things as facts rather than perceptions or opinions.

For instance, if you scored low on a pre-algebra test in junior high school, you may have told yourself you're not good at math. Perhaps you just weren't developmentally ready for the concepts of pre-algebra at the time or weren't properly prepared for that

particular test. Experiencing repeated struggles in math without positive support from others will reinforce your opinion that you are not talented in math. If you hear messages like "girls aren't as good at math," this also might reinforce your belief.

Throughout the course of our lives, we create stories about ourselves and our abilities based on assessments. This mix-up between opinion and fact shapes who we become. We might only take on challenges we feel fully equipped to handle based on our experience so far. In essence, we might allow our opinions about ourselves and the world to limit our potential.

The key to success is creating a new story. The first step in that process is deconstructing your story.

## Activity

### FOR 7 DAYS, HIGHLIGHT FACTS AND OPINIONS IN THE DAILY NEWSPAPER

- **With a blue highlighter, highlight facts.** Example: “A 33-year-old man was arrested yesterday” and “The council vote was 3 to 7 to pass Amendment 22.”
- **With a yellow highlighter, highlight opinions.** Example: “The cop was courageous in his pursuit of the suspect” and “The victim was distraught” and “The ice skater performed a breathtaking routine.”

**Look at the newspaper and notice how much yellow highlighting there is versus blue highlighting.**

- How do you think this pattern might be reflected in your own thought process?
- Would your self-reflections mainly be highlighted in blue or yellow?

