

Climate change: Fact or opinion?

Subject Geography | Social Studies
Level medium
Duration 30 minutes

EXERCISE

K

Learning Opportunity

Competence	Detailed description
Social and civic competences	The pupils are aware of current issues relating to contemporary Greenland, both in terms of climate change and also related social and economic concerns.
Basic science competences	The pupils can judge the quality of contemporary sources
Learning to learn	Pupils learn to critique and evaluate contemporary sources.

Overview

Min.	Topic	Tasks for the pupils	Tasks for the teacher	Material
20	What are facts or opinion in a text	Using two different colours, highlight the elements within the worksheets that they consider to be 'fact' or 'opinion'.	Provide guidance as required by pupils during the activity.	One copy for each pupil of worksheet K1 or similar articles about climate change chosen by the teacher
10	Discussion and debrief of the answers	Discuss, whether all parts can be clearly defined as 'fact' or 'opinion'	Guide discussion, compare results and eventually ask questions	Results of the pupils

Detailed Description

‘Fact or opinion’ exercises are designed to develop a pupil’s capability to critique texts and distinguish between ‘facts’ and ‘opinions’, they are also likely to highlight grey areas where it is less than straightforward that a statement is either fact or opinion. Discussion of such grey areas is to be encouraged as this is likely to enhance pupils’ awareness of the complexity of text while at the same time developing competences in relation to the potential for seemingly objective texts to be less objective than might at first appear to be the case. In such cases, it is important that the pupils are encouraged to consider the perspectives from which a text has been produced. For instance, if we take the sentence: ‘climate change is evident in current extreme weather events based on rising global temperatures and sea water levels’. This sentence is not simply opinion or fact, but is also partially a contested claim. An understanding of such nuances enhances the analytical capacity of the pupils.

STEP 1

Provide the pupils with the ‘Fact or opinion’ text. (Worksheet K1 is an example of such a text, but other text could be chosen by the teacher). Instruct them to highlight the elements that they consider to be ‘fact’ in one colour and ‘opinion’ in a second colour. While some elements will clearly fit into one category or the other, other elements will be more contentious. Ideally, the pupils should work in pairs to enable them to discuss their answers.

STEP 2

Debrief the pupils at the end of the activity. This could be done by letting them compare their answers and discuss eventual differences. In addition, the teacher can ask critical questions regarding some of the pupils’ classifications and ask them to elaborate their choice. It is important to stress here that answers may not be clear-cut. It is acceptable, indeed desirable, for there to be a full discussion of whether elements might be considered ‘fact’ or ‘opinion’. A full debriefing is important to develop the necessary critical thinking skills for pupils to evaluate source material.