

Evidence Time Detectives

Use checkable evidence to spot facts and opinions.

S.VS.d “using evidence to construct timelines, classify events, and distinguish fact from opinion;”

NAME _____

DATE _____

FACT

A fact is a statement that can be checked in a reliable source. Dates, records, and eyewitness accounts can provide evidence for facts.

Apollo 11 landed on the Moon on July 20, 1969.

OPINION

An opinion tells what someone thinks or feels. Words such as best, worst, or most can signal an opinion.

Apollo 11 was the most amazing space mission.

1 SORT _____ 8 items

For each statement, circle FACT or OPINION, then choose two items and explain what evidence or clue helped you sort each one.

1. The Declaration of Independence was adopted on July 4, 1776. FACT OPINION
2. The U.S. Constitution was signed on September 17, 1787. FACT OPINION
3. The Constitution was the wisest plan for the new country. FACT OPINION
4. The United States bought the Louisiana Territory from France in 1803. FACT OPINION
5. The Louisiana Purchase was America's smartest land deal. FACT OPINION
6. Traveling the Oregon Trail was the hardest journey in U.S. history. FACT OPINION
7. The first transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869. FACT OPINION
8. Completing the railroad was the best change in transportation. FACT OPINION

2

PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ HOW I KNEW _____

ITEM # _____ HOW I KNEW _____

3

MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Write one new FACT about a historical event and one new OPINION about a historical event.

FACT _____

OPINION _____

CHALLENGE

Use the four FACT statements with dates to make a mini timeline by writing their item numbers from earliest to latest, then explain why the OPINION statements do not belong on this evidence timeline.

PART 1 • SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The Declaration of Independence was adopted on July 4, 1776.	FACT	The adoption date can be checked in historical records.
2	The U.S. Constitution was signed on September 17, 1787.	FACT	The signing date can be verified in historical records.
3	The Constitution was the wisest plan for the new country.	OPINION	Wisest is a judgment that people may disagree about.
4	The United States bought the Louisiana Territory from France in 1803.	FACT	The purchase and year can be checked in historical sources.
5	The Louisiana Purchase was America's smartest land deal.	OPINION	Smartest is a personal judgment.
6	Traveling the Oregon Trail was the hardest journey in U.S. history.	OPINION	Hardest is a judgment, not a checkable fact.
7	The first transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869.	FACT	The completion year can be verified in historical records.
8	Completing the railroad was the best change in transportation.	OPINION	Best is an opinion because people can disagree.

PART 2 • PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 • MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **FACT:** The Erie Canal opened in 1825.
- **OPINION:** The Erie Canal was a wonderful idea.

Challenge: 1 (1776) → 2 (1787) → 4 (1803) → 7 (1869). I left out the opinion statements because they give judgments, not dates that can be checked.

Accept other accurate, checkable historical facts and clearly stated opinions in Part 3. For Part 2, students should identify a checkable detail for a fact or a judgment word or personal belief for an opinion.