News, Opinion and Checking Sources: Worksheet

Journalism and News Writing · Worksheet for https://jugami.com/journalism/news-and-opinion/ · For instant feedback, try the self-guided quiz online.

Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Every place, person, newspaper and number on this worksheet is made up for practice. The town is Cedar Falls, and its newspaper is *The Cedar Falls Courier*. The town council has voted on a new skatepark. Answer in complete sentences unless a problem asks for a label or a list.

1. **Match each label to what it means.** Write the letter.

Label	Meaning
___ Column	A. A writer's judgment of a movie, game or meal
___ Review	B. A reporter's explanation of why an event matters and what may come next
___ Guest essay	C. A signed piece where one writer shares personal views
___ News analysis	D. An argument sent in by a person who does not work for the paper

2. **Sort each statement.** Write **F** (factual: a record or measurement could show it true or false), **O** (opinion) or **B** (borderline: a guess about the future, or too fuzzy to test).

a. The council voted 5 to 2 to approve the skatepark. ____

b. A skatepark is the coolest thing a town can build. ____

c. The skatepark will make Cedar Falls a happier place. ____

d. The skatepark is planned for the empty lot on Mill Street. ____

e. Skateboarding is more fun than basketball. ____

3. **Find the clues.** This paragraph appeared without a label. List three clues that it is opinion writing.

> I have lived in Cedar Falls my whole life, and this is the smartest thing the council has ever done. Anyone who complains about a little noise should try being thirteen with nowhere to go. We need this park, and we need it yesterday.

4. **Make it neutral.** A reporter wrote this sentence for a *news* story. Rewrite it so it reports only what can be checked.

> The council finally made the smart choice on Monday and approved the long-overdue skatepark.

5. **Fix the news draft.** A news story about the skatepark includes this sentence, written in the reporter's own voice: "The park will be loud and annoying." Describe **two** different ways an editor could fix it.

6. **Who is speaking?** For each *Courier* piece, write whose view (if anyone's) it gives.

   a. A story headlined "Council approves skatepark, 5–2": _____

   b. A piece labeled "Editorial: Build it right": _____

   c. A piece labeled "Column" with the byline Dana Brooks: _____

7. **Follow the money.** A skateboard shop pays the *Courier* to run an article titled "Why Every Town Needs a Skatepark" on its website. What label should appear on it? Is it news? Explain.

8. **Three questions.** A video posted by an account called @CedarFallsTruth says, "The skatepark will cost five million dollars!" Write one specific question you would ask for each of the three source-checking questions.

   a. Who is behind the information?

   b. What is the evidence?

   c. What do other sources say?

9. **Read sideways.** You land on a website called SafeStreetsForKids.net that argues against the skatepark. The site looks professional. Describe two searches you would run in new tabs and what you would look for in the results.

10. **Closest to the original.** You want to confirm that the town pool opened in 1962. Rank these sources from 1 (closest to the original) to 3, and explain your top choice.

    ___ A 2021 blog post about Cedar Falls history

    ___ A *Courier* article from 1962 reporting on the pool's opening day

    ___ A neighbor who says, "My aunt told me it opened sometime in the sixties."

11. **The tricky middle.** A resident says, "The skatepark will cut graffiti downtown." Why is this hard to label as fact or opinion? Name a record that could test it, and say how long you would need to wait.

12. **Write it, label it.** Use these reporter's notes to write a three- or four-sentence editorial for the *Courier*. Give it a label and a headline. Use at least two facts from the notes, then underline every sentence that is opinion.
    - Council vote: 5 to 2, on Monday, Nov. 2 (from the council's posted minutes)
    - Cost: $400,000 from the parks budget (from the town budget document)
    - Planned opening: June (from the parks director, Luis Ortega)
    - Petition: 230 residents signed in favor (count confirmed by the town clerk)