

[MUSIC PLAYING]

NARRATOR: Critical reading. Critical reading means thinking about and analyzing what you read. It involves identifying a writer's purpose. Distinguishing between facts and opinions. And understanding the writer's point of view.

First, let's consider an author's purpose. Usually authors write for one of three main reasons. To inform or explain, to persuade, or to entertain. Authors may write to inform their readers about historical events, political realities, scientific discoveries, and countless other topics.

Explanation is a kind of in depth way to inform. An author might write an explanation of how to do something, or why something happened.

When writing to persuade, a writer may propose a course of action. To send money to a charity or to buy a product for example. Writers may also right to criticize an idea or to support it.

Finally, many writers use essays, stories, jokes, poems, plays, or films to help readers understand something about the world through their emotions. These writers entertain readers. Often a piece of writing include several purposes. But critical readers strive to determine the writer's overarching purpose.

To achieve their purpose writers offer supporting details, including facts and opinions. Factual statements are based on observations that can be proven. The law requiring a minimum wage was established in 1938.

Opinions on the other hand, express an attitude or a point of view about a fact or a set of facts. In my view, the minimum wage is too low.

Critical readers must be able to distinguish between facts and opinions.

Facts provide information and evidence in support of opinions. Here are some important points about facts. Facts can be verified by any of the five senses. Facts

can be measured, weighed, or counted. Facts can be confirmed in historical records. Facts can be proven in an experiment. Critical readers give the most weight to facts.

Opinions are different from facts in these ways; opinions express personal view, impression, or judgment. Opinions can be disagreed with. Opinions refer to something that might have happened in the past. Opinions refer to something that might happen in the future.

Opinions may be interesting, but they are of little value unless they are heavily supported with evidence. One way to identify opinions is to be alert for words such as apparently, in my view, and other introductory expressions.

An author's point of view is his or her position on a topic. Authors express their points of view through the kinds of words they use and by the kinds of details they include in their writing. Their words and details reveal their tone, bias, and slant.

Tone conveys formality and emotion. Writers convey their attitude toward a subject with the kinds of words they choose to describe or explain it. A writer's tone may convey enthusiasm, humor, anger, or any number of attitudes.

Writer's attitudes affect how seriously readers should take their ideas.

Bias refers to a person's inclination to favor one side of an issue. Slant is the way writers use overly positive, or overly negative words, to emphasize their bias.

Advertisers for example, are biased toward the products they promote. And positive language makes the ads very slanted.

Writers who hold strongly biased views ignore or dismiss opposing points of view, which makes their opinion even more light weight. Recognizing bias and slant will help you determine whether a writer is presenting information fairly. Careful readers decide how trustworthy a writer is through his or her tone, bias, and slant.

Remember, critical reading means thinking about and analyzing what you read. It involves identifying a writer's purpose, distinguishing between facts and opinions,

and understanding the writer's point of view.