

**Critical Thinking Skills Activity 14**

**Distinguishing Fact From Opinion**

Facts are statements that can be proved by direct observation or reliable sources. Opinions are personal beliefs that cannot be proved. For example, it is a fact that the sepoys started a rebellion in 1857. It is an opinion that the British treated the sepoys badly. Although this opinion can be supported by examples, it is a value judgment and would have been open to debate at that

time. To distinguish between facts and opinions, first look for statements that you can verify from direct observation or in a reference book, magazine, or newspaper. Then see which statements cannot be proved. These will be opinions. Often, opinions will contain the words *always, never, must, all, none, the most important, the least important, and should.*

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the following passage about the fate of explorer David Livingstone. Then analyze each statement to decide if it is a fact or an opinion. Write the number of each fact and opinion in the appropriate column of the chart.

**1.** David Livingstone died in the village of Chitambo in 1873. **2.** Chitambo is located in what is now Zambia. **3.** Determined to return Livingstone’s body to his native land, the locals removed his heart, brain, liver, and other internal organs and buried them. **4.** Next, they used salt to embalm the body and dried it in the sun. **5.** The journey with the body to the coast near Zanzibar was brutal. **6.** It took the men nearly a year to cover the 1,000 miles; 10 men died on the way. **7.** The survivors were treated very poorly at the end of their journey. **8.** Their only rewards were their usual wages and a special medal. **9.** The men should have received much more for their efforts. **10.** Only Chuma and Susi—the two men who led the journey—got a suitable reward. **11.** They were invited to England to share what they knew about Livingstone; as a result, they got many jobs guiding European explorers when they returned to Africa.

<b>Distinguishing Facts and Opinions</b>	
<b>Facts</b>	<b>Opinions</b>