

Fact or Fantasy?

Targeted skill

Good readers evaluate meaning as they read. Learning to distinguish between fact and fantasy is part of the reading process.

What to do

Young children often blur the line between fact and fantasy. They often have imaginary playmates and make up stories while they are playing. Learning to recognize these differences is a part of maturing and growing up.

In informal situations, introduce the idea of what makes a fact. Point out to your child that a fact is something you can prove, such as by seeing an event or by touching an object. Discuss examples of this with your child. For instance, it is a fact that he drank milk for breakfast and a fantasy that he drank coffee. Continue to bring this up with concrete examples, such as during dinner, at playtime, or while riding in the car.

Extending the activity

- ❖ Help your child recognize things that are opposites. For example, identify a cold drink and ask him or her to give an example of a hot drink, or ask him or her to contrast something that is funny and something that is sad. Other opposites include top/bottom, in/out, on/off, and front/back.
- ❖ Some children have trouble making up stories or thinking of fanciful things. Encourage your child's imagination by extending conversations to include fanciful things. For example, say, "Wow! That is a big truck. It is as big as a skyscraper!" Then discuss with your child how that was an exaggeration and help him or her come up with a more reasonable description.
- ❖ Some children use a doll or favorite stuffed animal to respond to this activity. It is often easier for children to tap into their imagination by letting the doll or stuffed animal talk.

What your child is practicing

It is often difficult for young children to distinguish between something that is true and something false, fact and fantasy, real and make-believe. Practicing this skill in a structured way helps your child transfer it to everyday life.