

# Activity . . . . . ➔ 54

## Recognising statistics, facts, arguments and opinions

### STUDENT HANDOUT

Work through the following tasks and questions during independent study. Take your time. It is important that you understand the issues involved as it will help you to produce better written work, help you to develop effective arguments and make it harder for others to dispute or criticise your work.

1. Give a full definition of what is meant by 'statistics'.
2. Give some examples of the ways in which statistics can be misused.
3. How can you determine whether statistics are accurate?
4. If using statistics in your work, how can you convince the reader that your statistics are correct?
5. Give a full definition of what is meant by 'facts'.
6. How can you determine that a fact is correct and true?
7. If using facts in your work, how can you convince the reader that your facts are correct and true?
8. Give a full definition of what is meant by 'argument' (in relation to academic research and writing).
9. What do you think constitutes a weak argument?
10. How do you ensure that your arguments are strong and effective when presented in your work?
11. Give a full definition of what is meant by 'opinion'.
12. Is it ever appropriate to use opinion in academic writing? Justify your answer.
13. How can you differentiate between an argument and an opinion?
14. How can you detect when opinions are disguised as arguments?
15. How can you ensure that you don't mistake opinions for arguments in your work?

**Learning outcome:** By the end of this activity you will be able to recognise the difference between statistics, facts, arguments and opinions, understand how and when they are misused and know how to use them correctly in your academic work.