

Reporter's Notebook

A routine for separating fact and feeling.

1. Identify a situation, story, or dilemma for discussion.
2. Ask students to identify the Facts and Events of the situation. As students name them, ask if these are clear facts, or if they need more information about them.
3. Ask students to then name the Thoughts & Feelings of the characters/participants involved in the story. As students name them, ask if these are clear facts or if they need more information about them.
4. After a discussion, ask to make their best judgment of the situation based on the information at hand.

Purpose: What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?

This routine is about distinguishing facts from thoughts and judgments. It helps organize ideas and feelings in order to consider a situation where fairness may be at stake. It promotes the fine discernment of information and perspective taking in order to clarify and make a tentative judgment.

Application: When and where can I use it?

Students can use the reporter's notebook in any number of situations. These could include when discussing imagined or real moral dilemmas or topics from history, literature, or science; after reading a chapter, or watching a video or performance; or when thinking about actual events from their own life, etc. This routine is most useful "mid-investigation," after some information about a given situation has already been put on the table. Maybe things are getting convoluted or there are disagreements. Perhaps opinions are taken as facts or things are getting "messy." Use the routine to go deeper into an issue to clarify thoughts about it OR to even clarify what the issue is.

Launch: What are some tips for starting and using this routine?

This routine is best introduced with the whole class. Later students can work independently or in small groups using the recording sheet on the following page. Students are asked to imagine they are a newspaper reporter in order to differentiate the facts of a given event or topic from involved characters' thoughts and feelings. The stance of a reporter helps students clarify issues and points of agreement and disagreement by getting distance from their own perspective or initial understanding of a given situation. Draw a 4x4 grid. Along the top write "Clear" and "Need to Check." Down the side write "Facts & Events" and "Thoughts & Feelings." List responses in the appropriate portion of the grid. Make sure kids talk about the characters, not their own thoughts or feelings. Once the notebook is completed, the routine asks the students to make an informed judgment.

Share your experience with this thinking routine on social media using the hashtags [#PZThinkingRoutines](#) and [#ReportersNotebook](#).

Reporter's Notebook, cont'd

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

	CLEAR	NEED TO CHECK
Facts & Events (What happened?)		
Thoughts & Feelings (How did characters think or feel about it?)		

My Best Judgment:

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This thinking routine was developed as part of the Visible Thinking project at Project Zero, Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Explore more Thinking Routines at pz.harvard.edu/thinking-routines