

It's a case for **Detective Sergeant Factual**

Teacher's background material

Detective Sergeant Factual will be introduced (see below) to the students early on. He will visit the classroom perhaps 2 or 3 times a year with a joke, poem, or story. Many of the stories will then have statements for the students to rate as true, false, or (?). The (?) means that the story did not tell us. Being a good detective he will want the students to stick to the facts presented in the story. Please make sure the students understand the use of the (?) by doing the Jack and Jill exercise together with the students first. At the beginning, the teacher might find it beneficial to read the poem or story with the students.

When the exercise includes questions to be answered in writing, give each student a copy of a Detective Sgt. Factual exercise (without the answers). Advise the students that the statements in the story can be accepted as truthful. Emphasize that the questions are to be judged **only** by the content of the story, and they will have the story in front of them as they perform the test. You may want to collect the tests, or relax the students by telling them the tests will not be graded.

Have the students discuss their own points of view about the answers, but do not tell them the correct answers until the total end of the discussion. If you implement this discussion by calling on specific students, then ask if someone else has another idea you can get the discussion going. Ask students to defend their points of view. Attention should focus on the most important aspect of the lesson—the discussion.

The T,F, ? exercises should eventually assist students to discern between factual statements and inferential statements, and also from making unwarranted assumptions.

Many readers can read a passage, but upon completing it, have omitted information or read something into the passage, which it did not contain. This shortcoming is not limited to children. You might have a student who can read well in front of the class, but has failed to understand the meaning of the combination of words he/she just read. If a student finds it difficult to answer simple questions with the passage in front of them, it might be an early warning sign of reading difficulty.

General Semantics emphasizes the next two areas, among others. First, non-allness; the understanding that we do not know 'it all.' The other understanding, that since we do not know it all (the question mark) we consider it entirely proper to say, "I don't know."

Some other Detective Sgt. Factual exercises will be read by the teacher to the class, and specific questions will be asked of the students. These exercises will have a specific agenda described.

MORE ABOUT SGT. FACTUAL (*Read to your class*)

To help us with our studies, we will introduce an imaginary character, a policeman. His name is Detective Sergeant Factual. Detective Sergeant Factual likes to stick to the facts. He will frequent say, when questioning a witness, "The facts ma'am, just the facts."

Sgt. Factual joined the police force many years ago. He was so successful that the chief of police made him a detective. Sgt. Factual continued doing an outstanding job solving cases that he now has the title of Detective Sergeant.

Sgt. Factual bases his success on his ability to find the facts. He insists that the way to solve a problem requires us to get to what really happened. Sgt. Factual has sent us some stories to help us learn how to stick to the facts. Let's see if we can equal Detective Sgt. Factual as good detectives.