

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

"The facts ma'am, just the facts"

Teacher's notes on factual and inferential statements.

Just the facts. Sounds simple. But just how do we determine what we can call factual? Dr. Irving J. Lee listed properties of factual and inferential statements. We have chosen to paraphrase this list.

1. An individual can make a statement of fact *after* an observation or experience, and must be confined to the observation or experience.
2. The number of factual statements that can be made is limited since we cannot see it all.
3. The statement of 'fact' then represents a high level of probability. We tend to get agreement with other statements of 'fact' about the same observation or experience.

On the other hand:

1. An individual may make an inferential statement at any time; before, during or after an observation.
2. An unlimited number of inferential statements can be made, and go beyond what one has observed or experienced.
3. Inferential statements have some degree of probability, and if only inferential statements are made in a given situation, we can anticipate disagreement.

The Sgt. Factual story on page 04-02-01 stresses the point that factual statements require observation. At this point the students do not need the full definition of factual and inferential. However, stress that factual statements require that the person making them can verify them by an observation or experience.

The student notes on factual and inferential statements should be handed out at a later time when called for in the schedule. A class review of the hand out should follow, with students giving examples of both factual and inferential statements. Depending on time, you could take a daily newspaper and select statements appearing in news items, and ask students to determine which are inferential and factual.