Real Voices

Grade 6 Name: _____

Read the passage about a real event or figure. Classify statements and explain your reasoning. Remember: even famous people express opinions!

Key challenge: a statement from a history book, scientist, or leader can still be an opinion if it expresses a judgment. Look at the words — not just who said it.

Marie Curie: Unveiling the Invisible

Marie Skłodowska Curie, born in Warsaw, Poland, in 1867, was a pioneer in the field of radioactivity. Facing educational barriers in her homeland, she moved to Paris, France, in 1891 to study at the Sorbonne, a renowned university. It was there, amidst the bustling academic environment, that she met and married Pierre Curie, a fellow scientist. Together, they embarked on groundbreaking research into invisible rays emitted by uranium.

Working in a modest laboratory space, often described as a shed, the Curies conducted meticulous experiments. Their tireless efforts led to the discovery of two new elements: polonium, named after Marie's native country, and radium. These discoveries, made between 1898 and 1902, were revolutionary and laid the foundation for understanding atomic structure and energy. They published their findings extensively, sharing their knowledge with the scientific community.

In 1903, Marie and Pierre Curie, along with Henri Becquerel, were jointly awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics for their study of radioactivity. This made Marie Curie the first woman in history to win a Nobel Prize. She famously stated, "Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood." This quote reflects her profound belief in the power of scientific inquiry.

Tragically, Pierre Curie died in 1906. Marie continued her research alone, demonstrating incredible resilience. Her perseverance was rewarded in 1911 when she received her

second Nobel Prize, this time in Chemistry, for her isolation of pure radium. She remains the only person to win Nobel Prizes in two different scientific fields. During World War I, she developed mobile X-ray units, known as "petites Curies," to help wounded soldiers on the front lines.

Marie Curie's work in radioactivity fundamentally changed the field of physics and medicine, leading to new cancer treatments and diagnostic tools. Historian Dr. Anya Sharma recently remarked, "Curie's unwavering dedication to science, despite immense personal and professional challenges, makes her the most inspiring figure of the 20th century." Indeed, her relentless pursuit of knowledge was the greatest example of scientific determination. The world would be a much darker place without her discoveries.

She passed away in 1934 from aplastic anemia, likely caused by her prolonged exposure to radiation. Her legacy continues to inspire scientists and women worldwide. Her notebooks are still radioactive today, stored in lead-lined boxes, a testament to the powerful substances she worked with. 🧪

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

(1) Marie Curie was the first woman in history to win a Nobel Prize. FACT or OPINION? 🏆

Ⓐ Fact Ⓑ Opinion

(2) Curie's unwavering dedication to science makes her the most inspiring figure of the 20th century. FACT or OPINION? 🌟

Ⓐ Fact Ⓑ Opinion

(3) Marie Curie's work in radioactivity fundamentally changed the field of physics and medicine. FACT or OPINION? ⚛️

Ⓐ Fact Ⓑ Opinion

(4) A famous person says something confidently. Does that automatically make it a fact? Explain using an example from the passage. 🗣️

(5) Choose one opinion from the passage. Rewrite it as a verifiable fact by changing the wording. ✍️

(6) Why is it important to be able to distinguish fact from opinion when reading about history? 🧐