

► **Goal:** extract the main points from a news programme

► **Focus:** distinguishing fact from opinion



1 a What do you know about meteors and meteorites? Guess the correct option, a or b.

- 1 Meteors and meteorites are both rocks from space. The difference between them is ...
 - a meteors burn up before they hit the Earth but meteorites hit the Earth.
 - b meteors hit land but meteorites hit the sea.
- 2 When meteors enter the Earth's atmosphere, they heat up to ...
 - a about 1,650,000°C (degrees Celsius).
 - b about 1,650°C.
- 3 The meteorite that probably killed the dinosaurs and most of life on Earth struck ...
 - a sixty-six million years ago.
 - b sixty-six billion years ago.
- 4 The largest known crater left by a meteorite is in South Africa. It is ...
 - a 300 kilometres wide.
 - b 3,000 kilometres wide.

b **10.5 Listen and check your answers.**

2 a **10.6 Listen to part 1 of a news report about a meteor strike in Canada. Answer the questions.**

- 1 When and where was the sighting of the meteor?
- 2 What was the approximate size and weight of the meteor?
- 3 Where did the rock hit the Earth?

b **Listen again and check your answers.**

3 **10.7 Listen to part 2. Are the sentences true (T) or false (F)? Correct the false sentences.**

- 1 Both Ana Santos and Hugo Martin have written a book about meteor strikes.
- 2 Sixty tonnes of space material reaches the Earth's surface every day.
- 3 A large meteorite hits the Earth about once a lifetime.
- 4 The dinosaurs were wiped out by climate change.
- 5 Someone at home in Alabama was hit by a meteorite.
- 6 A meteorite in Chelyabinsk in Russia weighed more than the Eiffel Tower when it hit the Earth.

4 Read the Focus box. Then read the sentences. Are they fact (F) or opinion (O)?

- 1 Our planet is bombarded with tonnes and tonnes of space material every day.
- 2 If a piece of rock from space reaches the ground, then it's referred to as a meteorite.
- 3 To be honest, it's really not worth worrying about.
- 4 The dinosaurs were probably killed by climate change.
- 5 In 2018, a meteorite crashed into the Ural Mountains in Russia and injured about 1,000 people.

Distinguishing fact from opinion

To identify the main points in a news report, you need to be able to distinguish between fact and opinion.

- Facts are more likely to be presented in the passive form and to include numbers.

Our planet is bombarded with 60 tonnes of space material every day.

- Important facts are usually emphasised with examples or further explanation. When you hear an example, think about what point it is supposed to show.

In 2018 a meteorite crashed into the Ural Mountains.

- Listen out for obvious ways of introducing an opinion such as *I think ...* and *I believe that ...*, but also listen out for more academic ways of introducing an opinion such as *I would argue that ...*, *I'm not convinced that ...*, *I would suggest that ...*

I would argue that large meteor strikes are very rare.

Listen out for words like *probably*, *should*, *best*, *worst* and other superlatives. A speaker is often expressing an opinion with these words.

- The reporter will often ask questions concerning feelings, e.g. *Should we be worried about ...?* These questions are asking for an opinion rather than a fact.

5 Listen to part 2 again. Which two statements do Professor Santos and Professor Martin disagree on?

- 1 We should be worried about meteor strikes.
- 2 Small meteorites can be dangerous.
- 3 The dinosaurs were killed by climate change.
- 4 The Alabama meteorite was very small.
- 5 The Chelyabinsk meteor didn't hit the Earth.

6 Are the sentences fact (F) or opinion (O)? Underline the words that show this.

- 1 This is the most impressive meteorite of the last ten years. O
- 2 The meteor was detected by specialist equipment.
- 3 99.9 percent of space material burns up in the atmosphere.
- 4 It's obvious to me that this meteorite is dangerous.
- 5 It probably caused a lot of damage.
- 6 We should be concerned about the cost of this space mission.
- 7 70 percent of meteorites land in the sea.

7 Do you believe we should be worried about meteorites? Why/Why not?