



Practice Your Skills



Critical Thinking *Distinguishing Fact From Opinion*

The excerpt below comes from a speech made by Ohio senator Thomas Corwin in the Senate in 1847. It expresses his views about the Mexican War. Read the excerpt from Corwin's speech. Then answer the questions that follow to determine which statements are facts and which are opinions.

There is one topic connected with this subject which I tremble when I approach. . . . It meets you in every step you take; it threatens you which way so ever you go in the [fighting] of this war. . . . Opposition to [slavery's] further extension, it must be obvious to everyone, is a deeply rooted determination with men of all parties in what we call the nonslaveholding states. . . . How is it in the South? . . . I believe . . . that there is equal [stubbornness] on both sides of this fearful question. . . .

Should we prosecute this war another moment, or expend one dollar in the purchase or conquest of a single acre of Mexican land, the North and the South are brought into collision on a point where neither will yield.

1. (a) What statement of fact does Corwin make about northern attitudes toward slavery?

- (b) What opinion does Corwin express about the feelings in both the North and the South toward slavery? _____

- (c) What phrase signals that this is an opinion? _____

2. What conclusion does Corwin draw from his view of northern and southern attitudes?

3. How do the statements at the beginning of this excerpt help support Corwin's opinion?
