



Facts of the Union

Student Handout

Developing Questions on President Bush's Statements

Directions: Before we can check facts, it is often necessary to determine what facts we need to research. In this exercise, we will begin the process of verifying the accuracy of President Bush's claims. Starting with President Bush's statement on the left, determine what we would need to know in order to assess the accuracy of the claim. Use the tips in the middle column as starting points. In the right-hand column or on a separate sheet of paper, write down the specific questions you will need to research in order to assess President Bush's statements. Save the final question in the middle column for after you complete your research.

TOPIC/STATEMENT	POINTS TO CONSIDER	RESEARCH QUESTIONS
<p>Gasoline Use Reduction, Foreign Oil Dependency <i>Let us build on the work we've done and reduce gasoline usage in the United States by 20 percent in the next 10 years. When we do that we will have cut our total imports by the equivalent of three-quarters of all the oil we now import from the Middle East. For too long our nation has been dependent on foreign oil</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The president talks about reducing imports of oil from the Middle East, not oil imports generally. • Is oil the same as gasoline?. • Is the President correct in his claims? 	

<p>Federal Deficit and Fiscal Discipline <i>What we need to do is impose spending discipline in Washington, D.C. We set a goal of cutting the deficit in half by 2009, and met that goal three years ahead of schedule.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be wary of dangling comparatives. Saying that something is 50 percent off sounds good...unless I'm being offered 50 percent off of a price that is three times the normal price. • What two things are being compared? • Is that the whole story? • Is the President correct in his claims? 	
<p>TOPIC/STATEMENT</p>	<p>QUESTIONING STRATEGY</p>	<p>RESEARCH QUESTIONS</p>
<p>Education <i>...students are performing better in reading and math, and minority students are closing the achievement gap.... The No Child Left Behind Act has worked for America's children.</i> (NCLB enacted in 2002)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A straightforward comparison: Scores before NCLB and scores at the time of the SOTU Address. • Is that the whole story? • Are the figures sufficient to demonstrate that NCLB is working? • Is the president correct on his claims? 	

<p>The Economy and Jobs <i>Unemployment is low, inflation is low, and wages are rising.</i> <i>We're now in the 41st month of uninterrupted job growth, in a recovery that has created 7.2 million new jobs -- so far.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Low" compared to what? This might mean looking at historical data more broadly.• The second sentence has some straightforward factual claims to examine.• Is there any important information the President leaves out?• Is the president correct in his claims?	
---	---	--