



## Critical Thinking

# Distinguishing Fact from Opinion

Read the following campaign material from former presidential candidate Steve Forbes outlining his proposal for a “flat tax.” Answer the questions that follow.

Since 1970—in just 25 years—Washington spending has increased more than sevenfold. During those same years, family income in America has declined. I mean to free the mighty American economy from political repression. The first element is dramatic pro-growth tax cuts. I’m not talking “revenue neutral” fiddling with the tax code, the usual game in Washington that pretends to cut some taxes while raising others. And I’m not talking about fiddling around the “margins” cutting taxes that only help the well-to-do. I am talking about across-the-board tax cuts that are deep and wide and permanent, that reach down to all Americans and get the suffocating weight of the IRS off their backs. Start by scrapping the tax code. Don’t fiddle with it. Junk it. Throw it out. Bury it. Replace it with a pro-growth, pro-family tax cut that lowers tax rates to 17 percent across the board and expands exemptions for individuals and children

so that a family of four would pay no taxes on the first \$36,000 of income. Not one cent to the IRS on the first \$36,000. Anything over that would be taxed at a flat, fair 17 percent. The flat tax would be simple. You could fill it out on a postcard. It would be honest. It would be fair. Millions of people would be off the federal income tax rolls. There would be no tax on Social Security. No tax on pensions. No tax on personal savings. It would zero out capital gains taxes.

It would eliminate the principal source of political corruption in Washington. It would set off a boom by letting people keep more of what they earn and by lowering barriers to risk taking. I will underline here this distinction between my proposal and those floated by other candidates in this political season: I am straightforwardly calling for a tax cut to expand the economy and make everyone better off.

1. List two statements from the article that seem to be fact. \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. How could these statements be checked? \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. List two statements that seem to be opinions. \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. Why do you think they are opinions? \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. Are the opinions adequately supported by facts? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_  
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