

CHAPTER
11

Section 4

SKILLBUILDER PRACTICE *Analyzing Assumptions
and Biases*

An assumption is a belief or an idea that is taken for granted to be true. Some assumptions are based on factual evidence, while others are based on personal opinion and observations. Bias is a one-sided, prejudiced point of view. As you read the passage below, look for clues that signal the author's point of view. Then answer the questions below. (See Skillbuilder Handbook.)

Every Englishman is born with a certain miraculous power that makes him master of the world. When he wants a thing he never tells himself that he wants it. He waits patiently till there comes into his head, no one knows how, a burning conviction that it is his moral and religious duty to conquer those who have got the thing he wants. Then he . . . conquers half the world and calls it Colonization. When he wants a new market for his adulterated Manchester goods, he sends a missionary to teach the natives the gospel of peace. The natives kill the missionary; he flies to arms in defense of Christianity; fights for it; conquers for it; and

takes the market as a reward from heaven. . . .

You will never find an Englishman in the wrong. He does everything on principle. He fights you on patriotic principles; he robs you on business principles; he enslaves you on imperial principles; he bullies you on manly principles; he supports his king on loyal principles, and cuts off his king's head on republican principles. His watchword is always duty; and he never forgets that the nation which lets its duty get on the opposite side to its interest is lost.

from George Bernard Shaw, *The Man of Destiny*, 1905

1. What assumptions does the author make about Englishmen? _____

2. What are some words in the passage that reflect value judgments and appeal to the reader's emotions? _____

3. Which statements are factual? Which statements are opinions or judgments? _____

4. How would you describe the tone of the passage? _____

5. What is the author's point of view? _____

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Jicheng Xie



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