

CHAPTER  
**27**

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, p. 1002.)*

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? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_