



The Fact



Editors of newspapers and magazines often go to extremes to provide their reader with unimportant facts and statistics. Last year a journalist had been **instructed** by a well-known magazine to write an article on the **president's** palace in a new African **republic**. When the article arrived, the editor read the first sentence and then **refuse** to publish it. The article began: Hundreds of steps lead to the high wall which surrounds the president's palace. The editor **at once** sent the journalist a fax instructing him find out the **exact** number of steps and the height of the wall.

The journalist **immediately** set out to **obtain** these important facts, but he took a long time to send them. Meanwhile, the editor was getting **impatient**, for the magazine would soon go to **press**. He sent the journalist two more faxes, but **received** no reply. He sent yet another fax informing the journalist that if he did not reply soon he would be fired. When the journalist again failed to reply, the editor **reluctantly** published the article as it had originally been written. A week later, the editor at last received a fax from the journalist. Not only had the poor man been **arrested**, but he had been sent to **prison** as well. However, he had at last been allowed to send a fax in which he informed the editor that he had been arrested while counting the 1,084 steps leading to the fifteen-foot wall which surrounded the president's **palace**.