

Identify what is important

- ✓ What are the key ideas, problems, arguments, observations, findings, and conclusions?
- ✓ What evidence is there?
- ✓ Distinguish critical from other types of writing (e.g. descriptive); fact from opinion; bias from reason

Evaluate what you find

- ✓ Explore the evidence - does it convince?
- ✓ What assumptions are being made and inferences drawn?
- ✓ Is there engagement with relevant, up to date research?
- ✓ How appropriate are the methods of investigation?
- ✓ Is there a consistent and logical line of reasoning?
- ✓ Do you agree with what is being said? Why or why not?
- ✓ How is language being used (emotive, biased etc.)?

Look beyond what you are reading/hearing

- ✓ What other viewpoints, interpretations and perspectives are there? What is the evidence for these? How do they compare?
- ✓ How does your prior knowledge and understanding relate to these ideas, findings, observations etc.?
- ✓ What are the implications of what you are reading/hearing?

Clarifying your point of view

- ✓ Weigh up the relevant research in the area
- ✓ Find effective reasons and evidence for your views
- ✓ Reach conclusions on the basis of your reasoning
- ✓ Illustrate your reasons with effective examples

Study Success at Sussex

Critical thinking

checklist



Critical thinking is about using your ability to reason.

It is about being active (as opposed to passive) in your learning. It means that when you approach an idea, you do so with scepticism and doubt, rather than with unquestioning acceptance. You are always questioning whether the ideas, arguments and findings you come across are the whole picture and you are open to finding that they are not. You are identifying, analysing and, where possible, solving problems systematically.

Arguments, here are the way in which ideas are developed and organised into a **line of reasoning** which moves in a **logical** order to the conclusion and which aims to persuade the reader or listener of the validity of the point of view presented.

Being able to discern and create structured, reasoned arguments is central to critical thinking.

You can find Study Success at Sussex at:

The Careers and Employability Centre

The Library, University of Sussex

01273 877531

s3@sussex.ac.uk

www.sussex.ac.uk/s3

www.facebook.com/studysuccess.atsussex

