

# Critical thinking



University of  
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## What is critical thinking?

Critical thinking allows us to recognise, construct and present logical, well-reasoned arguments and explanations, supported by credible evidence. This type of thinking allows us to recognise opportunities to effectively apply and adapt what we have learned in new situations and contexts.

Critical thinking requires us to acknowledge the broader historical, cultural, social, political and lived experiences contexts in which knowledge is created and shared. You will often be asked to evaluate multiple arguments, theories, perspectives, and ideas. You will question assumptions underpinning different sources of information and ask "why?" and "how?" to uncover biases, inconsistencies, or flaws in reasoning. Critical thinking will allow you to recognise useful information and theories, and to understand the issues and problems that these can – and cannot – address.

## Critical vs Criticism

There is a difference between criticising and being critical. Critical thinking does not mean that you write negatively, or criticise, but instead that you provide a balanced view of your topic, using evidence and discussing alternative views.

A simple way to include critical thinking is to ask yourself the “**so what**” question as a way of justifying your argument and choice of evidence.

## Possible sentence starters for critical thinking

These sentence starters can be used to introduce your critical thinking. They will be most effective directly after providing some evidence.

- This could mean...
- Therefore...
- This evidence demonstrates...
- In this example Sullivan (2021) illustrates...
- This data is relevant because...
- Hussain's (2021) argument is contrary to the mainstream view...
- This is important because...
- This research indicates...
- A consequence of this is ...
- Brown's (2022) data fails to acknowledge...

## Transition phrases for critical thinking

Transition Words and Phrases					
For continuing an idea	For providing a contrasting view	For showing cause and effect	For showing sequence	For concluding	For restating a point or giving examples
Additionally... In addition... Moreover... Because... Consequently... Clearly, then... Furthermore... In the same way... Continuing this idea... Also... Pursuing this further...	In contrast to these... Unlike the previous example... Different from this... Despite these findings... However, ... Contrary to these findings... In opposition to... Nevertheless...	Following... In response to... Therefore... As a result of... For this reason... The result... Thus... Due to this... Consequently... The reaction...	Firstly, Secondly, Finally After... Afterwards... Later... Meanwhile... Next...	Therefore... This..... Hence... In final analysis In conclusion... In final consideration... Indeed...	Specifically... For instance... For example... One such occurrence... This is demonstrated by To illustrate... Also... To demonstrate... This is supported by...

## Critical thinking language for introducing evidence into your writing

For adding <b>extra sources</b> into your work to <b>critically assess or challenge</b> your existing evidence	For adding <b>extra sources</b> into your work to <b>agree</b> with existing evidence	For <b>adding paraphrased or quoted</b> information into your work	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Argues</li> <li>• Challenges</li> <li>• Contrasts</li> <li>• Debates</li> <li>• Disputes</li> <li>• Opposes</li> <li>• Refutes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affirms</li> <li>• Corroborates</li> <li>• Supports</li> <li>• Substantiates</li> <li>• Validates</li> <li>• Verifies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Argues</li> <li>• Articulates</li> <li>• Asserts</li> <li>• Claims</li> <li>• Concludes</li> <li>• Comments</li> <li>• Describes</li> <li>• Demonstrates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examines</li> <li>• Explains</li> <li>• Hypothesises</li> <li>• Indicates</li> <li>• Observes</li> <li>• Predicts</li> <li>• Reasons</li> <li>• Reports</li> <li>• States</li> </ul>

### Further support

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