QA

ACE Quick Guide to Critical Thinking

What Does it Mean to be 'Critical'?

- To **analyse** information and make a **logical decision** about the extent to which you believe something to be true or false.
- To move beyond description, **evaluating** the **validity**, **coherence**, or **relevance** of a source.

When undertaking a **degree apprenticeship**, you are expected to demonstrate a **sophisticated approach to critical analysis**.

This can involve:

✓ **Identifying a range of relevant concepts, theories, and models** to help you understand an issue.

✓ **Exploring related sub-issues** and associated problems, benefits, challenges, **drawbacks and limitations**.

✓ Demonstrating an **understanding of alternative perspectives**, issues, concepts, theories and models.

✓ **Questioning the validity of scholarly resources** and their applications to organisational practice.

✓ Assessing gaps in research and **contributing new ideas and applications**.

(Adapted from Glasgow Caledonian University, 2022)

Potential Barriers to Critical Thinking:

- **Reluctance to critique experts** in the field.
- Mistaking critical analysis for **focusing on the negative**.
- Trusting assumptions, preconceptions, **biases**, experiences, or beliefs over the evidence.

Are You 'Criticising' or 'Being Critical'?

Being critical does not just mean finding fault; it means assessing evidence from a wide range of sources and developing reasoned conclusions.

As a result of your analysis, you may decide that a particular scholar's argument is not robust, or that you disagree with their findings, but you should always explain how and why you have arrived at this conclusion.

(Adapted from The University of Edinburgh, 2023)

Criticising	Being Critical
Disapproving	Objective
Subjective	Factual
Limited evidence	Balanced
Lacks rationale	

It is important to **engage critically** with your **assignment briefs**, developing a **rigorous argument backed up with evidence**.

You can use the following table to help break down this process:

Task	Notes
Identify a range of positions on a particular topic or issue, comparing opposing viewpoints.	

Assess the credibility of your sources using the CRAAP Test.	
Evaluate their scholarly arguments based on the evidence presented.	
Synthesise a range of evidence to support your contentions, exploring the strengths and limitations of alternative perspectives, issues, concepts, theories and models.	
Propose conclusions and recommendations based on the evidence.	

(Adapted from The University of Edinburgh, 2019)

Reference List

Glasgow Caledonian University (2022) *Critical Analysis*. Available at: https://www.gcu.ac.uk/aboutgcu/academicschools/gsbs/study/ldc/academicwriting/critical analysis (Accessed: 16 December 2024).

The University of Edinburgh (2019) *Features of Critical Thinking*. Available at: http://www.docs.hss.ed.ac.uk/iad/Student_resources/Critical_Thinking/IAD_Features_of_critical_thinking_CC_2019.pdf (Accessed: 15 December 2024).

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