# The ACE Critical Thinking Checklist

Developing the ability to think critically is essential for academic success.

During your degree apprenticeship, you will be required to engage with a wide variety of scholarly resources – appraising the validity, coherence, or usefulness of the evidence to support your own arguments.

Before submission, apply this checklist to your work to ensure that you are demonstrating critical thinking.

#### Applying the Critical Thinking Checklist to Your Work

* You can apply this checklist to individual paragraphs and / or to a complete draft of your assignment.
* You are not required to explore all these points in a single paragraph; you should decide on which to exclude, identifying those which may warrant further discussion.
* This list is by no means exhaustive as criticality can take many forms!

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| --- | --- |
| Critical Thinking Checklist |  ✓ or ✗ |
| Have I presented an argument?  |  |
| Have I justified my argument?  |  |
| Have I explained its significance?  |  |
| Is my argument convincing?  |  |
| Have I connected my ideas with appropriate signalling language?  |  |
| Are my ideas supported with evidence?  |  |
| Have I engaged critically with scholarly resources, evaluating the validity, coherence, and usefulness of their arguments?  |  |
| Have I considered the strengths and limitations of their positions? |  |
| Have I considered numerous perspectives, developing a balanced argument? |  |
| Have I engaged in comparative analysis, exploring relevant disparities, contradictions, or alternatives proposed by the wider academic community?  |  |
| Have I effectively refuted their findings and / or explained why they should be regarded as less important or contextually relevant?  |  |
| Is my analysis of those contrasting positions accurate and backed up with additional evidence?  |  |
| Have I discussed the extent to which these concepts, theories, or models can be applied to my organisation?  |  |
| Have I included examples?  |  |
| Have I proposed reasonable conclusions and / or recommendations?  |  |
| Does my argument progress logically and sequentially from introduction to conclusion? |  |

 (Adapted from The University of Edinburgh, 2023)

#### Next Steps

Having reviewed your work with the Critical Thinking Checklist, identify potential areas for improvement.

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| Before submission, I will… |  ✓ or ✗ |
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**Reference List**

The University of Edinburgh (2023) *Critical Thinking*. Available at: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/study-hub/learning-resources/critical> (Accessed: 16 December 2024).

**Additional Resources**

The University of Manchester’s [Academic Phrasebank](https://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/being-critical/) provides examples of conventional academic phrases used to introduce critical analysis.

The [ACE Critical Thinking Quick Guide](https://www.qa.com/media/sykl5fra/critical-thinking-quick-guide.pdf) includes additional guidance on demonstrating criticality in your degree apprenticeship – including the difference between criticising and being critical.

The [ACE Critical Writing: Building an Argument Quick Guide](https://www.qa.com/media/u3anzgtp/critical-writing-building-an-argument-quick-guide.pdf) offers advice on paragraph structure – exploring the purpose of descriptive and critical writing respectively.

