

Critical Thinking

Quick Reference Sheet



Defining Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is more than just thinking. It involves a deeper level of thinking that goes beyond our everyday basic thoughts. To think critically means to question ideas and conclusions, by analyzing, assessing and reconstructing concepts. Critical thinking helps you to determine which actions are necessary to create the best solution to your problems. A critical thinker does not accept facts at face value; instead, they analyze these facts to gain a thorough understanding of the topic at hand. As a result, critical thinking can encourage individuals to be open-minded, and gain better control over their own learning.

Thinking critically includes asking questions, including:

- What is happening?
- Why is this important?
- Who is saying this?
- How do I know?
- What other possibilities



Observation

As humans, we are constantly observing the world around us. Observation provides us with a clearer vision, and can direct us to the right path to identify and solve problems. To begin an analytical process, it is necessary to observe your surroundings. A great critical thinker will have a keen sense of observation; they will listen attentively, and notice minute details in

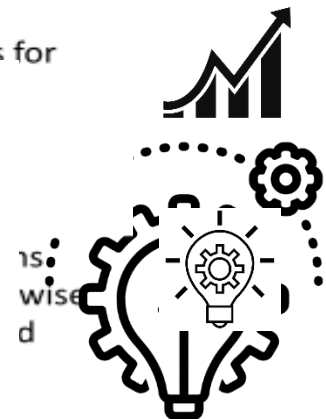
- Foresee problems before they occur

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... or
"What?" and "Why"



- Detect fallacies others may have ignored

- Recognize opportunities for



If you're looking to get the right answers, it's important to ask the right questions. Clarifying questions are thought-provoking questions that will help the thinker acquire more information and get a better understanding of the overall problem. Although these questions can be simple questions of fact, they help to obtain valuable knowledge that will eliminate any confusions or misunderstandings. With clarifying

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...ow does that work?" A curious
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...ing other beliefs, viewpoints or
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Once a possible solution has been derived, problem solvers may feel they can proceed with the solution. However, they should not overlook the all-important step of evaluating all possible solutions. Sometimes one problem has more than one solution, and taking the time to evaluate the efficacy of each alternative is a critical thinking skill. The critical thinker should evaluate each alternative and judge which one is the best.



The following steps are an effective evaluation technique:

- Make a T-chart to weigh the pros and cons of each possible solution.
- Develop criteria (or requirements) and assign weights to each criterion.
- Prioritize the criteria.
- Rate the proposed solutions using the criteria.



Consider Clarifying Questions

Review All Possibilities