



General Education Outcome 2: Critical Thinking

Learning Outcome: Critique and evaluate information, concepts, theories, and claims.

Framing language: For the purpose of this rubric, principles of sound critical thinking can be understood by describing how to thoroughly analyze, interpret, and assess information, concepts, theories and claims. A complete critique and evaluation will rigorously describe a vital question or problem, assess and present relevant information related to that question or problem, consider underlying assumptions and provide the context of other perspectives, offer a clear conclusion about the question or problem, and examine the implications and consequences of that conclusion.

Glossary (these definitions are informed by definitions from Dictionary.com):

- Information: Information is factual knowledge obtained from ethical investigation, study, or instruction. This definition might be best understood by contrasting it with the terms “disinformation” or “misinformation,” content disseminated to intentionally deceive or misinform its consumers.
- Concepts: Concepts are abstract or general ideas that require no evidence to prove their value or veracity.
- Theories: A theory is an explanation of a particular subject that is supported by significant evidence that has been tested and proved by multiple independent investigators.
- Claims: A claim is an evidence-based assertion open to challenge.
- Opinion: An opinion is a view or judgement formed about something, not necessarily based on fact or knowledge.

	Proficient (4)	Developing (3)	Developing (2)	Introductory (1)
Explanation of issues or problems	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, making sure information is relevant for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.



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Selecting and interpreting information to investigate a concept, theory, or claim	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of sources are questioned thoroughly.	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of sources are subject to questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of sources are taken as mostly fact, with little questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation of their expertise. Viewpoints of sources are taken as fact, without question.
Analyzing and evaluating context, assumptions, or perspectives within the evidence (information, concept, theory, or claim)	Thoroughly analyzes and evaluates evidence, including underlying assumptions and context of material; discusses multiple perspectives (both supportive and competing), and acknowledges and addresses bias in sources.	Attempts analysis and evaluation of evidence, begins to address underlying assumptions and opinions within context of material, and discusses multiple perspectives, usually with some acknowledgement of bias.	Some evaluation of evidence by summarizing material, some discussion of underlying assumptions, opinions, and context of material; there may be discussion of a few perspectives, usually without acknowledging context or bias.	Minimal attempt to analyze or evaluate evidence, accepts opinions without acknowledging context or bias, dismisses other perspectives.
Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)	Conclusions and related outcomes are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order.	Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints, related outcomes are identified clearly.	Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes are identified clearly.	Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes are oversimplified.

Inspiration and language drawn from:

<https://www.millersville.edu/gened/files/rubric-criticalthinking-fa15.pdf>

https://oupub.etsu.edu/cbat/economics/documents/niu_critical_thinking-short.pdf

<https://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/a-model-for-the-national-assessment-of-higher-order-thinking/591>

<https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/VALUE/CriticalThinking.pdf>

<https://www.usf.edu/undergrad/documents/academic-programs/critical-thinking-simple-and-detailed-rubric.pdf>