



Critical Thinking: A Guide to Skillful Reasoning*

Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by a thorough exploration of issues, ideas and events before forming an opinion or conclusion (AACU, 2009).

1. Description of the Issue or Problem

Without bias, describe the main ideas and events related to the issue.

What definitions help inform the issue?

What factors influence this issue?



2. Defining Positions

How is this issue understood by different people?



What are common assumptions and beliefs about the issue?

What do experts say about the issue?



3. Evaluating Evidence



How reliable and credible are the various arguments or positions presented? What information does or does not stand up to scrutiny?

What evidence is relevant to the investigation of this issue?

4. Comparison of Positions



What essential arguments, positions, ideas and evidence should be included in the final analysis?

What are the implications of the different positions?

5. Personal Position

What perspectives do you agree with and why?

Are you ready to formulate a position? If so, what is your position on the issue?

What evidence supports this position?

What arguments challenge your position?

What are potential implications of your position or recommendations?



6. Further Questions



What resources or ideas might provide more insight into this issue?

What further questions should be asked?

With some modifications, this Critical Thinking Guide is based on the LEAP Critical Thinking Value Rubric developed by Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU). Found at: <http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/CriticalThinking.cfm>

Additional Resources:
Criticalthinking.org <http://www.criticalthinking.org/>

Falcione, P. (1990). Critical Thinking: A statement of expert consensus for purposes of educational assessment and instruction - a Delphi Report. The California Academic Press, Santa Clara, CA. Retrieved from: http://assessment.aas.duke.edu/documents/Delphi_Report.pdf

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