



## What is Critical Thinking?

**Critical thinking** is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information gathered from or generated by observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication. It is then used as a guide to belief or action.

A critical thinker has the skills to:

- 1) use evidence skillfully and impartially;
- 2) organize thoughts and articulate them concisely and coherently;
- 3) distinguish between logically valid and invalid references;
- 4) anticipate the probable consequences of alternative actions;
- 5) see similarities that are not superficially apparent;
- 6) learn independently and has an abiding interest in doing so;
- 7) apply problem-solving techniques in other areas;
- 8) can strip a verbal argument of irrelevances and phrase it in essential terms;
- 9) question one's own views and attempt to understand the assumptions that are critical to those views, as well as their implications;
- 10) recognize the fallibility of one's own opinions and the probability of bias, as well as the danger of weighting evidence accordance to personal preferences.

Critical thinking is evident in your writing evaluations and papers when you:

- 1) elaborate on your points, perhaps by expressing them in another way or giving illustrations and examples;
- 2) check the accuracy of your statements;
- 3) give details and make sure that you are precise;
- 4) make sure the points you make are relevant to the main issue;
- 5) address the complexities of a given issue;
- 6) consider another point of view or how a statement might look from another standpoint;
- 7) double-check the logic of your argument. Does what you say follow from what you've already said?

What questions will inspire you to think critically?

You begin planning your paper by posing critical questions that will guide you throughout. Consider the following:

- 1) determine the purpose of this assignment;
- 2) define the issue you're writing about and the key points about it;
- 3) explore the larger questions or ramifications of your issue;
- 4) explain why anyone should care about this issue.

Need more help? Schedule an appointment with the Writing Studio in 2420, 25 Park Place at <http://gsu.mywconline.net/>