



# STUDY ZONE

## Strategies for Critical Reading and Thinking

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# Overview of session

- What is criticality?
  - Critical thinking
  - Critical reading
  - Reading and note making
- 
- What do you hope to get out of this session?



# What is criticality?

- Buying your next mobile phone....
  - Questions, questions, questions !!
  - What, what, what....
  - Why, why, why?
- Discussion – add your thoughts to the chat

# What is criticality?

“Criticality is about using and questioning information rather than simply absorbing and then describing it. A critical mind is aware of the bigger picture: it locates information or ideas in broader contexts and tries to develop an understanding of the links existing between them. It also critiques what is being learnt as it is discovered, establishing weaknesses in arguments or identifying other pieces of work that might present contradictory evidence.”

(<https://study.cardiffmet.ac.uk/AcSkills/Pages/Criticality>)

# What approach do you use for your decision?

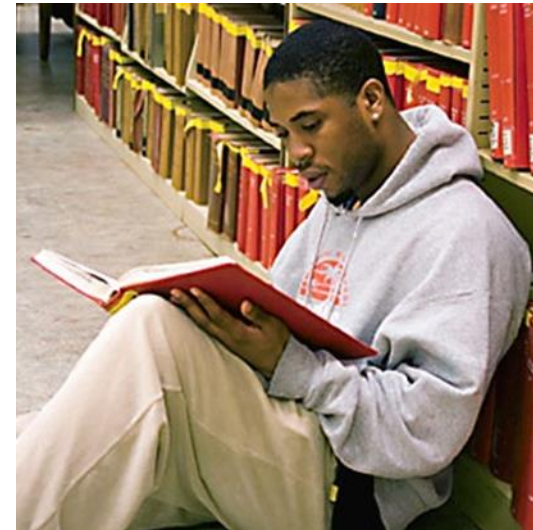
You probably did most, if not all, of the following:

- evaluated different information and points of view to see which you agreed with.
- considered the strengths and weaknesses of information. Involving being objective and considering each thing from different perspectives ('on the one hand this is good, but on the other hand...')
- added in thoughts from your experiences (e.g. reading through the materials on your own is good for you but works better when you do it as part of a group or with others input).
- considered what the evidence is to support points of view and based your decision on that.

# What does being a critical reader mean?

Being a critical reader means having a questioning approach as you read. Ask:

1. When was the text written?
  2. What kind of text is it?
  3. Is it a reliable academic source?
  4. Who is the author?
  5. Is the conclusion reasonable and logical?
  6. What is the key argument?
- and ...**



# Critical reading: further questions:

6. How does the author support this argument?
7. Is the evidence that is used to support the argument sound? Is it valid? Are there any weaknesses – eg small sample size?
8. How does this argument compare with other texts you have read on this subject?
9. What are the implications of the text?
10. Is there any information the author has omitted to include?



# Activity

Look at the first page of the paper entitled 'Defining Culture'

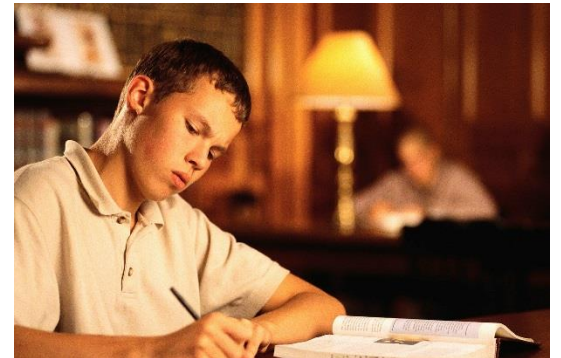
- What does this tell us?
- Use the critical reading questions to guide you
- Add your thoughts to the chat

How do the questions assist you?



# Reading Strategies

- Identify your reason for reading – what do you need to get out of the activity
  - get an overview of a subject
  - prepare for a particular lecture or seminar
  - find information for a written assignment
  
- Find the most appropriate material to read
  - Reading list & tutor recommendations
  - Evaluate the material – use checklist
  - Decide what level you need – overview or in-depth



# Type of material...

**Textbooks** - overview of the subject. Use the index and contents page to get an idea of the topics covered. Textbooks will signpost the main points with headings and sub-headings.

**Journal articles** often online, locate using search terms - can be narrowed to focus on a specific time frame or aspect. Journal articles provide an insight into current thinking or research. The abstract at the beginning of the article will indicate what aspects to focus on.

**Edited books** or **Chapter in an edited collection**. find out how the editor has decided to present information in the different chapters. Check the introduction for some hints about content and purpose. Look at contents list.

**Government report** or document - often online, be guided by headings and sub-headings. You may need to skim the full document searching for key relevant information.

# Approaches to Reading

- Browsing – the web/the library/electronic journals (to find if something is suitable for your purpose)
- Relaxed reading – for background information/interest (e.g, newspaper article)
- Skimming – to get the gist/main idea (quick reading)
- Scanning – to pick out specific information (glancing to find something specific)
- Intensive reading – key material for course/assignments/exams, usually accompanied by note making

# Reading and Note Making

How have you approached reading & note making previously?

- which note making techniques have you employed?
  - Highlighting
  - Linear notes
  - Flow charts
  - Tables
  - Mind maps
  - Diagrams
  - Summary cards
  - Electronic/digital methods (One Note)

# Reading and Note making for Learning

Have a look at the reading and note making for learning handout

Discussion:

- How might this assist in your learning?
- Which note-making techniques could be employed here?
- Is there another approach that works well for you?

# Further practice

1. Use the list of 'Questions to Support Critical Reading' when you next read an academic text.
  - Read the rest of the 'Defining Culture' article using the critical reading questions
2. Look at some of the resources/handouts on academic reading
3. Review your own approach to reading
4. Use the Reading for Learning handout to maximise your learning

# Ongoing Support

The screenshot shows the website's navigation menu with links for Home, About, Study Skills, Peer Support, Students as Change Agents, and UG Research Showcase. The main banner features the text 'STUDY ZONE DIGITAL' and 'Digital resources to support your study'. Below the banner are three columns: 'Quick links' with options like 'Request a 1-1', 'Writing Cafés', 'Study Zone Digital', 'ASK: Academic Skills (Penryn students)', and 'Information for staff'; 'Contact us' with location information, staffed hours (10am - 2pm, term-time only), and an email address; and a '#uoestudyzone' section displaying a tweet from Exeter Uni Students about a research showcase opportunity.

<http://www.exeter.ac.uk/studyzone/>

- 1:1 appointments
- Writing Café
- Workshops
- Breakfast Clubs
- Digital Resources

Thank You

Questions?

Feedback?