

Academic Writing Guide – Critical Thinking Checklist

Stage 2, Part 1

Use the checklist below to see the questions that Milan suggests you ask yourself as you read.

Identify what's important:

- What are the key ideas, problems, arguments, observations, findings, conclusions?
- What evidence is there?
- Distinguish critical from other types of writing (eg descriptive); fact from opinion; bias from reason

Evaluate what you find:

- Explore the evidence - does it convince?
- What assumptions are being made and inferences drawn?
- Is there engagement with relevant, up to date research?
- How appropriate are the methods of investigation?
- Is there a consistent and logical line of reasoning?
- Do you agree with what's being said? Why?
- How is language being used (emotive, biased etc)?

Look beyond what you're reading/hearing:

- What other viewpoints, interpretations and perspectives are there? What's the evidence for these? How do they compare?
- How does your prior knowledge and understanding relate to these ideas, findings, observations etc?
- What are the implications of what you're reading/hearing?

Clarifying your point of view:

- Weigh up the relevant research in the area.
- Find effective reasons and evidence for your views.
- Reach conclusions on the basis of your reasoning.
- Illustrate your reasons with effective examples.