

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND STAGES OF CRITICAL THINKING

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***Annotation:** This article provides a comprehensive overview of the concepts of criticism and stages for improvement of critical thinking. It describes the role of critical thinking in the learning process and definitions that foreign scientists give to the concept of critical thinking. In addition, there are examples from our study on the formation of critical thinking.*

***Key words:** Discussion art, critical thinking, freedom of choice, critical thinking, process, action orientation.*

Critical thinking has been described as: reasonable reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do. Critical thinking enables us to recognise a wide range of subjective analyses of otherwise objective data, and to evaluate how well each analysis might meet our needs. Facts may be facts, but how we interpret them may vary. Critical thinking includes a complex combination of skills.

Critical thinkers display the following characteristics:

- They are by nature skeptical. They approach texts with the same skepticism and suspicion as they approach spoken remarks.
- They are active, not passive. They ask questions and analyse. They consciously apply tactics and strategies to uncover meaning or assure their understanding.
- They do not take an egotistical view of the world. They are open to new ideas and perspectives. They are willing to challenge their beliefs and investigate competing evidence.

By contrast, passive, non-critical thinkers take a simplistic view of the world.

- They see things in black and white, as either-or, rather than recognising a variety of possible understandings.
- They see questions as yes-or-no with no subtleties.
- They fail to see linkages and complexities.
- They fail to recognise related elements.

Non-critical thinkers take an egotistical view of the world.

- They take their facts as the only relevant ones.
- They take their own perspectives as the only sensible ones.
- They take their goals as the only valid ones.

Some critical thinking strategies :

Reflection

- engage in the reflective process.

Rationality

- rely on reason rather than emotion,
- require evidence, ignore no known evidence, and follow evidence where it leads,
- be concerned more with finding the best explanation than being right,
- analyse apparent confusion and ask questions.

Self-awareness

- weigh the influences of motives and bias, and
- recognise our own assumptions, prejudices, biases, or point of view.

Honesty

- to think critically we must recognise emotional impulses, selfish motives, disreputable purposes, or other modes of self-deception.

Open-mindedness

- evaluate all reasonable inferences,
- consider a variety of possible viewpoints or perspectives,
- remain open to alternative interpretations,
- accept a new explanation, model, or paradigm because it explains the evidence better, is simpler, or has fewer inconsistencies or covers more data,
- accept new priorities in response to a reevaluation of the evidence or reassessment of our real interests, and do not reject unpopular views out of hand.

Discipline

- be precise, meticulous, comprehensive, and exhaustive,
- engage in active listening and reading practice
- resist manipulation and irrational appeals, and avoid snap judgments.

Judgment

- recognise the relevance and/or merit of alternative assumptions and perspectives,
- recognise the extent and weight of evidence.

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