
Questions to Support Critical Reading

1. When was the text written? (Is it up-to-date enough for the subject you are studying? If it is a key text from the past how is it likely to have been influenced by the time when it was written? How have subsequent writers built on this?)
2. What kind of text is it? (E.g. is it a core text-book for your course? Is it an article from a peer-reviewed journal? Is it from a government website? Could there be any bias?)
3. Is the text a reliable academic source? (Has it been peer-reviewed? Is it recommended by your tutor? Is the writing scholarly?)
4. Who is the author? (E.g. Are they a key name in the field? Have they been mentioned by your lecturers? Have they been cited by other key authors? Are they from a particular university or organisation? Could this bias them in any way?)
5. What is the key argument? (I.e. what is the main point the author is trying to make?)
6. How does the author support this argument? (E.g. Do they use evidence based on research or theory? Do they use logical reasoning?)
7. Is the evidence sound? (E.g. Is it up-to-date and reliable? Are there any weaknesses in the research? Is every step of the reasoning logical and coherent?)
8. How does this argument compare with other texts you have read on this subject? (E.g. Does it agree or disagree? Does it perhaps build on the argument of another writer and develop it further? Or does it come from a completely different perspective? If so how does it differ? Why is it different? Is it convincing?)
9. What are the implications of the text? (E.g. What are the consequences of what has been argued? How does this link to the wider debate? What is the logical next step in terms of further research or debate?)
10. Is there any information the author has omitted to include? (E.g. Has the author taken other perspectives into account?)

Adapted from: Exeter University