

# GRADU<sup>PP</sup>ATE

Dear Graduate Student,

Have you ever found yourself reading an article, and by the time you reached the last few paragraphs you struggled to remember what the article was about? Reading critically and carefully is an important skill for any graduate student. Critical reading is an **ACTIVE** style of reading which can help you to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for the materials you will need to read. It is a reflective strategy that allows the reader to engage in analyzing and interpreting the reasoning and assumptions of an author to be able to generate a solid analysis of the text.

## What is critical reading?

Critical reading is **NOT** focusing on what the article says, but rather its significance and impact on the field of research.

When reading articles critically, you might want to ask yourself, what is the larger meaning of this research? What evidence is used to support the study? What are the assumptions of the research? How have the authors argued their position, and are they correct?



Critical reading involves reading **AGAINST** the text, not **WITH** the text.

Challenge the researcher's assumptions and interpretations as you read the article. Pay attention to their reasoning and how they formed their conclusions. What other circumstance could explain their results? Also, are the findings relevant and do they add to your own knowledge about your own research?

Critical reading is **NOT** about understanding or memorizing the text. Critical reading is about *analysis, evaluation, and interpretation*.

**Analysis** involves examining the various components of a research article which have led to the author's assumptions and conclusions.

Analysis asks:

1. What is the supporting evidence that helps the author form their hypothesis?
2. How does the supporting evidence relate to the thesis?

3. What examples are used as supporting evidence to back up the researcher's assumptions?

**Evaluation** involves making judgments about the contents of a text, which may include its intellectual, practical or contextual relevance.

Evaluation asks:

1. What are the weaknesses or strengths of the theory discussed?
2. How does the research compare to similar research performed in the field of study?
3. Is the argument sound and persuasive to support the findings?

**Interpretation** involves reading for ideas as well as reading to understand the text. Interpretation also involves an understanding of context, which could perhaps be cultural, historical or social, within the discipline today.

Interpretation asks:

1. What is the context of the issues that the author is engaging in at the time?
2. Are there any areas of the text that might be biased? Slanted? Is this problematic?
3. What ways of thinking are used to present the text?

### **Before you engage in critical reading:**

1. Identify what you're reading for.
2. Ensure you have enough time to read.
3. Get in touch with your inner curiosity and be inquisitive.
4. Evaluate how you typically read and make adjustments to ensure optimal reading.

Still struggling to read critically? If you would like further help developing your critical readings strategies, please call 519-661-2183 to book a Learning Skills appointment. We are located in the Western Students Services building, room 4100.

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