

What is Critical Reading?

Critical reading is reading with the purpose of understanding, analyzing and evaluating the material. A critical reader is constantly asking the following question when reading: Am I really THINKING about what I am reading?

BECOMING A CRITICAL READER:

❖ Consider the source

- What kind of publication is this?
- What is the author's background in this subject?
- To whom is the author writing?

❖ Recognize what is said

- Has the author really said what I think he said?

❖ Recognize assumptions and implications

- Are the author's statements consistent?
- What assumptions has the author made? Are these assumptions stated?
- Does a statement depend on its context for meaning?

❖ Recognize intent, attitude, tone and bias

- What is the author's intention?
- What is the author's attitude? Tone? Bias?
- Does the author make the point directly or in a roundabout way through humor, satire, irony or sarcasm?
- Are the author's words to be taken exactly as they appear, or are they slang, idioms, or figures of speech?
- Which of the author's statements are facts? Opinions?

❖ Analyze arguments

- Which of the author's statements are supported? Which are unsupported?
- What are the author's conclusions?
- Which of the author's conclusions are justified? Which are not justified?

Adapted from Critical Reading Improvement, Anita Harnadek (McGraw-Hill, 1978)



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