



ANALYSIS

How to read a paper and think

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for University of the People

ANALYSIS

Analysis is the first step in thinking critically

Analysis, simply put, is the ability for a person to read or view an item critically.

For reading, this is best described as being able to answer the questions (as given by Cumbria University) to the right:

1. What is the text about?
2. What is the author's angle? How do I know?
3. What is the evidence presented by the author?
4. Is the evidence valid? How do I know?
5. Is the evidence relevant? How do I know?
6. Have I seen anything similar or dissimilar? What was it?
7. Do I agree or disagree with the author? Why?

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What is the text about?

Can you tell, with 2-3 sentences, what the text is about? Can you explain it to someone who hasn't read it?

This is the first step of critically thinking about any text.

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What is the author's angle? How do I know?

Is the author taking a side? Was he paid to? Is this a fair and neutral study? All of these questions need to come to focus when you read a work.

Also, you need to be able to state how you know what the angle is. Is it in the text itself or something else you've seen?

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What is the evidence presented by the author?

Is there actual evidence presented? Is the author merely stating opinions?

You need to be able to tell fact from opinion to read critically.

You also need to be able to examine the evidence to make sure the 'facts' are just that.

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Is the evidence valid? How do I know?

Just because an author says something doesn't mean it is true. Is the evidence true?

There are a lot of people on social media sites like Facebook who give false information. Before believing everything, take a moment and do your own research. Is the evidence true? How do you know?

If you can answer those questions, you are on your way to thinking critically.

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Is the evidence relevant? How do I know?

$$2+2 = 4$$

That statement is true, but is it relevant to a discussion on geography? Probably not.

Just because a statement is true (or was true at some point), doesn't mean it is relevant to the current reading.

An author will sometimes use 'true' statements that are no longer relevant to put an angle on his or her work. You need to do the research to make sure you are not being misled by the 'truth'.

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Have I seen anything similar or dissimilar?
What was it?

Sometimes an argument will make the rounds in the news. For example, a news paper might run a similar story to the other papers.

Have you seen something like the reading before? Maybe you've seen something that said the exact opposite of what you're reading. If so, you can use this as a way of analysis. What was it that you read before that made you think of the current article? Which was better written? Why?

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Do I agree or disagree with the author? Why?

Just because you read it doesn't mean you have to agree with it. If you do agree with it though, you should think of 'why' you agree with something.

The same goes with disagreeing with it. Thinking, 'I don't like this!' is okay when you are a child, but a critically thinking adult has a reason. Why don't you like something? Why do you like something else?

This is the very center of reasoning with your mind instead of your wants.

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