

Critical Reading Checklist

These questions on this checklist are designed as a guide to the process of reading academic texts critically and analytically. You can apply these questions to most academic texts. You may like to print the checklist out for future use.

- What is the author's approach/perspective?
- Is there another theoretical or philosophical approach which might have been taken?
- Who/what is left out of the text?
- Does the author write from an insider's/outsider's perspective? How does this effect what is included/excluded from the text?
- Do you agree with the points the author is making?

- Are the points made by the author supported by evidence?
- Is the evidence anecdotal or is the evidence the result of scientific study/research?
- Is the evidence referenced? Is it recent?
- Does the writer present opinion as fact?
- Does the writer use valid reasoning?
- Are any assumptions the writer has made clear to the reader?

- Does the writer oversimplify complex ideas?
- Does the writer make unsupported generalisations?
- Does the writer make reasonable inferences?
- Does the writer represent the ideas of others accurately? Fairly?
- Does the writer distort the ideas of others or present them out of context?

- Does the writer use unfair persuasion tactics such as appeals to prejudice or fear?
- Does the writer present a balanced picture of the issue?
- How would you characterise the writer's tone? How does the tone affect your response to the text?
- Does the writer's language, tone, or choice of examples reveal any biases? If so, do the writer's biases reduce his or her credibility?
- Do your reactions reveal biases in your own thinking?

- Does the text challenge your own values, beliefs, and assumptions?
- If the paper contains statistics, graphs, illustrations etc, are these adequately introduced and discussed and do they contribute to the author's argument?

Footnote: The questions on this checklist are adapted from: Kirszner, L.G. & Mandell, S.R. (1992) *The Holt Handbook*. Sydney: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, pp. 100-117.

The questions below are some that are especially relevant to **research articles**.

- Are the limitations of the procedures clear?
- Is the methodology valid? (e.g. size of the sample, method of sampling used)
- Are the results consistent with the objectives?
- Are the results verifiable?
- Are the claims the author makes about his or her own research internally consistent, that is, are the aims, method, results and conclusion of the research logically consistent with each other (i.e. what is argued on the basis of the research is supported by the results; the methodology allows the aims of the research to be achieved)?
- Are the diagrams clear to the reader?

Footnote: These critical questions are adapted from: *Journal Of Construction Engineering and Management*, (1992), Vol 18, p.1-2.