

Critical thinking

14 examples

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Objective

This presentation:

- Expands on the Free School presentation titled “An Introduction to Principles of Critical Thinking” which is available at the following address

<http://www.thefreeschool.education/writing-center.html>

- Discusses 14 examples of flaws that a critical thinker may detect in academic writing.

Reading passage 1

I argue that fresh honeycomb is the only suitable home treatment for major burns.

The company that I part-own called 'Mind Your Beeswax' has proven this argument using scientifically controlled clinical trials.

Conflict-of-interest

The person putting forward this argument is not a neutral observer.

The writer has a vested interest in promoting their argument. For example, they may sell more beeswax if they can convince their audience to agree with them.

Reading passage 2

I do not support professional sportspeople's careers because they commercialize sport.

My research shows that professional sportspeople are not ethical people.

Biased opinion

The speaker has shown a personal bias against professional sportspeople.

Any negative comments that they say against sportspeople may lack objectivity.

Reading passage 3

I am a Registered Nurse and hold a Bachelor Degree in Aged Care Nursing.

I argue that surgeons must never use anaesthetic on infants aged under 12 months old in the operating theatre.

Author is not qualified

This argument needs to be put forward by a person who holds a medical degree and is qualified to operate on babies (neonatal surgery). Ideally, such a person should also have sufficient hands-on experience working as a neonatal surgeon.

Reading passage 4

I am coordinating a research project as the lead researcher. This inquiry aims to prove that global warming is an environmental problem. I hold a PhD in Accounting and have much experience in the commercial sector as a stock market researcher.

Researcher is not qualified

The researcher does not have qualifications to coordinate or publish research in the field of Environmental Science. Their research proposal lacks credibility.

Reading passage 5

The carrot-and-stick approach to personnel management is best practice in the Information Technology field. A study conducted at IBM in the 1967 confirms this.

Data is out-of-date

The data is out-of-date - it is 50 years old.

The Information Technology field has changed dramatically over this time. There were no smartphones, laptops, Internet, Internet search Engines or WIFI in 1967.

Reading passage 6

Commercial airlines should consider installing afterburner engines to increase thrust and speed. This design has proven successful with military fighter jets.

Comparison is not valid

This comparison is not valid. Fighter jets are designed to be light to engage in dogfights at supersonic speeds with weapons and one passenger. It would be unsafe to install turbo thrust afterburner engines on a commercial airliner that is designed to carry hundreds of persons.

Reading passage 7

This holy text provides undisputed proof that modern science cannot solve social problems. The end chapter of this text discusses the evidence used to prepare the arguments put forward in this sacred text.

Circular argument

This argument is circular as the conclusion/evidence refers to the original statement. A text cannot offer independent support of its reliability and validity. Such claims must come from independent sources.

Reading passage 8

Unemployment has increased by 5% in Australia since 2015. This is evident from the decline in retail sales of 5% over this period.

Irrelevant evidence

The only data that can support this argument are Australia's national unemployment statistical data.

Reading passage 9

I argue that classical cello compositions from the Middle Ages period in Australia do not have global appeal in contemporary society because we know that there are things to know that are hard to know.

Incoherent argument

This argument is incoherent:

- There were no classical cello instruments in Australia prior to colonization in 1788;
- The latter half of the sentence is nonsensical.

Reading passage 10

This marketing study shall use open observation research to see how consumers react to the installation of a flashing red light above the fresh fruit and vegetables displays. The market researcher shall advise all customers of the purpose of the light and observe this marketing study in person.

Poor methodological design

The research design is flawed. The only way to know how consumers are responding to the light is to hide the market researcher and the purpose of the study. If consumers have access to these parameters, it may influence the way that they interact with the fruit and vegetables in the store.

Reading passage 11

This research exposes cattle to direct sunlight for 36 hours so that I can measure the damage caused to their retinas. The data obtained from this study will benefit humans who live in arid climates.

Unethical research

This research project is unethical because it causes harm and suffering to living organisms.

Reading passage 12

This environmental expedition aims to measure the cavity space of hollow Earth.

Assumption is not proven or known

This research project assumes that the Earth is hollow.

This assumption has never been proven or disproven.

Reading passage 13

This environmental expedition aims to measure the cavity space of hollow Earth.

Research proposal is not feasible

Current technologies do not allow scientists to drill deeper than approximately one mile below the Earth's crust.

Research passage 14

This research project aims to prove that energy equals mass multiplied by the velocity of light, squared;

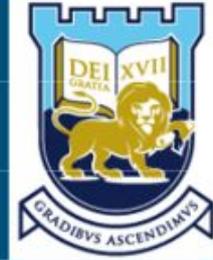
$$E = MC^2$$

Research is not original

This research was proved by Albert Einstein and other physicists prior to 1920.

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