

# EDUCATIONPLUS

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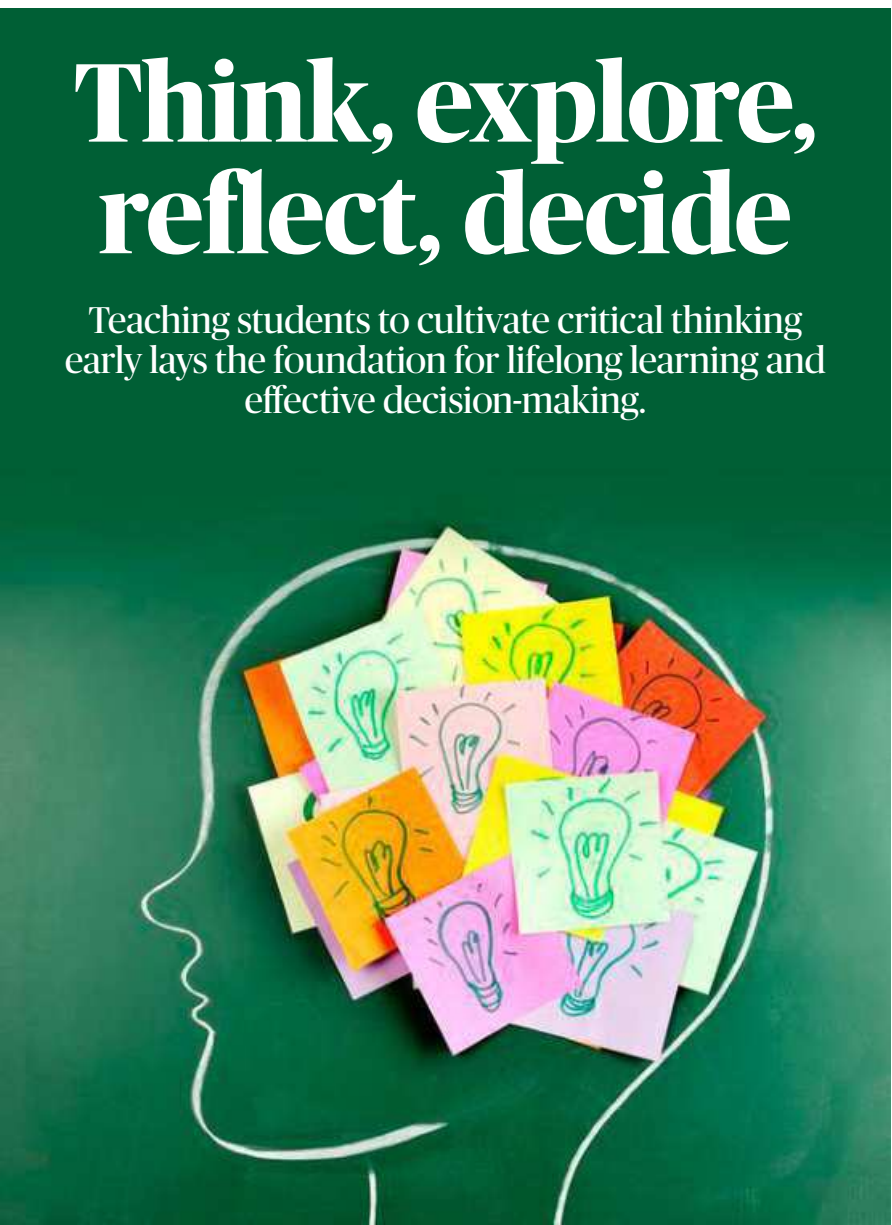
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## Shraddha Bharatiya

Today, we are constantly bombarded by information with Each day bringing a deluge of news, social media updates, and diverse opinions. As a result, the ability to engage in critical thinking is more essential than ever. Without the capacity to critically evaluate this flood of information, there's a significant risk of making hasty decisions based on incomplete or misleading data. Recognising this, the World Economic Forum has highlighted critical thinking as one of the paramount skills for the 21st century. The quality of our personal and professional life is deeply intertwined with the quality of our thinking. However, our cognitive processes are influenced by personal experiences, biases, and preconceptions, leading to a disconnect between perceived realities and the actual world. This can have adverse effects on interpersonal interactions and our relationship with the environment. Thus, fostering intellectual autonomy through critical thinking is imperative to bridge this cognitive gap. Critical thinking, as defined by Richard Paul and Linda Elder from the Foundation for Critical Thinking, involves skillfully taking charge of the structures inherent in the act of thinking and imposing intellectual standards upon them. This intricate

process requires a deliberate slowing down of one's thought process to meticulously observe and evaluate information before accepting it. The relevance of critical thinking today is underscored by the phenomenon of "fake news". For instance, during the 2016 U.S. presidential election, false stories proliferated on social media, significantly influencing public opinion and voter behaviour. Moreover, the emergence of deepfakes – highly realistic digital forgeries of videos and images – further complicates our ability to discern truth from falsehood. In such a landscape, individuals equipped with critical thinking skills hold a distinct advantage. **Early beginnings** Acquiring critical thinking skills is not an overnight process; it requires nurturing from a young age. Richard Dawkins advises parents and educators to cultivate independent thinking in children. Encourage them to ask probing questions and base their opinions on sound reasoning rather than blindly following trends or ideologies. A fundamental way to cultivate critical thinking is to encourage a child's natural curiosity. Children are inherently inquisitive, constantly asking questions about the world around them. Parents and educators can nurture this curiosity by providing thoughtful and detailed



answers, prompting children to think deeper about their questions. Teaching children to ask open-ended questions is another effective strategy. This encourages exploration of various possibilities and thinking more

broadly. Questions such as "What do you think would happen if...?" or "Why do you believe this character acted in this way?" stimulate critical thinking and help children develop the ability to consider multiple perspectives.

Children should also be encouraged to develop their argumentative skills. This involves teaching them how to construct logical arguments, support their viewpoints with evidence, and respectfully challenge opposing views.

Activities such as debates, discussions, and persuasive writing exercises are beneficial. **In the curriculum** Integrating critical thinking into the educational curriculum is essential. Subjects like Science, Maths, Literature, and Social Studies lend themselves to critical thinking naturally. For instance, in Science, students can design experiments, test hypotheses, and analyse results. In Literature, they can interpret texts, analyse characters' motivations, and explore themes. History classes can focus on evaluating sources, understanding cause and effect, and considering different historical perspectives. Reflection is a crucial component of critical thinking. Encouraging children to reflect on their learning processes and outcomes helps them understand how they arrived at their conclusions and consider how they might improve. This can be facilitated through reflective journals, where students write about what they learnt, the strategies they used, and what they found challenging. Modelling critical thinking behaviours is essential for adults. When parents and teachers demonstrate critical thinking in their daily lives, children are more likely to adopt these behaviours. This might involve thinking aloud when solving a problem, discussing how to evaluate

information sources, or reflecting on decisions and their outcomes. Creating a safe and supportive environment for discussion is essential. Children should feel comfortable expressing their ideas and opinions without fear of ridicule or harsh criticism. Encouraging respectful dialogue and valuing diverse perspectives helps children learn to consider different viewpoints. In the current digital age, media literacy is a crucial component of critical thinking. Children need to learn how to navigate the vast amount of information available online and discern credible sources from unreliable ones. Educators can incorporate lessons on evaluating websites, understanding biases in media, and recognising misinformation. Cultivating critical thinking from a young age lays the foundation for lifelong learning and effective decision-making. By encouraging inquiry, promoting argumentation, integrating critical thinking into the curriculum, and providing a supportive environment, we help children develop the skills they need to navigate an increasingly complex world. As they grow, these skills will enable them to think independently, evaluate information critically, and contribute meaningfully to society. The writer is Assistant Professor, Institute of Management, JK Lakshmiapatt University.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

**Nilam Patel Bahushrut Foundation SSC Students Scholarship** **Eligibility:** Open to applicants domiciled in Gujarat or Maharashtra who are classified as hearing-impaired and have completed the SSC exam this June from a regular secondary school in either Maharashtra or Gujarat. **Rewards:** Scholarships, prizes, and special awards **Application:** Through post to Nilam Patel Bahushrut Foundation 303, Aries Palms, Tower - B 5/6 Shobhana Nagar Vasana Road, Vadodara, 390015 Gujarat, India **Deadline:** August 31 [www.b4s.in/edge/NPBFB3](http://www.b4s.in/edge/NPBFB3) **Corteva Agriscience Scholarship Programme** **Eligibility:** Female students from Classes 11 or 12 with STEM subjects or in UG, PG or doctoral programmes; Annual family income must be ₹ 6 lakhs or less. **Rewards:** For PG students: ₹50,000; for UG students: ₹25,000; for school students: ₹10,000 **Application:** Online **Deadline:** September 13 [www.b4s.in/edge/CASP4](http://www.b4s.in/edge/CASP4) **INSPIRE Awards MANAK Scheme** **Eligibility:** Open to students enrolled in Classes 6 to 10 at a recognised school/institution. **Rewards:** ₹10,000 one time **Application:** Online **Deadline:** September 15 [www.b4s.in/edge/IAMS3](http://www.b4s.in/edge/IAMS3) Courtesy: buddy4study.com

## Explore and research

Uncertain about your career options? Low on self-confidence? This column may help



OFF THE EDGE  
Nandini Raman

**I am 19 and in the second year of B.A. History. I would like to do my PG abroad. Which colleges can I consider? Also what are my career options?**  
Anuranj

Dear Anuranj, In the U.S., some of the best colleges for PG in History are Harvard University, Stanford University, Yale University, Princeton University, and University of California-Berkeley. In the U.K., the University of Oxford, University of Cambridge, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), University College London (UCL), and King's College are the ones to consider. In Canada, look at University of Toronto, McGill University, and University of British Columbia (UBC). As far as career options go, you can be a historian, archivist, curator in a museum, or teacher / professor in academia and research. You can also be a content writer, a policy analyst, or a cultural consultant. Research and identify programmes offering Master's and PhD programmes in History, Historical Studies, and related disciplines in the U.S., U.K., Canada, Australia, Europe, and other preferred destinations. Explore the curriculum, faculty, research areas, facilities, and opportunities to identify the most suitable one based on your interests, aspirations, and preferences.

**I am 25. I have completed my Master's and qualified in the NET. But I am only doing part-time jobs. I feel lost and don't know what to do further.** Saima

Dear Saima, While this feeling is common to many people, it's never too late to explore new opportunities, reassess your career goals, and make informed decisions about your future. Seek professional guidance from qualified career counsellors to get insights on your personality and aspirations. This will help you identify, evaluate, and explore a suitable career path. Reflect on your core interests, strengths, and values to identify the industry, and role that will best align with your personal and professional preferences. Consider your academic background and work experience to identify the areas of expertise you have acquired. Consider industries, and sectors that align with your interests, qualifications, and aspirations, and identify a potential path that may offer growth, development, and personal fulfilment. Then invest in continuous learning, skill development, and professional growth by pursuing additional courses, certifications, training programmes, workshops, and educational opportunities to stay competitive and relevant. Connect and network with professionals, experts, and others in the field to gain insights, advice, and recommendations regarding career paths, opportunities, and strategies to succeed. **I am in the final year of B.Com. Finance. I am confused about the next step. Some say I should**

**do a PG but others say that is of no use. How can I decide?** Partha

Dear Partha, This decision depends on your career aspirations, interests, goals, personality and personal circumstances. Reflect on your career goals and inherent passion to gain clarity and insights into the types of careers, industries, and roles that align with you. What do you enjoy: finance, accounting, banking, investment, financial planning, analysis, consulting, research, entrepreneurship? Research the different options available to individuals with a B.Com. In Finance, and see what excites you. A PG degree in Finance, Accounting, Business Administration, Economics, or related fields will add specialised knowledge and skills, enhance your qualifications and open up advanced career opportunities. You will also be able to connect, network, and collaborate with industry professionals, experts and others and expand your professional relationships, and connections to gain valuable insights, guidance, and recommendations regarding career paths, opportunities, and strategies for success. **I am 20 and a B.Sc. PCM graduate. I took a year off to prepare for the M.Sc. entrance exams in an IIT but couldn't clear that or leverage my UPSC preparation. Now, I want to dedicate myself to preparing for the civil services but don't want to drop another year. I don't know what else I can study.** Unnati

Dear Unnati,

Identify your career goals and aspirations. What interests and motivates you? Understand the types of careers, industries, roles, and opportunities that align with your skills, qualifications, and overall life plan. Reflect on your preparation, learnings, and feedback from your UPSC preparation, and use those to enhance your performance. Also, explore alternate career paths available in Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths, R&D, Education, Entrepreneurship, Healthcare, Information Technology, Data Science, Artificial Intelligence, and other related fields. Consider postgraduate studies, specialised courses, certifications, training programmes, and advanced qualifications to enhance your knowledge, skills, and qualifications. Develop a comprehensive career plan and a roadmap that outlines and defines your short-term and long-term goals, and objectives. Identify and prioritise actions, initiatives, and decisions required to achieve success. If you still feel overwhelmed and confused, consult a qualified career counsellor who will help you identify, evaluate, and decide on a suitable career path based on your interests, qualifications, and personality. **Disclaimer: This column is merely a guiding voice and provides advice and suggestions on education and careers.** The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. Send your questions to [eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com](mailto:eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com) with the subject line Off the Edge

## Hit the refresh button

The habits formed during one's college years now can have a major impact on well-being in the years to come.

### Smriti Pahwa

It's that time of the year when students embark on a journey of independence, exploration, and maybe even a few late-night study sessions fuelled by questionable food choices. But amid the whirlwind of new experiences, don't forget to prioritise one thing: your health. The habits you form now can have a major impact on your well-being for years to come. This is especially true because adolescence isn't exactly known for its focus on preventive health. Remember that invincible feeling you had back in high school? Yeah, Science says it's not quite accurate. Research shows that teenagers tend to underestimate the long-term consequences of their choices. Also, according to a study published in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* found that individuals born in the late 20th century have a higher prevalence of cardiovascular risk factors compared to previous generations, putting them at greater risk of early-onset cardiovascular diseases. But here's the good

news: College is your chance to hit the refresh button on your health habits. Here's why and how: **Take charge:** You're probably more independent now than ever before. This means you get to make your own decisions about things like food, sleep, and physical activity. Now is the perfect time to ditch unhealthy habits and embrace practices that support your long-term health. **New challenges:** College throws a lot your way; new schedules, academic pressure, and may be even a part-time job. While these can disrupt healthy routines, they also present an opportunity to build resilience and develop coping mechanisms that will benefit you throughout your life. **Build a foundation:** The choices you make now can set the stage for your future health. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), regular physical activity can lower the risk of developing heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and certain types of cancer. By prioritising preventive measures like healthy eating, regular exercise, and enough sleep, you can reduce your risk of chronic diseases later in life. **What you can do** **Embrace your squad:** Your



friends aren't just there for late-night talks and movie marathons. They can be a powerful influence on your health choices. Find friends who motivate you to make healthy decisions, and be that friend for them too. **Campus resource centres:** Most colleges offer a variety of health and wellness programmes. Take advantage of free health screenings, fitness classes, and workshops on topics like nutrition and stress management. **Tech for good:** There are tons of apps and online tools designed to help you track your fitness, manage your sleep, and make healthy food choices. Find ones that fit your lifestyle and make staying on track a little easier. Remember, you are (literally) in charge of your health. College is a time of transformation, and developing healthy habits now is an investment in your future self. So grab your water bottle, hit the gym, and fuel your body with nutritious food. Lay the groundwork for a future filled with vitality and resilience. The writer is the Regional Director, Arogya World

### SAVE THE DATE

**Admission The University of Sheffield**, the U.K. invites applications for its four-year Civil Engineering M.Eng. course in September 2025. **Eligibility:** Between 80% and 90% depending on the Indian board. IELTS score of 6.5 with minimum 6.0 in each component. <https://tinyurl.com/yc84u8n8>

**Scholarships Strathclyde Business School**, Glasgow, the U.K., is offering upto 35 Masters Scholarships for its M.Sc. programmes. **Eligibility:** Candidates must be self-funded and hold an offer of a place on an SBS M.Sc. programme for the September 2024 intake and be deemed International with regards to Fee Status. <https://tinyurl.com/bdwvkb9>

**Last date:** August 31 <https://tinyurl.com/bdwvkb9> Amazon invites applications for the **Amazon Future Engineer Scholarship Programme**. **Eligibility:** Female students pursuing an undergraduate degree in Computer Science Engineering or a related field; academic excellence and leadership potential; financial need.

**Last date:** October 31 <https://tinyurl.com/2s3duruw> **Hyundai Motor India Foundation (HMIF)** has launched the 'Hyundai Hope Scholarship Programme,' to help under-privileged aspirants preparing for Civil Services Exam, Common Law Admission Test and projects of IIT students across India. For eligibility, selection and more information, visit [hyundai.scholarsbox.in](http://hyundai.scholarsbox.in)



