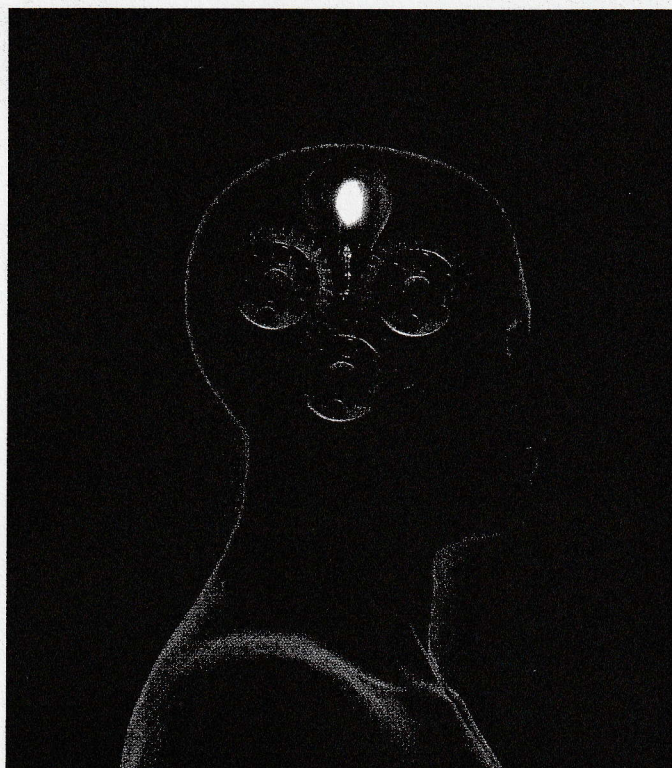


## What is Critical Thinking?

**1** We live in a complex world. Rapid change has become common as technology advances and people from different cultures with different ways of thinking move around the world. In addition to rapid change, the amount of information produced in the world increases by 30 percent every year.<sup>1</sup> Finally, the problems we need to manage today are becoming more complex. Concerns about a healthy natural environment are rising, national and local conflicts are raging, and science is pushing the frontiers of ethics. With rapid change, an explosion of information and complex problems, thinking creatively and critically about our world is more important than ever.

(9) *raging*: happening in an emotionally very angry way

(10) *pushing the frontier of ethics*: challenging what is morally right or wrong, forcing an argument or discussion about what is morally right or wrong



## Reading for Information

The writer explains what critical thinking is by describing eight strategies students should use when thinking about complex issues. A good reading strategy for articles that are broken into sections separated by headings is to

pause after each section and paraphrase the main idea in one or two sentences. As you read the rest of the text, take point-form notes of these critical-thinking behaviours.

**2** One of the goals of higher education is to teach students to think critically. But just what is critical thinking? What do teachers expect of students when they insist that students think critically about complex situations? Critical thinking is not the same thing as logical thinking although good reasoning is essential. Critical thinking is a way of thinking about complex situations. It helps us to make better decisions and to manage problems more effectively. It is not easy, but there are several things you can do to become a better critical thinker.

### Identify Issues That Are Relevant To The Situation

**3** It is important to think critically when dealing with complex situations. For example, should we be con-

cerned about personal privacy when so much information is stored and exchanged over the Internet? Is global warming really an urgent threat? Should creationism be taught in high school science classes along with evolution? How should we even begin to think about such complex issues? To start, we need to identify important issues that we should consider in order to understand the situation fully. We should ask ourselves, "What are the important factors that influence (or are influenced by) the situation we are studying?" Consider this example. Canada accepts about 250 000 new immigrants each year.<sup>2</sup> Canada needs skilled immigrants in order to maintain and grow its economy. There is evidence, however, that highly skilled immigrants find it difficult to find jobs