

Research Seminar

CSC 4112 / CSS4212

Critical Review – L3

Anusha Walisadeera (PhD)

Department of Computer Science

University of Ruhuna

Lesson Outline

- What is a critique?
- Why we need a critical review?
- How to write a critique?
- Structure of a critique

Learning Outcomes

- On successful completion of this lesson, students should be able to:
 - Define the purpose of a critical review in research
 - Identify components of a critical review
 - Conduct a critical review for a given research work

What is a critique?

- Critique – piece of academic writing that briefly ***summarizes*** and ***critically evaluates*** a research work, concept, article, or creative piece.

Why we need a critical review?

- **Purpose of writing a critique is to:**

- Evaluate somebody's work (a book, an essay, a movie, a painting, ...) in order to increase the reader's understanding of it
- Judge the usefulness or impact of a work in a particular field
- Summarize and evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, arguments, and contributions of the work
- Provide a reliable recommendation
- Identify gaps, trends, opportunities and inconsistencies in research
- Build a strong foundation for your research study
- Assess the reliability, validity, and relevance of sources/studies

Steps in writing a critical paper

- Steps in writing a critical paper:
 - Critical reading
 - Critical writing

Reference :

- <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/esl/resources/writing-critiques/>

What is a Critical Review?

- A critical review *systematically evaluates and synthesizes* the strengths and weaknesses of academic literature.
- Writing a critique involves more than pointing out mistakes. It involves conducting a *systematic analysis* of a scholarly article or book and then writing a fair and reasonable description of its strengths and weaknesses.

Reading for a Critique and Writing a Critique

Reading for a critique	Writing a critique
What is the nature of the piece?	Introduce the subject of the critique
What is the significance of the piece?	Briefly summarize the argument of the author
What are the objectives of the piece?	Analyze the author's presentation based upon points presented
What is the design, plan, or method of the piece?	Respond to the presentation or focus upon the assumptions the author makes.
What is the particular appeal (or lack of appeal) of the piece?	state your conclusions about the overall piece
What assumptions underlie the piece?	
Do the assumptions and biases affect the validity of the piece?	

State your praise, criticism, and suggestions politely, but with the appropriate level of strength.

Structure of a critique

- **Introduction**
 - Name the work being reviewed as well as date it was created and the name of the author/creator.
 - Describe the main argument or purpose of the work.
 - Explain the content in which the work was created. This could include the social or political context, the place of the work in a creative or academic tradition, or the relationship between the work and the creator's life experience
 - Have a concluding sentence that signposts what your evaluation of the work will be. For instance, it may indicate whether it is a positive, negative or mixed evaluation.
- **Summary**
 - Summarize the main points and objectively describe how the creator portrays these by using techniques, styles, media, characters or symbols.
- **Critical evaluation**
 - Evaluate how well the creator was able to achieve the purpose
 - Identify both strengths and weaknesses

Structure of a critique Cont...

Conclusion

- A statement indicating the **overall evaluation of the work**
- A summary of the key reasons, identified during the critical evaluation, why this evaluation was formed.
- In some circumstances, **recommendations for improvement** on the work may be appropriate.

Reference list

- Include all resources cited in your critique.

Structure of a critique Cont...



WRITING A CRITICAL REVIEW

Purpose

Structure

Introduction	Summary						Critique	Conclusion
1. Establish context, mention the title of the article and author. 2. Introduce topic and mention author's purpose. (found in synopsis or abstract). 3. Comment on appropriateness of author's purpose in terms of timelessness and importance of subject. 4. Mention what authority or expertise the author has to write on the subject. 5. Present Thesis Statement Explain whether you agree/disagree/ partly agree with it. Remember that you have to support this view in your critique and that the structure of your critique depends on your overall impression of the reviewed material as given in your thesis	Main purpose of the summary is to provide the reader with adequate information necessary to understand the critical commentary that follows. The summary should be objective and should not include any personal interpretation or discussion. In a research based article, summarise each section of the article.						<p>The purpose of the critique is to express your judgments and comments about the writing you are reviewing.</p> <p>It consists of personal judgments, comments and opinions.</p> <p>Ask yourself the following questions about the article.</p> <p>Argument What is the explicit or implicit argument/ perspective (conclusion) of the paper?</p> <p>Was it stated up front?</p> <p>What was their insight, i.e., was the argument novel, risky, open to falsification?</p> <p>Definitions Are all key words well defined? (described)</p> <p>Arguers Who are the authors?</p> <p>Have they established their expertise?</p> <p>Why have they selected this particular argument?</p> <p>Evidence What evidence is brought to support the argument (conclusion)? Was the evidence convincing, novel, insightful?</p> <p>Was the counter argument fully considered?</p>	<p>Restates the most important comments from the introduction and sums up the main critical points from your Critique.</p> <p>1. Restate the purpose of the article/ book.</p> <p>2. Using your critique as a base, make a judgment about how successful author has been in achieving their purpose.</p> <p>3. Restate your own response to the article that has been reviewed from the introduction.</p> <p>4. Comment on whether or not the reviewed material makes a useful contribution to the body of literature already published in the area.</p>
	Introduction including the research question.	Background	Hypotheses	Methods	Results and discussion	Conclusion		

“A critique is a careful analysis of an argument to determine **what is said, how well the points are made, what assumptions underlie the argument, what issues are overlooked, and what implications are drawn from such observations**. It is a systematic, yet personal response and evaluation of what you read.”

Task 01 - Critical Review 1 - Group Work

- Total marks for the report = 20; Page limitation = 2 – 3 pages including references;
submission date: 31/10/2025
- **Formatting Guidelines:**
 - Header 1 should be: 14pt, “Times New Roman”, Boldface
 - Header 2 should be: 12pt, “Times New Roman”, Boldface
 - The body of the report should be written in 12pt, “Times New roman” with 1.5-line spacing.
- **Introduction:**
 - Introduction to the topic, purpose of the review, and the scope of the analysis
- **Summary:**
 - Introduction
 - Literature Review - (discuss/compare identified two/three similar approaches in LR against the proposed method in the paper)
 - Methodology , Results and Findings, etc.
- **Critical Evaluation:**
 - In-depth critique of the selected research paper, discussing strengths, weaknesses, methodologies, and findings
- **Conclusion:**
 - Overall conclusion of the work. Summary of the main points
 - Proposing a novel approach to extend or enhance the method outlined in the manuscript
 - Future directions or by your own
- **References:**
 - Completeness with references; a list of all references cited in the paper

Task 01 - Group Work – General Papers

1. Group 01 – BCS → Paper 01
2. Group 02 – BCS → Paper 02
3. Group 03 – BSc → Paper 03
4. Group 04 – BSc → Paper 04
5. Group 05 – BSc → Paper 05

Task 2 - Critical Review 2 - Individual Work

- Total marks for the report = 20; Page limitation = 2 – 3 pages including references;
submission date: 15/11/2025
- **Note:** *Select a research paper that is suitable for your research work*
- **Introduction:**
 - Introduction to the topic, purpose of the review, and the scope of the analysis
- **Summary:**
 - Introduction
 - Literature Review - (discuss/compare identified two/three similar approaches in LR against the proposed method in the paper)
 - Methodology, Results and Findings, etc.
- **Critical Evaluation:**
 - In-depth critique of the selected research paper, discussing strengths, weaknesses, methodologies, and findings
- **Conclusion:**
 - Overall conclusion of the work. Summary of the main point
 - Proposing a novel approach to extend or enhance the method outlined in the manuscript
 - Future directions or by your own
- **References:**
 - Completeness with references; a list of all references cited in the paper

Task 03 - Presentation on Critical review on Research Topic (based on Critical Review 2)

- Note:
 - Each student will have 5 minutes for presentation and 2 minutes for Question and Answering. Students must stick into their given time.
 - Presentations are scheduled for **last week of November 2025.**