

Definitions of critical thinking emerging from the philosophical tradition include

- “the propensity and skill to engage in an activity with reflective skepticism” (McPeck, 1981, p. 8);
- “reflective and reasonable thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do” (Ennis, 1985, p. 45);
- “skillful, responsible thinking that facilitates good judgment because it 1) relies upon criteria, 2) is self-correcting, and 3) is sensitive to context” (Lipman, 1988, p. 39);
- “purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or conceptual considerations upon which that judgment is based” (Facione, 1990, p. 3);
- “disciplined, self-directed thinking that exemplifies the perfections of thinking appropriate to a particular mode or domain of thought” (Paul, 1992, p. 9);
- thinking that is goal-directed and purposive, “thinking aimed at forming a judgment,” where the thinking itself meets standards of adequacy and accuracy (Bailin et al., 1999b, p. 287); and
- “judging in a reflective way what to do or what to believe” (Facione, 2000, p. 61).