# How to critique an academic paper

1. What is the subject matter of the paper (topic)?
2. What is the main purpose of the paper (aim)?
3. What prior research is identified (literature anchor)?
4. What is the conceptual basis of the paper (theory)?
5. What research approach has been taken (method)?
   1. Is the approach taken suitable to fulfil the aim?
   2. What alternative approach might have been taken?
   3. What are the arguments for and against the method taken compared to the alternative?
6. How has the evidence been collected and analysed (data)?
   1. Was the sample/analysis adequate to support the conclusions?
   2. Have analysis techniques been applied correctly?
   3. Have issues of reliability/validity been considered?
7. How have the results been interpreted (findings)?
   1. What are the limitations of the study?
   2. Is there a logical flow of arguments?
   3. How strong are the conclusions drawn?
8. How important is the study overall (impact)?
   1. Do results support or contradict earlier research?
   2. What does this paper contribute to theory?
   3. What does this paper contribute to practice?