**LECTURE 6 HANDOUT 2 CRITICAL THINKING**

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/studyingeffectively/studying/creativecriticalthinking/criticalanalytical.aspx>

**Studying Effectively**

[**Critical and analytical thinking**](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/studyingeffectively/studying/creativecriticalthinking/criticalanalytical.aspx)

**CRITICAL AND ANALYTICAL THINKING**

What is critical and analytical thinking?

In essence, this means looking very closely at the detail and not taking what you read or are told for granted. This is likely to involve some or all of the following:

Check list:

* Evaluating how far sources and materials are up-to-date and relevant
* Evaluating if the evidence or examples used support the points or claims made
* Evaluating opinions, arguments or solutions using appropriate criteria and benchmarks
* Following a line of reasoning through to its logical conclusion
* Checking for bias or unfounded assumptions
* Evaluating the argument to check that the evidence presented really does support the conclusions drawn.

You will need to do this for books and other resources that you consult throughout your learning. You are expected to be applying critical and analytical thinking to assessing your sources, using evidence that has been well researched rather than just your own, or someone else's, unjustified opinion. This is especially true when you are using materials and sources drawn from the internet. Website material in particular may not have been subjected to the same processes of peer-reviewing as many printed materials. Peer-reviewing is a core process of evaluating materials proposed for publication and involves appropriate experts in a field assessing the validity, reliability and intellectual contribution the writing would make to the field and its intended readership.

Interpreting the contributions of broadcast media materials such as YouTube videos, radio, television, and film may also present challenges for applying critical and analytical thinking.  You may need to consider the impact of any legal constraints for meeting publication or broadcast guidelines and the extent to which review or approval in advance may be limited. In selecting evidence and developing your own opinion you will need to take into account the potential bias inherent in the sources you consult.  Talk to your subject tutors to access advice on critically analysing the relevant range of resources you may refer to in your academic discipline.

Further reading

**Writing**

* [Dissertations, projects and theses](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/studyingeffectively/writing/writingtasks/longerassignments.aspx)

**Reading and interpreting sources and data**

* [Evaluating information](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/studyingeffectively/reading/evaluating/index.aspx)

**Practical strategies for critical analysis**

* [Writing critically](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/studentservices/support/supportforyourstudies/academicsupport/studyresources/writing/writingcritically.aspx)
* [Relevance tree](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/studentservices/documents/dissertation-relevancetree.pdf) - for dissertation topic planning

[more from Academic Support study resources](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/studentservices/supportforyourstudies/academicsupport/studyresources/index.aspx)