Critical Thinking Checklist

Argument
✓ Ask yourself – what is the main point that the author is trying to make you believe?
✓ Have reasons been given? Is there evidence to support those reasons?
✓ How good is the argument?
  • Is the author’s position clear?
  • Is there a logical structure to the argument?
  • Have all possible points been thoroughly covered – including opposing views?
  • Has the argument been presented fairly and without bias?
  • Are the reasons given sufficient to make you believe the argument?

Evidence
Ask lots and lots of questions:
✓ Why should I believe this?
✓ What evidence would help me to think that what is being claimed is credible?
✓ Where is the evidence?
✓ How good is the evidence?
  • Is the data still relevant?
  • What is the source of the evidence?
  • How credible is the author?
  • Could the evidence be biased?
  • How has the evidence been collected?
  • Are there flaws in the way the research was carried out?
  • Does the data support the findings?
  • Are there alternative conclusions that could be drawn?

When you are making notes don’t just paraphrase what you are reading. Give yourself time to really think critically about what the author is trying to persuade you to believe and to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence provided.

TOP TIP: Talking through what you are thinking with others can help you to identify your own point of view.