

Contents

Introduction: Building our 'critical muscle'	viii	4 Is it an argument?	45
Do critical thinking skills matter?	ix	Introduction	45
About this book	x	Argument and disagreement	46
Glossary	xiv	Activity: Argument and disagreement	47
Acknowledgements	xvi	Non-arguments: Description	48
1 What is critical thinking?	1	Non-arguments: Explanations and summaries	49
Introduction	1	Activity: What type of message?	50
What is critical thinking?	2	Distinguishing argument from other material	52
Reasoning	3	Activity: Selecting out the argument	53
Why do critical thinking skills matter?	4	Summary	55
Underlying skills and attitudes	5	5 How well do they say it?	57
Self-awareness for accurate judgement	6	Introduction	57
Personal strategies for critical thinking	7	How clear is the author's position?	58
Critical thinking in academic contexts	8	Internal consistency	59
Barriers to critical thinking	10	Activity: Internal consistency	60
Critical thinking: Knowledge, skills and attitudes	13	Logical consistency	61
Priorities: Developing critical thinking abilities	14	Activity: Logical consistency	62
Summary	16	Independent reasons and joint reasons	63
2 How well do you think?	17	Activity: Independent reasons and joint reasons	64
Introduction	17	Intermediate conclusions	65
Assess your thinking skills	18	Intermediate conclusions used as reasons	66
Scoring sheet	22	Activity: Intermediate conclusions	67
Focusing attention	23	Summative and logical conclusions	68
Focusing attention: Identifying difference	24	Activity: Summative and logical conclusions	69
Focusing attention: Recognising sequence	25	Logical order	70
Categorising	27	Activity: Logical order	71
Activity: Categorising text	28	Summary	72
Close reading	29	6 Reading between the lines	73
3 What's their point?	33	Introduction	73
Introduction	33	Assumptions	74
The author's position	34	Activity: Identify the underlying assumptions	75
Activity: Capturing the author's position	35	Identifying hidden assumptions	76
Argument: Persuasion through reasons	36	Implicit assumptions used as reasons	77
Identifying the argument	37	Activity: Implicit assumptions used as reasons	78
Activity: Identifying simple arguments	40	False premises	79
Activity: Reasons and conclusions	41	Activity: False premises	80
Hunting out the conclusion	42	Implicit arguments	81
Summary of features	43	Activities: Implicit arguments	82
Summary	44	Denoted and connoted meanings	83
		Activities: Associations and stereotypes	85

Activity: Denoted and connoted meanings.....	86
Summary.....	87

7 Does it add up? 89

Introduction	89
Assuming a causal link	90
Correlations and false correlations	91
Activity: Identify the nature of the link	92
Not meeting the necessary conditions	93
Not meeting sufficient conditions.....	94
Activity: Necessary and sufficient conditions	95
False analogies.....	96
Activity: False analogies	97
Deflection, complicity and exclusion	98
Other types of flawed argument	99
Unwarranted leaps and castle of cards	100
Emotive language; attacking the person	101
More flaws	102
Misrepresentation and trivialisation.....	103
Tautology; two wrongs don't make a right.....	104
Summary.....	105

8 Where's the proof? 107

Introduction	107
Primary and secondary source materials	108
Searching for evidence.....	109
Literature searches	110
Reputable sources.....	111
Authenticity and validity.....	112
Currency and reliability	113
Selecting the best evidence	114
Relevant and irrelevant evidence	115
Activity: Relevant and irrelevant evidence.....	116
Representative samples	117
Activity: Representative samples.....	118
Certainty and probability.....	119
Sample sizes and statistical significance	120
Over-generalisation.....	121
Controlling for variables	122
Facts and opinions.....	123
Eye-witness testimony.....	124
Triangulation.....	125
Evaluating a body of evidence.....	126
Summary.....	127

9 Critical reading and note-making 129

Introduction	129
Preparing for critical reading	130
Identifying the theoretical perspective	131

The relation of theory to argument.....	132
Categorising and selecting	133
Accurate interpretation when reading.....	134
Making notes to support critical reading.....	135
Reading and noting for a purpose	136
Concise critical notes: Analysing an argument	137
Concise critical notes: Books	138
Activity: Critical selection – Notes A	141
Activity: Critical selection – Notes B.....	142
Commentary on critical selection activity.....	143
Note your source of information	144
Summary.....	146

10 Critical, analytical writing 147

Introduction	147
Characteristics of critical, analytical writing.....	148
Setting the scene for the reader.....	150
Activity: Setting the scene for the reader.....	151
Writing up the literature search.....	152
Words used to introduce the line of reasoning	153
Words used to reinforce the line of reasoning	154
Signposting alternative points of view.....	155
Words used to signpost conclusions	157
Words and phrases used to structure the line of reasoning.....	158
Drawing tentative conclusions.....	159
Activity: Writing conclusions	160
Critical analysis for essays: Essay titles	161
Academic keywords used in titles	162
Critical analysis for essays: Reading	163
Critical analytical essays: Introductions	164
Structured argument: The body of the essay.....	165
Essays: Bringing the argument together	166
Citing and referencing your sources	167
What do I include in a reference?	168
Summary.....	169

11 Where's the analysis? 171

Introduction	171
Checklist for evaluating Essay 1.....	172
Evaluate Essay 1	173
Evaluation of Essay 1	175
Commentary for Essay 1	176
Checklist for evaluating Essay 2.....	178
Evaluate Essay 2.....	179
Evaluation of Essay 2	181
Commentary on Essay 2.....	182
Evaluating your writing for critical thinking.....	184
Summary.....	186

12 Critical reflection	187	Applying critical thinking when looking for a job	217
Introduction	187	Critical consideration of the 'best fit' jobs for you	218
What is critical reflection?	188	Use the clues: Information provided by employers	219
Why engage in critical reflection?	190	Where do job applicants go wrong?	220
Decide your approach and purpose	191	Where job applicants go wrong: Examples	222
Approach: Outcome, focus, model, method	192	Employer demand for critical thinking skills	223
Approach: Method and audience	193	How critical thinking skills are useful in work roles	224
Approach: Relating experience and theory	194	Demonstrating critical thinking to employers	225
Decide your approach: Summary	195	Critical self-evaluation of job applications: Checklist	226
Resource: Outline approach to reflection	196	Summary	228
Reflection phases 1 and 2	198		
Examples of phase 1 reflection	199	Texts for Activities in Chapters 8, 9 and 11	229
Examples of phase 2 reflection	200		
Models of reflection	201	Practice activities on longer texts	235
Deciding on your model for reflection	202		
The Core Model for critical reflection	203	Appendix: Selected search engines and databases for online literature searches	274
Applying reflection to professional practice	205	Answers to activities	275
Reflection and professional judgement	206	Bibliography	303
Good and bad critical reflection	207	Index	307
Presenting your reflection to others	209		
Summary	210		
13 Critical thinking for your future career and employability	211		
Thinking critically about your life and career planning	212		
Self-evaluation: Thinking critically about your career path	214		
Thinking critically about your career: Taking action	216		