



Critical Thinking Applications When Researching

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January 29, 2020

What is critical thinking?

Critical thinking is clear, rational, logical, and independent thinking. It's about improving thinking by:

analyzing,

assessing,

and reconstructing how we think.

It also means thinking in a self-regulated and self-corrective manner.

It's thinking on purpose!



WHY do you need library resources?

Support your own critical thinking and thesis statement

CRITICAL THINKING

The **skills** that we need in order to be able to **think critically** are varied and include:

observation,
analysis,
interpretation,
reflection,
evaluation,

inference,
explanation,
problem solving,
and decision making

CRAAP TEST

**USE YOUR CRITICAL
THINKING
FOR EVALUATING
RESOURCES!**



To Evaluate a journal article look for:

Purpose of Article: Why was the article written? And to who?

- **persuade** the reader to do something?
 - For example: vote a certain way, purchase an item, attend an event
- **inform** the reader?
 - For example: results of a study/experiment, what happened at an event
- **prove** something?
 - For example: that a behavior is bad/good, a method works/doesn't work
- **Entertain** to audience?
 - For example: x celebrity purchased x basketball team

Date of Article:


Know the time needs of your topic and examine the timeliness of the article; is it:

up-to-date,

out-of-date, or

timeless?

Bibliography of an article:

- if a bibliography exists,
 - if the bibliography is short or long,
 - if the bibliography is selective or comprehensive,
 - if the references are primary sources (ex. journal articles) or only secondary sources (ex. encyclopedias),
 - if the references are contemporary to the article or much older, and
 - if the citation style is clear and consistent.
- 

Usefulness: Is the article relevant to the current research project?

- support an argument
- refute an argument
- give examples (survey results, primary research findings, case studies, incidents)
- provide "wrong" information that can be challenged or disagreed with productively



Authority:

It is very important to do some background research about the authors when evaluating an article

- Is the author an expert in this field?
- Where is the author employed?
- What else has he/she written?
- Has he/she won awards or honors?

Coverage:

Does the article cover the topic?:

- Comprehensively, partially, or is it an overview?
- How long is the article?
- How much in detail is the subject matter explained?



Audience: For what type of reader is the author writing?

What is the intended Audience?

- General readers,
- Students (high school, college, graduate),
- Specialists or professionals,
- Researchers or scholars?



Illustrations: What type of illustrations?

- Are charts, graphs, maps, photographs, musical excerpts etc. used to illustrate concepts?
- Are the illustrations relevant?
- Are they clear and professional-looking?



Accuracy



How do we differentiate between a fact and an opinion?

The **fact** is described as the statement that can be verified or proved to be true.

Opinion is an expression of judgment or belief about something.


Fact relies on observation or research while **opinion** is based on assumption. The **fact** is an objective reality whereas **opinion** is a subjective statement.





Definition of FACT

The fact is something, that has actually taken place or known to have existed, which can be validated with pieces of evidence. They are strictly defined, and can be measured, observed and proven. It refers to something that makes statements true and used in connection with research and study.



Definition of Opinion

The term 'opinion' is defined as the personal view or judgment about a subject, that may or may not be substantiated by the facts or positive knowledge. In other words, an opinion is an inconclusive statement, used in subjective matters, which cannot be proved true or false. It is what a person thinks or feels about something or someone. Hence it is not a true but biased information.

Fact or Opinion

| BASIS FOR COMPARISON | FACT | OPINION |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Meaning | Fact refers to something that can be verified or proved to be true. | Opinion refers to a judgement or belief about something. |
| Based on | Observation or research. | Assumption or personal view. |
| What is it? | Objective reality | Subjective statement |
| Verification | Possible | Not possible |
| Represents | Something really happened | A perception about something |
| Change | Universal | Differs from person to person |
| Words | Shown with unbiased words. | Expressed with biased words. |
| Debatable | No | Yes |
| Influence | Facts has the power to influence others. | Opinion does not have the power to influence others. |

HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS



CONSIDER THE SOURCE

Click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact info.



READ BEYOND

Headlines can be outrageous in an effort to get clicks. What's the whole story?



CHECK THE AUTHOR

Do a quick search on the author. Are they credible? Are they real?



SUPPORTING SOURCES?

Click on those links. Determine if the info given actually supports the story.



CHECK THE DATE

Reposting old news stories doesn't mean they're relevant to current events.



IS IT A JOKE?

If it is too outlandish, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.



CHECK YOUR BIASES

Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgement.



ASK THE EXPERTS

Ask a librarian, or consult a fact-checking site.

How to spot fake news

FIVE CC's of Critical Consuming

- 1- Context
- 2- Credibility
- 3- Construction
- 4- Corroboration
- 5- Compare

[TEDx video example of why fake news should bother you.](#)

[Game for identifying fake news!](#)



Class Exercises

Example:

Searching a music genre “Rock and Roll”

1- Start your search from a wider resource (Dictionary, encyclopedia)

Oxford Music Online

www.ecsu.edu under academics click on libraries and databases

2- Look at the end of the article to the cited references and see if the library has the item that is cited and find out other relevant resources to your topic

Rock and roll [rock 'n' roll]

Mickey Vallee

<https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.A2257196>

Published in print: 26 November 2013 **Published online:** 31 January 2014

Term often referring to a dominant strain of American popular music from the mid-20th century to the present, but more accurately designating a specific historical genre that emerged in the 1950s. Rock and roll emerged at a time when the phonograph disc had replaced sheet music as the chief medium of dissemination of popular music in the United States.



- Date it is published
- Authorship
- The list of cited resources at the end

Analyze the
Oxford Music Online Article

Finding more relevant resources from the list of Cited Resources of the Oxford Music Online Article

- 1- Go to ECSU online library catalog and get the call number or relevant links to other resources.
- 2- Also you can always go to www.worldcat.org to find out these resources.

Search example:

“Rock and Roll” in Oxford Music Online Database... Below is the list of cited resources in this article.

Bibliography

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Conclusion

Evaluation is the key for a successful academic writing free of biases.

Start from exploring a general database and find out other resources linked to it

Your librarian can get you anything!