

Assessing Critical Thinking

DEAL Model Critical Thinking Standards Table excerpts (Ash & Clayton, 2009; various)

[Critical Thinking Standards from Paul, R & Elder, L. (2001). The miniature guide to critical thinking: Concepts and tools. Santa Rosa, CA: The Foundation for Critical Thinking. www.criticalthinking.org]

Critical Thinking Standard	Description	Associated questions to ask to check your thinking
Clarity	<i>Expands on ideas, express ideas in another way, provides examples or illustrations where appropriate.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Did I give an example? ▪ Is it clear what I mean by this? ▪ Could I elaborate further?
Accuracy	All statements are <i>factually correct</i> and/or <i>supported with evidence</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How do I know this? ▪ Is this true? ▪ How could I check on this or verify it?
Precision	Statements contain <i>specific information</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can I be more specific? ▪ Have I provided sufficient detail?
Relevance	All statements are <i>relevant to the question</i> at hand; all statements connect to the central point.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How does this relate to the issue being discussed? ▪ How does this help us/me deal with the issue being discussed? ▪
Depth	<i>Explains the reasons behind conclusions and anticipates and answers the questions</i> that the reasoning raises and/or <i>acknowledges the complexity</i> of the issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Why is this so? ▪ What are some of the complexities here? ▪ What would it take for this to happen? ▪ Would this be easy to do?
Breadth	<i>Considers alternative points of view</i> or how someone else might have interpreted the situation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would this look the same from the perspective of.... ? ▪ Is there another way to interpret what this means?
Logic	The <i>line of reasoning makes sense</i> and follows from the facts and/or what has been said.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does what I said at the beginning fit with what I concluded at the end? ▪ Do my conclusions match the evidence that I have presented?"
Significance	The conclusions or goals represent a (the) <i>major issue</i> raised by the reflection on experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is this the most important issue to focus on? ▪ Is this most significant problem to consider?
Fairness	<i>Other points of view are represented with integrity (without bias or distortion)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have I represented this viewpoint in such a way that the person who holds it would agree with my characterization?

Use the table to provide feedback:

A: "Everybody knows that smoking is bad, so parents shouldn't smoke when they have children; those parents who do smoke obviously just don't care about their kids."

B: "My study away experience not only taught me a lot about the subject I was studying but myself as well. It changed how I saw the world, how I experienced campus and gave me qualities in myself I hadn't yet found. The experiences were once in a lifetime, and I use what I've learned from them to navigate my life now."

DEAL Model Critical Thinking Standards Rubric (excerpt) (Ash & Clayton, 2009; various)

[Modified source: Paul, R & Elder, L. 2001. The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking. The Foundation for Critical Thinking. Santa Rosa, CA. www.criticalthinking.org]

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Accuracy	Consistently makes inaccurate statements and/or fails to provide supporting evidence for claims	Makes several inaccurate statements and/or supports few statements with evidence	Usually but not always makes statements that are accurate and well-supported with evidence	Consistently makes statements that are accurate and well-supported with evidence
Clarity	Consistently fails to provide examples, to illustrate points, to define terms, and/or to express ideas in other ways	Only occasionally provides examples, illustrates points, defines terms, and/or expresses ideas in other ways	Usually but not always provides examples, illustrates points, defines terms, and/or expresses ideas in other ways	Consistently provides examples, illustrates points, defines terms, and/or expresses ideas in other ways
Depth	Fails to address salient questions that arise from statements being made; consistently oversimplifies when making connections; fails to consider any of the complexities of the issue	Addresses few of the salient questions that arise from statements being made; often oversimplifies when making connections; considers little of the complexity of the issue	Addresses some but not all of the salient questions that arise from statements being made; rarely oversimplifies when making connections; considers some but not all of the full complexity of the issue	Thoroughly addresses salient questions that arise from statements being made; avoids oversimplifying when making connections; considers the full complexity of the issue
Breadth	Ignores or superficially considers alternative points of view and/or interpretations	Gives minimal consideration to alternative points of view and/or interpretations and makes very limited use of them in shaping the learning	Gives some consideration to alternative points of view and/or interpretations and makes some use of them in shaping the learning	Gives meaningful consideration to alternative points of view and/or interpretations and makes very good use of them in shaping the learning
Fairness	Consistently represents others' perspectives in a biased or distorted way	Occasionally represents others' perspectives in a biased or distorted way	Often but not always represents others' perspectives with integrity	Consistently represents others' perspectives with integrity (without bias or distortion)