

Academic Critiquing

A critique is a thoughtful, evaluative overview of articles, books, music, or other works in a particular field. Critiquing involves considering what the author/creator has either told you or implied that they are going to do (prove, explain, interpret) and evaluating how well or not that they have done so. A critique can also serve to explain in what ways the work advances knowledge in the field (or not).

This is not criticism where one is noting what's wrong or bad about a work or accomplished by trying to justify your opinion of the piece. That is an emotional response and is inappropriate in academic writing and critique.

Any critique will include: background, analysis, discussion about how well was the goal met, support for arguments, evaluation, further readings and references to others, and a conclusion.

Analyzing Academic Works

- Who is writing the article? What are their qualifications? Have they written other articles? Who is the intended audience? Is this a scholarly or opinion piece?
- What is the main purpose of the article? What is the key question the author is writing about? What is the most important information in the article?
Identify the facts, data, or resources the author uses to support their argument. To expand on this statement you will need to look at the foot or endnotes and any other related materials.
- What are the main conclusion[s]/inference[s] in this article?
Identify the key conclusions the author(s) come(s) to and presents.
- What are the main assumptions underlying the author's thinking?
Think about what the author is assuming to be true and what might be questioned.
- Your critique (evaluation) of the article. This will include comparing it to other articles or works in the discipline.
- If you accept the author's line of reasoning, the implications are...
What consequence does the author's argument have on our understanding of the past and the present?
- If you reject the author's line of reasoning, the implications are...
What consequence does rejecting the author's argument have on our understanding of the subject matter?
- When writing this article, the author's point of view may have been influenced by...
It is important to remember that authors and creators are influenced by events that occurred during the time when they are active. You might research to find out information (academic credentials and influences) about the author(s).
- Limitations of the paper. What doesn't this work cover? Is this a gap or just an area outside the scope of this piece?
- Your conclusion of the value and of any questions remaining.

Critiquing is done using the conventions of the related discipline. This can be taken as a general overview, but will need to be used within the appropriate disciplinary context.

Resources: Paul, R. and Elder, L. (2014) *The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking Concepts and Tools*.

<http://www.criticalthinking.org/store/products/critical-thinking-concepts-amp-tools/156>

Graham, A. (2012) *Critiquing articles guide*

<http://courses.yukoncollege.yk.ca/~agraham/guides/article-analysis-readingguide.pdf>

