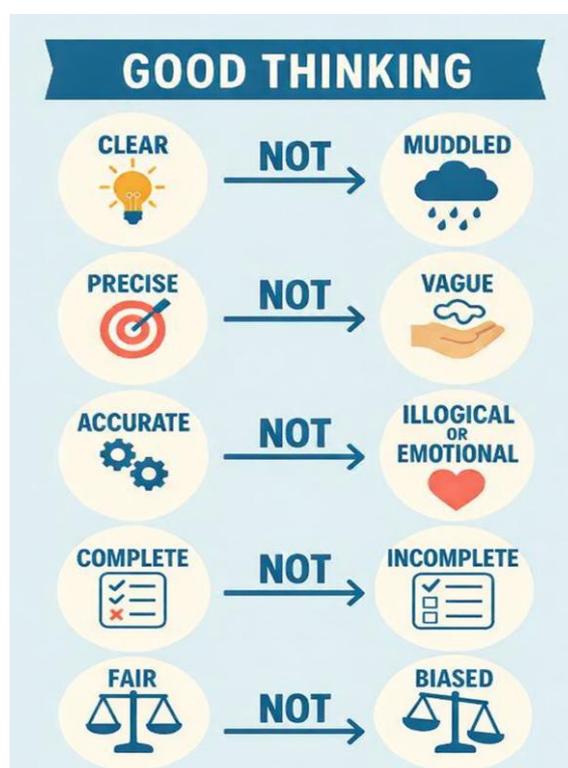


# Critical Thinking

## Use Critical Thinking to

- inform judgements, decisions, processes, and goals
- analyse and evaluate information
- recognise bias (in yourself and others)
- avoid being misled

## Critical Thinking is Good Thinking



Note. Image created using GenAI (Microsoft Corporation, 2026). Content adapted from *Critical thinking: A student's introduction*, by G. Bassham, W. Irwin, H. Nardone, and J. M. Wallace, 2023, p. A-3. Copyright 2023 by McGraw Hill.

## Critical thinking means

- **looking beyond the obvious**
- dispassionately and **logically analysing and evaluating** information
- drawing **logical conclusions** based on credible evidence
- recognising **logical fallacies** (see also **logical fallacies examples**)
- using **questioning** strategies
- **considering others' perspectives**
- **being open** to having your values, beliefs, and assumptions challenged

### Barriers to Critical Thinking

- **confirmation bias** (only accessing or only accepting information you already agree with)
- **assumptions and biases** based on
  - current popular viewpoints expressed within your social circle or media
  - your's or others' ideological standpoints or beliefs
  - the author's or publisher's status
  - your's or others' perceptions or emotions
- not knowing or **not recognising logical fallacies** (see also [logical fallacies examples](#))
- **unwillingness to**
  - **question** information or arguments
  - have your values, beliefs, and assumptions challenged
  - consider others' perspectives



### Critical Thinking Applied to Evaluating Sources of Information

#### 1. What is the background?

- What do you know about the author?
- What do you know about the publisher?
- What type of text is it?
- Who is the intended reader?

#### 2. What is the purpose?

- Why has this information been written and published?
- What is the author trying to convince you of?
- Who benefits by you believing this?

#### 3. What evidence is offered to support the argument?

- Is the evidence accurate, logically derived, and relevant?
- Has the author made assumptions?
- Can the evidence be corroborated by others?
- Are alternative viewpoints acknowledged and addressed?

#### 4. Is the argument logical?

- Are key terms and concepts defined?
- Do the points flow logically from one to the next?
- Do the conclusions flow from the evidence?

### Critical Thinking Applied to Evaluating Abstracts

**Title:** Does the title reflect the purpose and outcomes outlined in the abstract?

**Purpose:** Is the research question or objective clearly stated?

**Methods:** Is the data collection method described? Is the data analysis method described?

**Results:** Are the main findings outlined?

**Conclusions:** Are the implications of the findings described?

**Keywords:** Are keywords included to help others find the research?

## Critical Thinking Applied to Evaluating Journal Articles

<p><b>1. General overview</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the article a research project, an editorial, or an opinion piece?</li> <li>• Is the purpose of the research justified?</li> <li>• What are the aims of the research project?</li> <li>• Does the title clearly reflect the focus of the text?</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Research design</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is other published literature used to support the study?</li> <li>• What is the theoretical framework and is it appropriate for the research topic?</li> <li>• What is the methodology?</li> <li>• How was the data collected?</li> <li>• How was the data analysed?</li> <li>• Are the method, data collection, and data analysis strategies appropriate for the research topic?</li> <li>• If it is NZ research, have the Treaty of Waitangi principles been adequately addressed in the design?</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Participants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What participant selection method was used?</li> <li>• How was confidentiality and/or anonymity assured?</li> <li>• What ethical issues were identified and how were they addressed?</li> </ul>	<p><b>4. Research question and data analysis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the research question relate to the literature in the literature review?</li> <li>• Can the data analysis strategies be easily identified and followed?</li> </ul> <p><b>5. The findings and discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it clear how the findings have been generated from the data?</li> <li>• Is it clear how the findings relate to theoretical perspectives?</li> <li>• Does the evidence support the conclusions?</li> <li>• Are the author's interpretations of the data clear, comprehensive, and justified?</li> <li>• Are the links between the findings in this research and other research clearly made?</li> </ul> <p><b>6. The role of the researcher</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the researchers' biases, assumptions, and expectations made clear?</li> <li>• Are the limitations of the research made clear?</li> <li>• Are there other limitations that should have been acknowledged?</li> <li>• What recommendations for further study are made?</li> </ul> <p><b>7. Making the links between different texts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does this study's findings relate to other texts in your reference list? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Do other studies confirm, add to, or contradict these findings?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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## Critical Thinking Self-Assessment Checklist

Ask yourself ...	✓
Have I questioned all of the information presented to me?	
Have I considered others' perspectives?	
Have I examined, reflected on, and acknowledged how challenges to my values, beliefs, ideological stance, and worldview may impact on my evaluation of the information?	
Have I drawn logical conclusions about the information presented to me?	
Am I be able to justify my assessment of the information and the conclusions I have drawn to others?	

### Image References

Bassham, G., Irwin, W., Nardone, H., & Wallace, J. M. (2023). *Critical thinking: A student's introduction* (7th ed.). McGraw Hill.

Microsoft Corporation. (2026). *Copilot* (Version 2.20260122.47.0) [Large Language model]. <https://copilot.cloud.microsoft>

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