

# Critical Analysis

Are you unsure what critical analysis means?

Have you ever been told to comment more on your evidence?

- Do your essays come back with 'analyze' written in the margin?
- Do you want to get more from your critical analysis and ensure you improve your grade?
- Does the fact that lecturers fail students or mark them down because of poor critical analysis concern you?

As with any other skill, critical analysis can be learned. Obviously some students are better at this than others but usually only because they have been carefully taught. As with so many academic skills, the ability to analyze critically is learned not innate. **You need to begin to read differently and acquire the ability to see *all* your evidence in terms of how it can be critically applied.**

## **So, what is Critical Analysis?**

**Critical analysis is close-reading**, looking at a text in order to take it apart, almost like looking at how colors and brush strokes combine to make a picture come together. When you critically analyze work, you are looking at it with a view to commenting on it as evidence.

***This is critical analysis.***

**Therefore, it is no use simply typing in a quote to support a point you are making, you need to comment on particular words or phrases that are of special interest or importance; never leave a quote hanging without comment.**

***This is critical analysis.***

In other words, **you need to say *why* you are using this particular quote to support your point when you could have chosen any part of the text.** This makes it easier to say *how* you are going to use it:

***This is critical analysis.***

Obviously, you will have **reasons** for the evidence you need to analyze critically **so these reasons need to be made clear to the person reading your work** in order for you to get the very best out of the evidence you have researched and achieve the highest possible grade.

***This is critical analysis.***

## **So, what is the best method of critical analysis?**

Each time you are about to look at evidence that is to be analyzed critically, **ask yourself the following:**

- **What point am I making and how will critical analysis help it?**
- **Why did I choose this piece of evidence to support my point?**
- **How can I make the evidence more effective by critical analysis?**
- **Which words and phrases would I choose to analyze critically?**
- **Where are the key words and/or phrases to analyze critically?**