



Critical Thinking Skills

There are many things you can do to develop your critical thinking skills before you come back to school next year. Critical thinking is your ability to think clearly and rationally, reflecting and developing your thoughts. Sometimes we can get a bit lazy with our thinking and we only consider things at a superficial level. Here are some things you can do to enhance your critical thinking.

1. CLARIFY YOUR THOUGHTS

The best way to clarify your thoughts is to try and explain your thinking to someone else. Even if you are talking to an imaginary person, you will find that explaining your thinking out loud helps you to see the flaws in your argument.

2. QUESTION ASSUMPTIONS

Don't take your thoughts for granted, every now and then think about why you believe a certain thought or how you know things to be true. Get in the habit of pausing and looking at what you are thinking and questioning what thoughts underlie your assumptions. Don't just conform and accept a view because it is the popular one, instead pause and reflect on the arguments for and against that viewpoint and the strengths of each argument.

3. LOOK FOR OTHER PERSPECTIVES

When you are presenting an argument, imagine yourself in a debate and think about what the opposing side might say. What would someone with a completely opposite view to you believe? Can you understand why they might think that way? Can you see some validity in their viewpoint?

4. KEEP AN OPEN MIND

In order to look for other perspectives keep an open mind. If you immediately dismiss any thought that does not fit into the way you see the world, you will never be able to expand and develop your viewpoints, you will have a very fixed and limited view of the world.

5. BE CURIOUS

Start to look outside the things you normally read and watch and think about. Learn more about things you know nothing about and were not previously interested in. Listen more to what people say, we learn so much more when we really listen rather than spend time planning what we will say next.

6. MAKE INFORMED JUDGEMENTS

It is ok to not have an opinion about something because you don't have enough information yet. Avoid rushing to judgements, take your time to gather information and evidence and assess it before making a decision. Try not to let yourself be swayed by emotion as this can affect your ability to assess information intellectually.

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