

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking requires you to examine and analyse information in an objective manner so that you can make a reasonable judgement on it.

The most effective way to arrive at a reasonable judgement is to interrogate your sources using appropriate questions. Here are some **starter questions**:

Who?	... benefits from this? ... is the author? ... is being talked about and what language is being used?
What?	... is another perspective on the topic? ... is the context or situation that this is occurring? ... sources were used?
Where?	... would this be seen / used in the real world? ... can I get more information? ... would I find similar situations/ research?
When?	... does this research occur? ... will the results be released? ... will someone do something about it?
Why?	... did they get similar/ different results? ... is this an issue? ... why was this included / excluded?
How?	... would the study change if this piece of information was changed? ... does this benefit / harm others? ... do my opinions / experiences influence my understanding of this?

These questions will also help you to develop the key skills needed to be a critical thinker like the ability to:

- **Be sceptical** (e.g. *What sources does this journalist use to back up their statements about migrant workers?*)
- **Analyse other people's reasoning** (e.g. *Why did they exclude children under the age of 6 in their study?*)
- **Be aware of your own biases** (e.g. *How does my professional experience as a teacher make me less likely to be sympathetic to characters like Huck Finn who refuse to go to school?*)