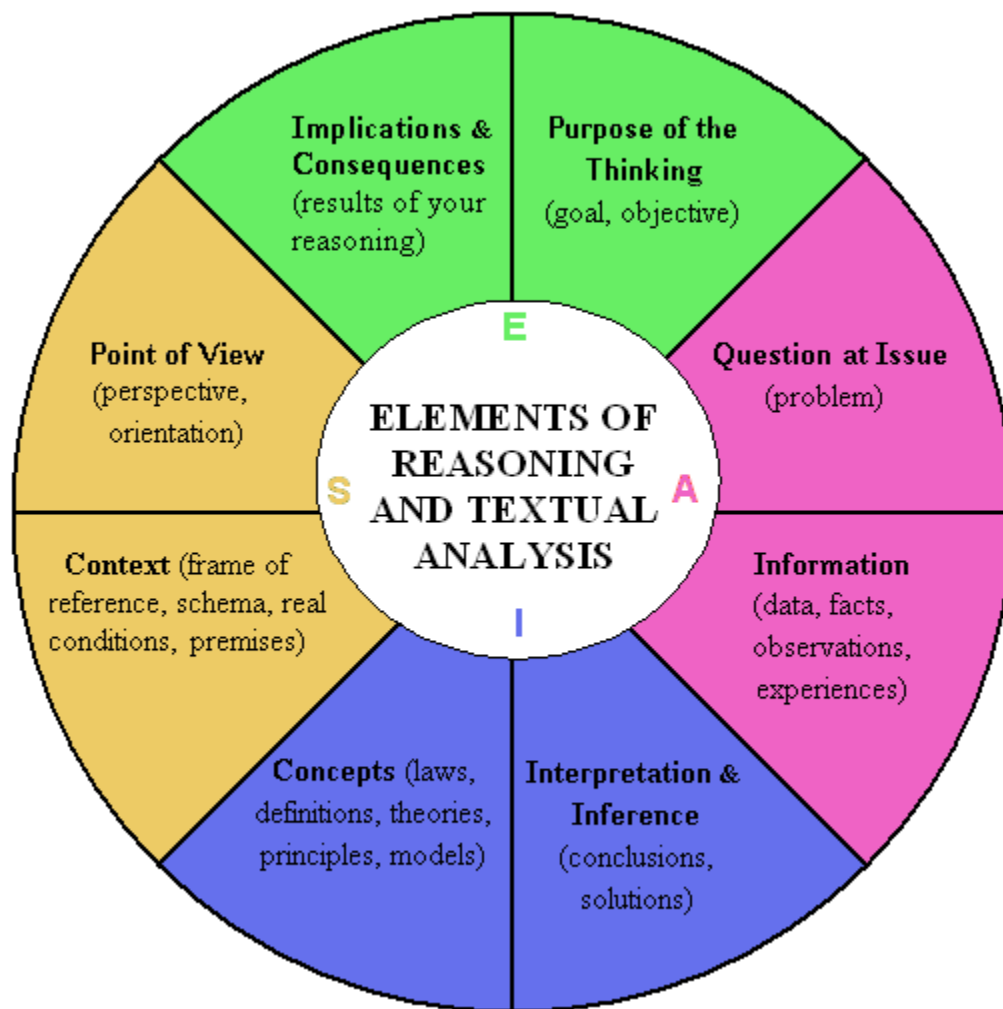


Critical Thinking Process

The following diagram and reflection questions outline the process for thinking critically, which is also called reasoning. You probably consider most of these steps whenever you make an important decision. Academic essay writers should follow these steps in order to thoroughly think through their argument. This diagram and these questions can also help in critical reading, or textual analysis, in order to consider everything that a piece of writing says to you.



Analysis **Interpretation** **Synthesis** **Evaluation**

Answer some of these questions

1. Purpose: Why do you want to write about this text? What are your ultimate goals or intentions? Can you separate personal reasons from academic ones? Why is this topic important to you personally, in terms of your experiences, thoughts, feelings, and beliefs? Why would it be important for your readers? What is your initial evaluation, before going deeper?

2. Problem: What are you going to say about this text? Do you understand the assignment and can you say it clearly in your own words? Who is your intended audience? What is their need that must be filled? What do you want the audience to think, feel, or do? What types of evidence, such as values, opinions, or facts, could work to support your purpose?

3. Information: How will you divide the text into its significant parts? What are the major issues, ideas, character roles, or images? Does evidence support the thesis and other claims? How are events, people, places, and institutions significant? How does the author use Ethos, Pathos, and Logos? How does the text use stories (plot), descriptions (settings), or arguments?

4. Interpretation: Do you intend to praise, comment upon, or critique this text? What are its values, attitudes, or beliefs? How does your perspective distort evidence? How can you move past your first impression and read between the lines? How will you organize your argument? Which claims are shallow, and which are deep? Would a reasonable person agree with you?

5. Concepts: What main concepts can label the significant parts of your text? How will they organize your essay? Some examples of concepts include things people want, such as friendship, or things people fear, like hatred. What organizing idea connects all of the concepts in your paper together and makes your analysis and interpretation work?

6. Contexts: What are the history, genre, and culture behind this text? Is there a shared understanding or schema that contextualize it? How does the author reflect real historical conditions, movements, and events? Is there a theoretical context, e.g. feminism? How is the cultural context relevant? Do premises or assumptions create false frames of interpretation?

7. Point of View: Whose perspective is represented in the text? Who is the Author? What can we tell about the persona from the style and content of the text? How does the author's perspective limit what he/she can show you? What are your point of view's strengths and limitations? Does your point of view create new directions that the author did not intend?

8. Implications: How does this text make you feel or think? What is your evaluation of the text? Does it cause you to look at yourself, others, and the world in a different way? What do you see now that you didn't see before? How could this be meaningful in and affect the lives of others? What should your readers do, physically or mentally, to respond to your writing?