

## Critical Thinking

“Critical thinking is thinking about your thinking while you’re thinking in order to make your thinking better,” according to Richard Paul, the author of How to prepare students for a rapidly changing world.

We can thus define critical thinking as the ability to be aware that, as a student, you need to employ your mental abilities and skills in order to improve your academic performance and intellectual skills.

This means that as a student, you cannot afford to be passive in class. You need to question givens, use your common sense and logic, and participate in discussing issues that come up in the classroom.

Critical thinking is fundamental in your academic work because it should be present in everything you do and study. English 181, English 182, and English 183 allow you to use and develop your critical thinking abilities in reading, writing and research skills. Some points that will help you in your critical thinking are:

- Identifying the purpose of a reading text
- Determining the goals/purpose of your writing task
- Identifying the main ideas of an essay/paper
- Planning the organization of your writing assignment
- Identifying the main ideas of a text/reading assignment/source
- Evaluating the supporting ideas/details
- Organizing the information from a reading text/source
- Asking questions
- Identifying problems/solutions
- Making logical connections – e.g. causes and their effects
- Exemplifying – illustrating, giving examples, finding models
- Identifying the style of writing of the author – e.g. formal/informal
- Identifying the mode of writing – e.g. definition, comparison/contrast
- Evaluating/revising your written work
- Making inferences based on evidence
- Determining whether your sources are relevant or not