

Critical Thinking and Reflection

Using the critical thinking model independently

The critical thinking model is a useful tool to help you get through several stages of writing. Most of us suffer from procrastination; we clean the house, do the laundry etc. rather than sitting down and starting an assignment. The critical thinking model can help you to get started.

Look at the assignment brief and make sure you understand the question and the instructions (see the TAP model in our **essay writing guide** for guidance on question analysis). Find somewhere comfortable to work, preferably at a table or desk, get two pieces of paper side by side and start to answer the questions listed on the **model to generate critical thinking**. Write down everything you know on one piece of paper. When you find you don't know the answer to a question write it down on the other piece of paper. You may find that one question will raise others. Write these down as well. This questioning process will help you to be more analytical in your thinking. When you finish you should have a very rough outline of current knowledge and a list of questions which can form the basis of your research plan. Include some key words and you are ready to start your research. The time it takes to go through this process will depend on the amount you already know on the subject, but you should allow at least 20 minutes.

Once you have done your research go through the questioning process again. This time you should have an outline of the assignment forming on one piece of paper and you are now ready to fill in the gaps, to include theory and references and provide evidence to justify your arguments. The **critical thinking study guide** provides further guidance to improve your analytical writing and help you to build an evidence based argument.

Please visit: <http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/learn> for the latest study guides highlighted within the text.