



**Module: English**

## Lesson 5: Critical Reading Skills

### Introduction

Critical reading is a higher-level academic skill that allows students to go beyond understanding the basic meaning of a text. It involves analyzing ideas, evaluating arguments, questioning assumptions, and forming independent judgments. In human sciences such as sociology, psychology, political science, and media studies critical reading is necessary for understanding complex theories, scientific articles, research findings, and media messages. This lesson develops students' ability to read thoughtfully, question information, and understand how authors construct meaning.

### 2. What Is Critical Reading?

Critical reading is a process that includes:

- **Comprehension** → understanding what the text says
- **Analysis** → examining how the text is structured
- **Evaluation** → judging the accuracy and quality of the ideas
- **Interpretation** → explaining deeper meanings and implications

Unlike basic reading, critical reading requires an *active mind*. The reader must interact with the text, not just follow it.

### 3. Why Critical Reading Matters in Human Sciences

Critical reading helps students:

- Understand **academic articles**, research reports, and media texts
- Compare different **theories, arguments, and perspectives**
- Detect **bias**, stereotypes, and hidden intentions
- Evaluate the **credibility of information**

- Improve academic writing, summaries, and presentations
- Form well-reasoned opinions based on evidence

In human sciences, critical reading is a foundation for analysis, research, and professional communication.

## 4. The Components of Critical Reading

### A. Identifying the Main Idea

The main idea is the central message of the text.  
**Ask:** *What is the author trying to say overall?*

### B. Recognizing Supporting Details

These include examples, facts, statistics, studies, and explanations used to support the main idea.

**Ask:** *What evidence does the author use?*

### C. Understanding the Author's Purpose

Authors write for various purposes:

- To inform
- To persuade
- To analyze
- To criticize
- To describe

Knowing the purpose helps readers understand the author's choices and style.

### D. Detecting Bias

Bias appears when the author takes a one-sided position or uses emotional language.  
**Examples of bias indicators:**

- Selective information
- Stereotypes
- Loaded language
- Lack of balance

## E. Identifying Assumptions

Assumptions are ideas the author accepts without proving them. Critical readers question whether those assumptions are valid.

## F. Evaluating Evidence

Strong evidence includes:

- Verified data
- Research studies
- Credible sources
- Logical reasoning

Weak evidence includes:

- Personal opinions
- Unsupported claims
- Generalizations

## G. Interpreting Tone

Tone expresses the writer's attitude. Examples include: neutral, formal, ironic, critical, emotional, persuasive.

## H. Examining Structure and Logic

Critical readers look at **how** the text is organized:

- Introduction
- Development of ideas
- Transitions
- Conclusion

This helps understand how the argument is built.

# 5. Critical Reading Strategies

## 1. Ask questions while reading

Examples:

- *What is the main argument?*
- *Is the evidence convincing?*
- *What is missing?*
- *Is the author objective?*

## 2. Annotate the text

Highlight keywords, ideas, and arguments.  
Write notes or comments in the margins.

## 3. Identify key vocabulary

Understanding academic terms (concept, theory, discourse, identity, etc.) helps students interpret the text accurately.

## 4. Compare different sources

Different texts may present different views.  
Comparison helps students develop a balanced understanding.

## 5. Evaluate the credibility

Ask:

- *Is the author an expert?*
- *Is the information recent?*
- *Does the text cite reliable sources?*

## 6. Example Text (for Analysis)

“Several studies suggest that social media influences young people's behavior by shaping their perception of success. However, some authors argue that individual factors and family environment play a stronger role. Although the evidence is still limited, the growing impact of digital platforms requires further investigation.”

### ***Possible Critical Reading Observations:***

- **Main idea:** Social media may influence young people, but other factors matter too.
- **Evidence:** The text mentions studies but does not specify them (weak evidence).
- **Bias:** The author tries to remain balanced by presenting two sides.
- **Assumptions:** Assumes social media has a “growing impact” without showing data.
- **Tone:** Neutral and analytical.

## Conclusion

Critical reading is a fundamental skill for university students in human sciences. It enables them to read thoughtfully, analyze arguments, evaluate evidence, detect bias, and understand academic texts at a deeper level. By practicing these skills regularly, students develop stronger academic thinking, better writing abilities, and a more independent, informed approach to learning.

## References

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