

Critical reading

What is critical reading?

Critical reading is actively responding to the text by analysing, questioning and assessing content to create your own meaning and understanding.

Example text:

Is this statement provable?
Is evidence given in the rest of
the book for this view of the future?

“As we will see in this book, the future belongs to the co-creative enterprise. Co-creation involves both a profound democratization and decentralization of value creation.....”

Ramaswamy, V. & Gouillart, F. J. (2010). *The power of co-creation: build it with them to boost growth, productivity, and profits*. New York, NY: Free Press.

What academic authority
do the authors have?
What is their background?

What does the author mean by the
'democratization and decentralization'
of value creation? Will this happen?
Will it really be profoundly democratic
and decentralized in application?

Why read critically?

“Texts present ideas, not absolute truths”

— Zemliansky, P. *Methods of Discovery: A Guide to Research Writing*. Chapter 3: Research and Critical Reading. [[Reference](#).]

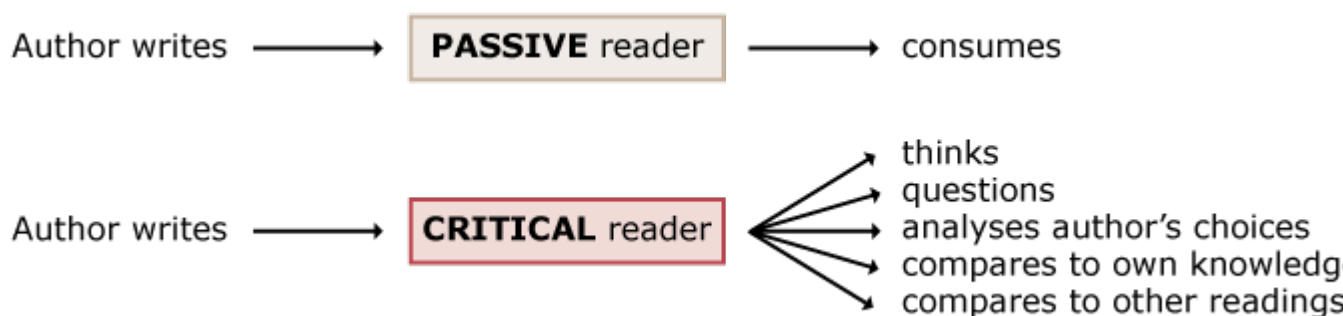
A particular ‘reality’

For example, a photograph is a text of a particular ‘reality’. It is the result of many choices made at a particular time and place (eg, where to aim, wide or narrow angle, colour balance, sharpness of the image, etc).



[Photo references](#)

An academic reading is the same: A written text is one portrayal of the facts. It makes a scholarly case for how we should understand the world around us. It too is made in a particular time and place and is the result of many choices made by the author(s).



The purpose of research is not simply to retrieve data, but to **participate** in a **conversation** about it.

How to read critically

1. Read the text for basic comprehension — read with the author

(suspend your own judgement for now)

- Who wrote and published the article? What is their background?
- What are the key concepts or ideas?
- What is argued and how it is argued for?
- What methodology was used (eg, literary sources, theory, surveys, statistical data, historical evidence, etc.)?

[Logic of the Writer's argument](#) [SUNY Empire State College]

2. Read critically — test the author

- Does the evidence strongly support what is being argued for?
- Is the evidence presented reliable? Are the sources credible?
- Are there any limitations in the evidence (e.g., too broad, too narrow, etc.)?
- Could better or more evidence be provided?
- Are there any assumptions made that are not argued for?
- What might an opposing argument be? (e.g., does the author's view contrast with other readings?)
- Would the argument in the reading still be strong if it faced this opposition?

[Read and Write Critically](#) [SUNY Empire State College]

3. Construct a response

- Make brief notes as you read
- Highlight your areas of concern
- Make a mindmap or concept map to 'see the big picture'
- Write a draft paragraph that expresses your overall view of the reading

[Evaluating the Author](#) [SUNY Empire State College]

Critical reading worksheet

Use the attached worksheet as a guide for critical reading.



[Critical reading worksheet](#)