

Three domains of critical reading

Reviewing the literature and critiquing scholarship

	Validity: On its own terms	Synthesis: In relation to others	Relevance: Usefulness to you
Context: discipline/profession, authors, currency, bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When was it published? • Where was it published? • What profession or discipline are the authors? • What else have they published—are they authoritative? • Are there any vested interests which might bias research? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have others cited or drawn on this research? • How influential has it been? • Is it cutting edge/controversial or mainstream? • Is this part of a debate and where does it sit? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are these authors coming at the issue from the same discipline perspective as you? • What is your overall response to the article?
What are they doing? Research Question/Aims/Hypothesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the aims clearly stated? Are they vague? • Is the research question etc valid or rests on bias/assumptions? • Is the question interesting/significant? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this a radically new area of research or a tweak or new angle on existing question or topic? • How long have people been interested in this topic? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How similar are their aims to your own? How does that affect your use of it? • Is it still worth me doing my research?
How did they do it? Methods, Models and Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are any theories/models appropriate and accurately understood? Do they develop their own? • Are the methods used for data gathering/interpretation appropriate? • Is the data set well chosen? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are they developing a completely new method etc? • Are the methods etc used standard and acceptable practice? • Are they adapting or improving previous methods etc? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does this help me justify my own choice of approach? • Can I adapt or improve their method? • Do I agree that this is an appropriate method for research like mine?
How do they know? Argument, evidence, logic and reasoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is their interpretation and analysis flawed or does it make logical sense? • Have they missed anything? • Do the results mean what they say they mean? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do they use other literature appropriately to help interpret their findings? • Do later scholars criticise them? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there anything I should be watching out for when reading my own work critically? • Is there anything I can point to in order to save me having to explain it in full?
What do they say? Findings and conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the conclusions actually related to their aims and results? • Are the conclusions drawn proportionate to the evidence presented? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are their findings confirmed by other literature? • Are their findings significant and novel, compared to other literature? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can I rely on their conclusions to build my own argument? • Do I disagree with their conclusions to some extent? Does that help justify my research? • Any gaps/missed opportunities to help justify my research?

Interrogate the text as you read - on its own terms, in relation to other texts, and its relevance to your work.

Three domains of critical reading

Reviewing the literature and critiquing scholarship

	Validity: On its own terms	Synthesis: In relation to others	Relevance: Usefulness to you
Context: discipline/profession, authors, currency, bias			
What are they doing? Research Question/Aims/Hypothesis			
How did they do it? Methods, Models and Materials			
How do they know? Argument, evidence, logic and reasoning			
What do they say? Findings and conclusions			

